Physical activity at the workplace – a beneficial cause

Michael Filtenborg
Health Consultant
Danish Federation for Company Sports
Danish Federation for Company Sports

- Danish Federation for Company Sports – the third largest sports organization in Denmark
- Approx. 375,000 people from 8,000 company's are members in our 78 local clubs
- Organizing health promoting activities at workplaces for more than 200,000 non-members each year
Physical activity at the workplace as a health promoting tool

- Physical activity at the workplace is a well-known practice and each year companies implement a new health promoting initiative.
- Physical activity at the workplace has a documented health promoting effect, but is it profitable?
Physical activity at the workplace – evidence to positively contributing the bottom line

• A recent study (Justesen; Just Bendix, 2015) regarding physical activity at the workplace show effects through a significant improvement in:
  • the physical condition (7%), an improvement to the health in general (11,5%) improvement of the work rate (5%), increase in productivity(7,5%) and a reduction in short-term absence (49%)

• Equivalent factors contributing to a positive bottom line

• Some parameters played a crucial and facilitating role:
  o well educated health ambassadors
  o in coalition with the management of the company
Similar finding by Danish Federation of Company Sports – general terms

• A strategically conducted effort from the beginning have turned to similar experiences

• Change-management - the flexibility, development and transformation is a keystone

• Strategic health-management – integration of workplace health promotion in the strategy and culture.
  • Health and physical activity is a natural part of the everyday tasks
8 health promoting elements:

1. A committed management who show the way
2. Well trained health ambassadors
3. Goalsetting and ambition
4. Involvement of employees (responsibility)
5. Persistent focus/motivation (strategy)
6. Resources (long-term investment)
7. A change of culture
8. Humor, positivity and no accusing fingers

"we’re in and fully support the workplace health promotion!"
A committed management

- Motivated leaders who take the lead – physically or non-physically
- Legalization and a part of the organisation
  - promoting and taking part front row
  - management took a selfie while playing ping-pong and posted it around to make it visible
  - video documentation to show support - competition
  - enhancement of recent initiatives – viral spread

- Middle-managers:
  - often the actual representatives of the management
  - connecting the gaps
The significance of the health ambassadors

• Are the mainstay to achieving a sustainable health culture
• A tangibly approach for a dependent solution at many workplaces
• Selecting an interested and motivated group vs. obvious choices
• Facilitators for generating a snowball effect
• On-going support, education and training in motivational matters
A health promoting workplace – with succes

• AXA Power:
  • Successfully implementing physical activity at the workplace for 6 years in a row
  • 30 minutes of physical activity each day at work (walking, running, playing soccer etc.)
  • Physical activity is an integral part of the overall health strategy

• Results:
  • Sickness absence is under 2%
  • Gathered highest revenues in the period
  • 7,5 hours with reserves of energy is better than 8 hours with lack of energy
Main keys to the success:

- A progressive and a participating management
- Created a firm foundation from the start
- A broad variety of activities – generating ambassadors
- The possibility for individual adaptation
- Ownership for everybody – not only management
- An yearly fixed budget and fixed time-schedule for exerting physical activity
Progression in a success?

• How do you ensure a healthy evolvement of the success?
  • Proactive thinking – securing and testing new tendencies
  • Never change a winning team – safe settings and patterns

• Does perks get out of hand – more wants more?
  • Shaping a natural itself

• Accepting resistance
  • Keeping a processual mindset
  • Popcorn POV - Accepting a group of prejudiced opponents - aim your effort at the big indifferent group – those are the ones to affect
Implementing physical activity at the workplace is a team effort
Implementing physical activity at the workplace is a team effort

Thank you