Employer perceptions of creating activity-promoting workspaces

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1. Background

Successful health and wellbeing programs need a multi interventional approach, awareness alone is not sufficient to make a long term impact. The aim of the ‘Stand Up Lend Lease’ program was to increase dynamic movement and reduce prolonged sitting during the working day. 147 employees participated in the study across 3 office locations.

1.1 Stand Up Lend Lease

Employee health and wellbeing and associated programs are being recognised by businesses as key to increasing employee attraction, retention, engagement & productivity. A recent study shows that employees whose companies ‘actively promoted health & wellbeing’ were 8 times more likely to be engaged and 4 times less likely to leave.¹

Given Australians are now spending almost one third of their lives at work, health bodies such as the World Health Organisation have identified the workplaces as a key area to promote health and wellbeing. Commonly workplace strategies have 3 focus areas which can be implemented in the work environment: nutrition, restoration & activity.

Increasingly there is a focus on workplace activity, with inactivity and sedentary work styles becoming a factor contributing to lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Our ‘Stand Up Lend Lease’ Study aim was to raise awareness on typical sedentary work practices common in modern office environments, and develop strategies to increase dynamic movement whilst reducing prolonged sitting during the working day.

The program involved a combination of awareness; creating an environment & steps for easy change and developing social norms within the business. Examples included:
- Awareness: breakfast launch of “Stand Up Lend Lease”
- Awareness: individual feedback on activity / inactivity
- Changing the environment: creating walking maps for people
- Changing the environment: encouraging people to take adequate breaks during the day
- Changing the environment: providing walking meeting guidance: why, when & how
- Changing the environment: provide standing meeting guidance
- Changing the environment: creating dynamic working toolkits for those who job description are desk -based
- Social norms: leadership behaviour by senior managers
- Social norms: meeting behaviour for meetings longer than 30 minutes

The program has been a success overall. We have successfully raised awareness across multiple management levels on the importance of dynamic movement during the work day

Acknowledgements

Genevieve Healy, David Dunstan and Charlotte Brakenridge, University of Queensland/Baker IDI

References

1. www.right.com/ working-well-a-priority-for-engaging-employees-and-driving-productivity