

Living on WELL Street Blog: “March Madness Can Be A Wellness Activity”

By Michael White, Worksite Wellness Technical Assistant, *We Choose Health*

“Learn to enjoy every minute of your life. Be happy now. Don’t wait for something outside of yourself to make you happy in the future. Think how really precious is the time you have to spend, whether it’s at work or with your family. Every minute should be enjoyed and savored.” – Earl Nightingale

We are in the midst of the college basketball season’s March Madness tournament. Stories abound as to how costly this is to businesses. The popular belief is that employees, who are distracted from their work because they are following their bracket sheet selections, are less productive. I am here to offer a dissenting opinion - March Madness is actually a wellness-promoting activity!

A California-based staffing firm, OfficeTeam, surveyed 300 senior managers at companies with more than 20 employees. The survey results suggest that March Madness may even benefit a work environment. Here are some of the findings:

- 32% of managers said the tournament boosts employee morale
- 27% said they felt March Madness has a positive impact on worker productivity
- 62% said the tournament has no effect on productivity or morale
- 7% said the tournament had a negative effect on morale
- 11% said it negatively affected productivity

In the spirit of full disclosure, I have run a March Madness pool for family and friends for a number of years. It has become a holiday-like event that connects people for three fun-filled weeks, and promotes a connection that lasts throughout the year. It attracts a wide demographic and sports knowledge is not a prerequisite – case in point, a sister-in-law picked all “16” winners on the first day of competition!

Whether your organization has an interest in March Madness or something very different, social events can have a very positive affect on the well being, morale and even the productivity of the workforce. Gallup’s Tom Rath, in “Well Being”, suggests that we need at least six hours of social time every day to maximize well-being and minimize stress and worry. This includes time socializing with family, friends and colleagues at home, at work, on the phone, via email, or through social media. If you can achieve that without March Madness, good for you. But, please be nice to those of us who choose to get our six hours from hoops hysteria!

“Shoot” For Six!

Michael

Michael White is a “culture of health curator”, and someone who seeks to live as happy and healthy as possible - for as long as possible! He loves to talk and write about these topics, and is happy to assist people and organizations in making it happen. Please contact him at: michaelwhite@wellstreetpartners.com.