



Living on WELL Street Blog: **“GUIDELINES FOR A WALKING MEETING”**
By Michael White, Worksite Wellness Technical Assistant, We Choose Health

“Walking is man’s best medicine.” – Hippocrates

I recently received a request for a worksite wellness policy example. I thought about the most common policies that worksites adopt, e.g., smoking, vending, etc., but opted for sharing one that can be an alternative to the standard top-down policy. Most employers do not wish to create workforce wellness policies. They will implement “safety” procedures without hesitation, but the unhealthy behaviors that pose a silent and hidden threat to health and productivity are most often avoided. Unless we understand health to be the absence of threat to physical harm, “health and safety” programs, don’t address the behaviors of employees during the workday. An alternative is to offer wellness “guidelines”, not policies, to gently assist in creating a workplace culture of health. Such guidelines can serve as tools for building healthy practices into the work environment, and become the foundation for a wellness program.

Think of it in terms of baking a cake. Guidelines are the ingredients that are baked – wellness practices that are added to the mix of the organization’s culture. Once the cake is baked, it is allowed to cool – wellness practices are tried and tested. Once the cake is cooled, the frosting is applied – wellness practices are accepted as part of the established culture of health. Now, is the appropriate time to formalize what has been established and supported in a formal workplace policy.

“Guidelines for a Walking Meeting” is an example of a worksite guideline. It encourages a healthy option to conducting meetings. It describes what the benefits are, provides direction how to do it and offers resources for learning more. Similar guidelines can be developed for increasing physical activity at work, stretching, healthy eating, flexible work time related to wellness activities, stress reduction techniques, etc. Examples of these will be provided in future blogs - don’t let your subscription lapse!

Live WELL!

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.

Guidelines for a Walking Meeting

Description

ABC Company wants to encourage walking meetings when it is appropriate. A walking meeting is a healthy option when sharing ideas or catching up with a colleague. It can serve as a substitute for an email, a phone call or a lunch meeting. The benefits of a walking meeting include:

- Increased energy and alertness.
- Reduced sense of stress from physical movement.
- Brain function improves with physical activity leading to the stimulation of new ideas, increased creativity and heightened problem-solving ability.
- Improved physical and mental well-being from being outdoors.
- It provides a more relaxed and confidential environment to communicate

To make the most of your walking meeting, consider:

- Limiting the size to what is practical for the walking environment.
- Planning in advance, so that a route with few distractions, weather conditions, appropriate footwear and drinking water can be considered.
- Share an agenda and any visual information beforehand to minimize note taking.
- Stick to a time limit and walk at a pace that is comfortable for everyone.
- Allow for time, following the walk, to summarize the meeting and note actions to be taken.

Resources

CBS News Video – “Walking meetings could make work healthier, happier”

Link: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/walking-meetings-make-work-healthier-happier/>

EveryBody Walk! – “Hosting Walking Meetings”

Link: <http://everybodywalk.org/collaborative/1130-hosting-walking-meetings.html>

Eytan, Ted M.D. – “The Art of the Walking Meeting”

Link: <http://www.tedeytan.com/2008/01/10/148>

Feet First – “Guide to Walking Meetings”

Link: <http://www.feetfirst.org/walk-and-maps/walking-meetings>

Mayo Clinic – “Walking: Trim Your Waistline, Improve Your Health”

Link: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/in-depth/walking/art-20046261>

Mother Nature Network – “Walking meetings: Exercising on the job”

Link: <http://www.mnn.com/money/green-workplace/blogs/walking-meetings-exercising-on-the-job>

NPR – “Walk While You Talk: The Meeting Goes Mobile”

Link: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2013/01/25/170264905/walk-while-you-talk-the-meeting-goes-mobile>

TED Talks – “Got a meeting? Take a walk”

Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/nilofer_merchant_got_a_meeting_take_a_walk