

WELLNESS STRATEGY FOR MILLENNIALS

The Round Table Discussion Outcome



Companies participated:



OBJECTIVE

To debate on workplace wellness strategy for millennials and identify nuances in effectively delivering wellness solution for Gen-Y.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Adoption and consumption of workplace wellness programs by employees have been a challenge for the Benefits team of every company.

What are key strategies or models in workplace wellness for Gen-Y, which:

1. Improve employee motivation to participate
2. Increase adoption of wellness initiatives
3. Bring tangible results and wellbeing in the workforce

Summary

- Nudging and evangelization is the right way to go so that it is not merely pushing.
- Creating an ecosystem of Insurer, employer and employees makes it rewarding for all stakeholders.
- A platform which can give choices to employees to pick and choose what is relevant to them is the way to go.

- Experiences are more important than data, and fun is a by-product
- Data plays a vital role in designing the architecture which is more customized to your employees. Linking data to more meaningful purposes helps in creating lasting impact.
- If wellness budget is moved from HR to business, and it is measured in terms of productivity and efficiency in projects,

wellness programs would automatically bring impact.

- Communities are very important and need to be nurtured through social platforms.



CONTEXT

Millennials or Gen-Y are people born between 1980-2000. While this period may be debatable, it is a not a moot point here. With an average age of 29, India is a millennial country. More than 400 million people (close to 35% of the population) in India fall in this category. Comparatively, USA has 83 million people (25% of the population) belonging to Gen-Y. On one side, millennials have been accused of being lazy, entitled, narcissistic, self-centred and so on. But we have to acknowledge that millennials have built the E-commerce industry, digital payments have been revolutionized by millennials, and 72% of founder CEO's in the Indian start-up ecosystem belong to Gen-Y. Innovation & creativity of the past decade has been architected by millennials. Today millennials constitute 74% of the workforce in knowledge industries. Some of their characteristics are worth noting for this debate:

- Personal values and ambition has an upper-hand over career advancement
- Millennials challenge hierarchy and love disagreements
- They are DIGITAL natives, DATA is God to them.
- In the Facebook era, they crave for instant feedback and recognition.
- Gen-Y wants to have FUN all the time. Work-life integration is important, not work-life balance

- They are an innovation breed, with a clear sense of purpose and conscious.

Q Traditional Wellness Programs – Gym in the workplace, Medical Sessions from experts, Health Check- How do they stand the test of time today for this new workforce? Are these programs aligned with their values at all?

Qualcomm [Sriram Rajaram]:

The challenge that most organizations face on ground is to engage employees on a conversation on wellness and see sustainable results. It's not a short-term intervention. The results don't happen in a short time frame which makes everybody sceptical. Hence, it becomes difficult for HR as practitioners to convince businesses to spend on these initiatives.

So, the debate today is, what modes of engagement do we really need to take. Do we keep doing what we have been doing? For example, absorbing partial cost of gyms?

I feel it has to be more holistic, it has to provide the right choices in multiple things, that an employee wishes to do every day in her life.

We do not make rational choices, so introducing subsidies doesn't work. That is where the concept of nudge comes into play. So as to lead the employee into making the right choices.

Nexval [Srinath Gururajaroo]:

How do you nudge employees? The very first thing is insurance. What we have done on the ground is to tie up employee wellness with insurance programs. Our insurers are getting involved in various wellness initiatives and the program has to cater for the dependants too.

Talking about the ambition of millennials, wellness has to be stitched to their progression somewhere. We have a gamified portal and we have tailored programs, creating experiences. It is important that family members are also taken care of, as this helps in engaging the employees effectively. It is important to bring the ecosystem players together, like insurers, employers, and the employees.

Q Millennials are known to be creative and innovative with a sense of purpose. Keeping this in mind, is it prudent to create wellness programs which improve clarity in thinking and build on creativity? For example instead of a typical GYM, we design a creativity centre. People can do things like carpentry, painting, or design tech-savvy products. What are your views on that?



Diageo [Udaya Bhaskar]: Let's take a step back and try and understand where this concept of gym came in. Wellness is equal to a gym for Gen X, because in that generation there was a predefined set of ideas saying that this is work and this is life and if you want wellness, go to a gym or a sports arena. The choices were limited and capital expenditure was incurred as there was no opex model. Opex model gives you an immense number of choices as you don't have to go to a gym to figure out how much you have walked. You have it right here in your band which tells you the distance covered. The old models have collapsed and I don't need to buy a treadmill. There are use and pay kind of models today and yes, we have to be very creative and how far can creativity go as a person and as an organisation is a question depending on how much are we ready to invest. So, as corporates, if we are going to make these choices for our employees, we need to draw a line for them.



Udaya Bhaskar

When an organization makes a choice for you and you don't get the fun element in it, you don't subscribe to it. Millennials are looking for fun and creativity in these programs.

QuintilesIMS [Ritesh Mathur]: Being a millennial is a mind-set and

not a label depending on when you were born. We come across the phrase "the problem with millennials" much too often. I don't think there is a problem with millennials. The millennials are just honest to ask why. When we look at wellness today, people are looking for experiences. Attention spans are becoming shorter, organizations need to keep that in context before they plan anything. So, it important to understand the approach, be more open when you are planning. Whether it is mental creativity or physical creativity, we all need to iterate and reiterate our plans on a continuous basis throughout the year. The other factor which should change the way we make decisions is the fact that people have more platforms today to voice their opinions than ever before and they have already experienced most of the stuff that used to be a wow factor for the previous generation, like bungee jumping etc.

HCL [Amit]: Millennials don't like to be forced. You tell them that this is our wellness offering, and leave it up to them. Many a times, the fallacy that we abide by is to run behind data when it comes to wellness and wellbeing. There is actually a trade-off over here. Say, if you do a health camp and 3000 people attend that camp, do you view it positively and say-"Hey! so many people are interested in wellness"? Or do you view it the other way and identify that there are 3000 people who have a problem? Nudge employees and don't force it on them. Secondly,

it has to be sticky and it has to come with an engagement perspective. Communicate the benefits and positives of an initiative. For example, 'What happens if you don't smoke?', and that goes down well. The way you communicate with millennials impacts the take-off of wellness initiatives.

Qualcomm [Sriram Rajaram]:

I think most of us are looking it in the wrong way. We are looking for the ROI on wellness programs which is not very difficult. More pertinent is to measure the value of these initiatives.



Sriram Rajaram

I would be glad if 10-15% of the employees that walk into the clinics, understand that they have deranged parameters. And this workplace clinic addresses them comprehensively over time. This has a larger ripple effect. But it is a difficult job. It is easier to measure the ROI.

QuintilesIMS [Ritesh Mathur]:

The fact is that- when you do something today, you should not expect the employee to feel indebted to you for doing it. When we set up something, people start using it when they see value in it. We think of standardizing things to manage administrative costs. But for an employee, choice is a give-in.

As she has an enormous amount of choices in personal life, irrespective of what she is doing, she refuses to adopt, unless there is value in it for her. So, I think we have to stop asking for ROI. We should just do it because we think it makes sense, and leave it at that.

Q DATA is GOD for Millennials. And that is why “quantified self” was a big hit. Fitbit reached an IPO on this strength. How do you think wellness programs can be designed, so that it is more quantitative in nature, and can provide instant feedback to this audience?

Nexval [Srinath Gururajao]:

Data plays a very important role in giving that nudge and creating an ecosystem.



Srinath Gururajao

Hierarchies have broken in a sense that the feeling of community is more prominent than hierarchical structures. So, what technology today is providing with the data sets is creating a sense of community, belonging, and competitive spirit among the employees. Any organization that is socially responsible are better off in terms of business outcomes on all parameters, at least by 50%.

We all know that providing a good atmosphere for employees will always yield good results, which also acts as a binding factor. Data plays a vital role in constructing wellness architecture and designing one which is more customized to your employees.

Qualcomm [Sriram

Rajaram]: There is a lot of information available, but what do we do with that information is critical. Are people really aware of the serious data that is taking a toll on us every day in our workplace? Do they know about BMI, high glucose level, high waist circumference, high lipids etc.? What are we doing about that and is it sustainable?

TCS [Garima]: It is very

important to use data and link it to a larger cause. The role of Influencers and leadership to motivate employees cannot be taken lightly. The role of peers, as wellness champions, keeps employees motivated.

Q Millennials are FUN loving people. They want FUN all the time. Keeping this trait in mind, how should we design wellness programs for this cohort?

- Do you think creating competitiveness and challenges would engage them?
- How should we play “social” to increase the “fun” element?

QuintilesIMS [Ritesh Mathur]:

Millennials are looking for transparency,

and they achieve it through data. They are looking for experiences that challenge them. Fun is a by-product and why I am differentiating this is because when we create social or wellness initiatives, we tend to bucket them as either fun or serious, but it's not true. They perceive it as - “what is in it for me?” and “Is it going to challenge me?”. If you add an element of experience to an initiative, then you have far more participants. Health can be a by-product and can be recorded on a platform. So, we have to answer these questions - “Why are we doing this?”, “Before I expect employees to take it up, is it giving me an experience or challenging me?”.

Q Millennials love disagreements! Hence, one size fits all does not suit them. How can we create very diverse wellness programs, which give them the flexibility to pick & choose?

- Is wellness platform, which allows multiple service providers to come and serve, a RIGHT answer?



Ritesh Mathur

QuintilesIMS [Ritesh Mathur]:

Today's generation, compared to the previous generations,

do not have a sense of community. One way to bring that change is to bring about that sense of community using digital means. Using each other's areas of improvement in positive ways to nudge them. The lifespan of employees in the organisation is much shorter. Hence, we need to think of risk factors and address them holistically.

HCL [Gayathri]: At HCL, we have passion clubs with varied interests like dance and cycling etc. We have associated CSR with these activities. We are providing employees with the platform and they come up with their own ideas to keep these initiatives going.

Sonata Software [Anita Vasudevan]: We feel that if an initiative is aligned to the ambition of the employees, they will participate. Else, we will continue to face challenges. So maybe Gen-X did not have the choices, but we see employees in different age groups who behave like millennials. Hence, it differs from person to person. We would rather not age-group on what motivates them.

Getactive [Mohammed]: This challenge of making wellness programs a success is universal. 'One size fits all' doesn't work for organizations when it comes to initiatives in the wellness space. Companies are experimenting with tech platforms that provide variety and choices to employees.

Q From Participants:
VF Brands [Debolain]: What is the role of HR and where do we draw the line in giving people choices? Everyone knows that exercise is good but how many actually do it regularly?

QuintilesIMS [Ritesh Mathur]: The role of HR is of a facilitator and not of an event manager. We are actually lucky to have so many choices. We should be open to ideation and then help facilitate the ideas brought on board.

Qualcomm [Sriram Rajaram]: The role of HR is that of an evangelist. What role we play in helping an employee inculcate a healthy habit, is what matters.

I am not worried if the employees have a shorter stint with my company. I want to institutionalize the fabric of being an employer of choice. I think HR is far from running out of ideas. We have not even started exploring ideas which are in front of our eyes. More than anything, the policy making has to change, to nudge employees towards the right choices. We need to look more on the proactive side, thus creating the right ecosystem of healthy choices.



Fedex [Rajinikanth]: We give discounts on bills if employees pick healthy foods and cook for themselves. This is done through our insurance partner. Obesity is very high. So, it is important to think differently.

Names of delegates:

Rajinikanth Sambasivam
FedEx Express

Vasanth Balachandhran
AB InBev

Mandanna SC
KPMG

Sneha Singh
Flipkart

Ramaa Sundara Raj
Medcall

Anita Vasudevan
Sonata Software

Suma Amarnath
Capgemini

Gayathri Jagdeesh
HCL

Vimala Pemmaiah
Nvidia

Dr Shashank
Paramount

Garima Gupta
TCS

Santosh Abraham
Wellsfargo

Amit Prakash
HCL

Debolina Dutta
VF Brnads

Yogesh Kumar
Northern Trust

Meenu Gupta
Nvidia

Kritika Thakur
USL - Diageo

Saurabh Tewari
I SOS

getactive>

Employee Wellness, Gamified.

+91 9241124164

care@getactive.in

www.getactive.co



twitter.com/GetActiveDotCo



www.linkedin.com/company/getactive



[Click here to view the session](#)