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BY MICHAEL H. COOK, Editor



## "CORPORATE WELLNESS— A KEY TO IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY"

Last year, American industry lost \$25 billion due to the premature death of its employees. Another \$700 million was lost due to illness and absenteeism.

Today, in this country . . .

...Heart attacks afflict more than one-half million people each year.

...Stress is related to 80 percent of all illness.

...Nine million men and women suffer from alcoholism or drug abuse.

...75 million people suffer from back pain and 25 million from hypertension (1 out of 6 employees).<sup>1</sup>

What is this thing called *wellness*? Recently, the term has been bandied about in the HRD profession, much like many of the "catch phrases" or fadist jargon of the past.

The term "wellness" has been defined as, "the actualized potential in each person to function at peak levels of performance with a healthy body, alert mind and sound emotions." And, as with many of the concepts popular in the field today, it wasn't until just a few years ago that any attention was being given to the worker's "well-being" by top management.

Today, we are finding that "wellness" can help measurably to improve productivity and profitability. In this issue, Gordon Shea points out what people need to learn to achieve positive payoffs from wellness training (p. 32). He points out, "Wellness is a long-range, lifetime project, and as

such, it must become an ingrained habit that is truly a way of life." He also outlines a five-part wellness training program that systematically tackles each need in an integrated fashion.

### Corporate Investment

The emergence of more than 500 U.S. "corporate fitness" programs in the past decade suggests that there are some who are seriously acknowledging the impact of employee "wellness" on productivity, job-effectiveness and corporate growth.

Recently, corporate giants like Xerox, Kimberly-Clarke, Merrill-Lynch, Johnson & Johnson, Chase Manhattan Bank, General Foods, and many others have been offering corporate wellness programs to their employees, placing emphasis on cardiovascular fitness and stress management.

One such example, highlighted in this issue (p. 39), is a new "Stay Well" program recently initiated at Control Data Corp. This program, which will eventually be offered to all Control Data employees and their spouses, was developed by the corporation's "Life Extension Institute," which is a corporate division that specializes in preventive medicine.

John McCann, M.D. and president and chairman of the Board of the Institute, tells us, "There has been a significant change in the perception of the potential values to be derived from prevention and wellness promotion by both em-

ployees and employers alike. Society, in general, and industry in particular are embracing the concept that to stay well is less costly than to get well!"

### A Lifelong Process

Also in this issue, Phillip Randall and Alyson Scott provide some insight into another area of "wellness training" concentration — retirement education and planning.

They stress in their article, "Wither Retirement Education? A Wellness Approach," that before and during an employees' transition into retirement, many critical issues of wellness must be resolved. "Corporate America is increasingly recognizing the importance of those issues — not only for the individual, but also for the corporation. As more and more retirement preparation programs are springing up, human resources professionals need guidelines for developing their retirement education programs," they point out.

Wellness promotion in industry is not a new concept. . . . However, we are now experiencing a significant change in top managements' perception of the potential value that prevention and wellness promotion, by employers as well as employees, can have on productivity.

### REFERENCES

1. For more information, contact: Management Potentials, Inc., 7 Walters Road, Sumneytown, PA 18084.