

From Warm Fuzzies to **FITNESS CULTURE**

Moen, a Cleveland-based manufacturer of high-quality faucets, showers and accessories, is showering praise on its wellness programs for their potential to cut health care costs.

by Josh Cable

When the 2,500-square-foot wellness center at Moen Inc.'s North Olmsted, Ohio, headquarters opened about a dozen years ago, it was viewed primarily as something that would give people the "warm fuzzies."

Today, with soaring health insurance costs on the minds of Moen management and many other companies, Moen is taking a serious look at ways the wellness center and wellness programs can trim fat from its bottom line.

"In the beginning, it was viewed as just a soft benefit, a feel-good benefit," says Program Manager Chad Hanzlicek, who is in charge of Moen's wellness initiatives. "Now management is seeing that it really works, that one way to reduce risk is to use the wellness center."

Hanzlicek isn't just basing that on warm fuzzies: A formal study conducted by Moen in 2005 concluded that for every dollar spent on wellness initiatives, Moen trims \$3 to \$4 from the bottom line.

Hanzlicek also points to a random sampling of more than 500 Moen employees that revealed a dramatic difference between health care expenditures for members of the wellness center versus nonmembers. For example, for every \$100 spent on health care over the course of a year, nonmembers spent \$46.30 on inpatient medical services while members spent a paltry \$4.76, according to the survey.

And while many companies have had to continually ask employees to up their contributions to their health care packages, Moen Vice President of Human Resources Robyn Hill points out that the company did not increase employee contribution levels from 2005 to 2006 – which she attributes in large part to Moen's wellness programs.

"[Wellness] is absolutely a key and core part of not just our benefits strategies but also our overall business strategies," Hill says.

Hill adds that Moen's wellness programs – which include group exercise classes, personal training sessions, health fairs, CPR/first aid classes, massages and "lunch and learn" educational seminars – have been so successful that the company would like to take them to "the next level." The next level likely will include taking steps to better integrate wellness into the company's benefits package and to offer wellness programs at all Moen locations for its 3,000 employees worldwide.



MOEN

THE 'FAT BOWL'

Moen has a solid platform to take its wellness program to the next level: Currently, about 285 of Moen's 500 North Olmsted employees have wellness center memberships.

The wellness center offers most of the amenities you'd find at any commercial fitness club – including strength-training equipment, 14 cardiovascular machines and a full locker room (“with the best showerheads and faucets in town,” Hanzlicek quips) – but the membership fees are a pittance by comparison. North Olmsted employees can join the wellness center for \$15 a month, while workers at Moen's nearby Elyria, Ohio, manufacturing facility can use the center for free.

Still, it isn't necessarily the low membership costs that are getting employees involved in health and fitness. Hill credits much of the success of the wellness program to its staff – Hanzlicek and fitness specialist Gina Palmieri, both of whom are certified in personal training and group exercise instruction – and the activities they create to keep employees engaged.

“Their passion and commitment gets folks excited about it,” Hill says. “Without the right people managing the program, I don't think it can be as effective.”

One of Hanzlicek's goals for the wellness program is to make a more concerted effort to measure participation and to retain employees who get involved in wellness activities.

To accomplish the latter goal, Hanzlicek says Moen can build on mainstays such as the “Fat Bowl,” a popular program that has been motivating Moen employees to exercise for 8 years.

The Fat Bowl is an 8-week competition – running from January through March – in which teams of four employees earn points for healthy activities such as exercising, eating healthy foods and drinking water. Teams also can earn points if team members maintain or lose weight, which is monitored via weekly weigh-ins at the wellness center.

At the end of the 8 weeks, the two teams with the most points advance to the Fat Bowl.

In the Fat Bowl, the team with the biggest drop in relative body fat percentage wins, and prizes this year included wellness center memberships and free personal training sessions and massages. At the conclusion of the Fat Bowl, Moen also gives out individual

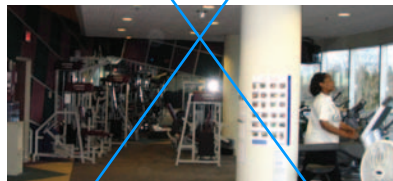
awards such as “Mr. Buff,” “Mrs. Buff” and “Biggest Loser.”

The Fat Bowl – which drew 84 participants this year – is popular largely because of its group dynamic, Hanzlicek explains. He cites research that shows that member-to-member interaction is the No. 1 motivator for people to participate in health and fitness activities.

“People love it,” Hanzlicek says. “If someone doesn't want to come in and exercise, there's a guilt factor – they feel like they have to go. He adds that Fat Bowl participants “get very fanatical about motivating each other.”

While the Fat Bowl is a great tool for drawing employees into the world of health and fitness – it is open to all Moen associates in North Olmsted and Elyria, regardless of whether they belong to the wellness center – the wellness staff has several strategies to keep them involved.

For starters, Fat Bowl participants can continue to take part in weekly weigh-ins throughout the year, or they can take advantage of a free introductory personal training session.



Moen's Wellness Center at a Glance

Size: 2,500 square feet

Hours: 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Staff: Chad Hanzlicek and Gina Palmieri (both certified in personal training and group exercise instruction)

Equipment: Treadmills, bicycles, ellipticals, strength-training machines, exercise bands/balls

Other amenities: TVs, full locker room

Programs: 13 group exercise classes per week (step aerobics, circuit training, yoga, boot camp), all free; personal training sessions; massage therapy; annual programs such as “Fat Bowl” and “Maintain Don't Gain”

Cost: \$15 per month for North Olmsted employees

Membership: 285 employees

Another strategy is the “Maintain Don't Gain” program, which awards merchandise to employees who maintain their weight *and* exercise at least three times a week at the wellness center. Employees can track their weight via a monthly weigh-in at the center.

Prizes in 2005 – the program's first year – included a wellness center fleece pullover for employees who maintained their weight and worked out three times a week for 46 to 52 weeks; a “Maintain Don't Gain” T-shirt for employees who accomplished those goals for 41 to 45 weeks; a wellness center flashlight for 36 to 40 weeks; and a clip/compass for 31 to 35 weeks.

“Biometrics” is another program designed to further engage employees. The program, which was launched in March, consists of a strength-training regimen and meal plan, and it's aimed at people who “can't seem to lose that last 5 pounds.”

“If they exercise regularly, and they're in a rut, this is for them,” Hanzlicek says.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

S hari Sackett, a senior production designer at Moen, says her workouts at the wellness center have improved her overall health and reduced her trips to the doctor's office.

“You can come in here for 45 minutes and go back to work with a renewed sense of energy,” Sackett explains, while running on a treadmill. “It's a great stress-buster.”

Sackett, who works out at the wellness center at least three times a week, notes that participating in the Fat Bowl helped her lose 9 pounds after having a baby in March 2005. Sackett adds that Hanzlicek and Palmieri showed her a number of safe exercises for staying healthy in what was a “difficult” pregnancy.

After the baby was born, Sackett took advantage of basic first aid and infant/child CPR training sessions that are offered on site and paid for by Moen.

“It might not seem like a huge thing, but when a child is choking on a piece of food, it's great piece of mind,” Sackett says.

Chuck Magel is another success story. Magel, whose family has a history of heart trouble, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, says he has lost about 17 pounds by participating in the Fat Bowl the past 2 years. He also

estimates that his cholesterol, at last count, had dropped by 115 points – which he attributes to fitness programs such as Maintain Don't Gain as well as lunch-and-learn seminars on healthy eating.

"Without the wellness center, there's no way I could do this," says Magel, who works out at the wellness center during his lunch hour. "I have two young kids at home. There's no way I could make it to a gym. The location is a great advantage."

BUCKING THE TREND

That kind of feedback from employees certainly helps validates Moen's investment in wellness programs. But Hanzlicek isn't satisfied. He points to studies that suggest that 40 percent of the general population will exercise no matter what kind of fitness activities are available to them, while 60 percent will not.

Even though Moen's wellness center membership numbers show the company is bucking the trend, one of Hanzlicek's major goals is to go after that 60 percent.

"We're hoping that will be our biggest ROI – getting the high-risk people active," Hanzlicek says.

Whatever their reasons for not exercising, the wellness staff realizes that in order to get to inactive employees, "we may have to take the workout to them."

That's the idea behind "Stress Busters." Stress Busters, which Hanzlicek hopes to implement in September, will be a building-wide, 10-minute break set aside for stretching and exercise. (Currently, the wellness staff is available to lead individual departments in stretching breaks, but only at the request of the department manager.)

The "Quick Fit" program, slated to launch this summer, is another way Moen plans to reach traditionally nonactive employees. The program is the creation of Richard Bradley – author of "Quick Fit: The Complete, 15-Minute, No-Sweat Workout" – and Falls Church, Va.-based L&T Health and Fitness. The program consists of 10 minutes of walking, 4 minutes of strength-training and 1 minute of stretching, and it's "based on research that small increments of exercise can be just as effective as longer increments."

Bradley will kick off the program with a rally at Moen headquarters, and he will have books, DVDs and other materials available for employees who want to use the program at home.

"The idea is to get people to start thinking about exercise, and to change the mentality that you don't have to work out 60 minutes to get some benefits from it," Hanzlicek says.

In terms of the big picture, the concept behind Quick Fit meshes nicely with Hanzlicek's philosophy toward fitness at Moen.

Explains Hanzlicek: "Where before the mentality was that fitness is for athletes and people who exercise, Gina and I are trying to show people that it's for everybody."

That philosophy certainly resonates with Magel, who beams "this is probably the leanest I've been since high school."

"When you're deciding on whether you want to stay at a job, you look at all the benefits," Magel says. "[The wellness center] is definitely one of the top three reasons for staying at Moen."

"Everybody has bad days. It's nice to know there's a place you can go to see smiling faces and burn off some stress. [Hanzlicek] is pretty easy-going. He's kind of like your barber – he helps you blow off some steam." **OH**

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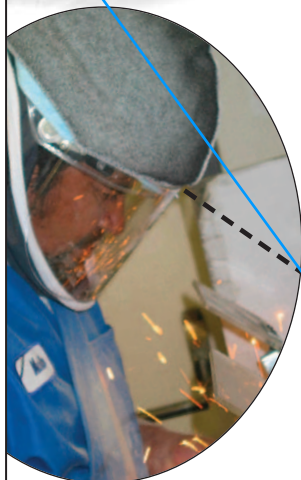
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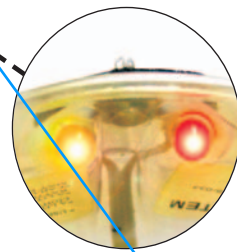
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April 2006 / Occupational Hazards 37