

Health Promotion Practitioner

Practical solutions for health enhancement programming

10 Reasons It's a Great Time to Be a Health Promoter

Now, more than ever, health promoters are in an ideal position to expand programs and careers; here's why:

- Healthcare costs continue to climb. It looks like the near double-digit increases are here to stay for a while. And although no one expects health promotion to reverse the trend, leading employers are beginning to embrace prevention as a vital part of the mix to manage this expense. See *Leading by Example: CEOs on the Business Case for Health Promotion* by the Partnership for Prevention (www.prevent.org).
- Prevention or delay of chronic conditions is top of mind for boomers. The biggest generation in history doesn't accept the same aging paradigm — boomers expect to live healthier longer than their parents and grandparents. That desire will fuel interest in healthy lifestyles for at least the next 2 decades.
- Generation Z is more in tune with quality of life issues. Not content to simply acquire wealth, the children of boomers want balance, creating a natural segue for your message.
- The information economy is more conducive to worksite intervention. As manufacturing continues to shift overseas, more US workers will toil in offices and at terminals, creating an easier path for raising awareness than having to pull workers off the line.

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- Lifelong learning is becoming the norm. Once just a corporate catch-phrase, today's workers have embraced the idea they'll need continuous learning to have control of their careers. That attitude opens the door to ongoing wellness as a parallel concept of equal importance to their future.
- Controlled industry growth offers a stable platform for building a health promotion program. While some industries (such as airlines) are in turmoil, most are in a period of modest, controlled growth. This allows business leaders to consider and implement strategies that enhance competitiveness, including health promotion.
- Bright minds are entering the field again. The irrational exuberance of the mid-1990s to early 2000s steered many young people toward more lucrative careers. Colleges are now seeing a renewed interest

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in wellness careers from a higher caliber of student. This infusion of talent will raise the bar for all health promoters.

- The trail has been blazed. Career wellness professionals who entered the field in the 1980s are beginning to retire, having established a path for those who follow. No longer are HR departments saddled with “what to do with the health promoters” question; they’ve answered it.
- Vendors are delivering on their promises. In the health promotion industry’s infancy, contracts were awarded more often for lowest cost and the promise of results. Now buyers are able to compare results and purchase value — best outcomes at best cost. This development has created the opportunity for a stable, rewarding career path within vendor organizations.

- We know what works. Struggles of the last 15 years — which saw interest in organization health enhancement go from its height in the early 1990s, through a period of stagnation, and now back to strength — have sharpened focus. Supported largely by measuring and analyzing interventions, we can see what has impact on health behaviors.

Threats to Our Future

Health promotion is no more immune than politics to mistakes of the past. As support for our services grows we’ll need to learn from history — resisting the temptation to go in too many directions just because we can.

Disciplined planning, execution, and evaluation will be the key to sustainable growth of your programs. While decision makers are more supportive than they’ve been in a decade, they also no longer have the luxury to suffer fools. 🚩



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