

Conference 2009 Highlights



Taking Care of Business

The Health Work & Wellness™ Conference prides itself in providing not just a forum for learning new approaches to ongoing workplace challenges, but also an opportunity for you to contribute your own thoughts and ideas and to brainstorm with others on how to address these challenges. We know that the professionals who attend this conference have a wealth of experience in organizational health and wellness and our aim is to provide an annual forum for sharing of those ideas with one another. This document is a synopsis of the ideas and thoughts that emerged at Conference 2009.

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TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

There was never any doubt that opening keynote Ian Percy was going to challenge many of the accepted norms in business practice – and that’s exactly what he did in a provocative and inspiring keynote address. He helped us understand why personal and organizational transformation is essential to taking care of business. Following the opening keynote address, Ian facilitated an inspiring executive forum for 20 senior executives.



In applying the conference’s “what, now what” approach to Ian address, delegates summarized their responses as follows:

What key messages am I taking away?

- Listen and look for intuition and possibilities
- The effects that the subconscious can have
- Fear holds us back
- There is a whole field of energy work that we don’t often tap into that can provide such possibility

Now What ?

- Be willing and open to solutions presenting themselves after a meeting
- Attempt the arm stretch exercise when my team does not seem to be aligned, as a way for each member to release the blockage
- Explain to colleagues the difference between change and transformation
- Help people to think without a box
- Acknowledge that the subconscious is there before we can change it

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THURSDAY THOUGHTS

Delegates were clearly inspired by what they heard at the Thursday sessions and came away with some great ideas for taking better care of business:

- Don't waste a perfectly good recession to bring your employee wellness change management objectives to life.
- Kindness is contagious – observe the kindness of others and be observed by others in the same light.
- World Kindness Day is a great opportunity to start a kindness campaign.
- It's OK to hug – a hug can be metaphoric.
- Organizations have a lot going for them – but don't always know what they actually have.
- Contact those I've been less kind to and say something kind.
- Pass kindness onto management.
- Form legacy networks.
- Try to find proper mediums to pass on knowledge; Boomers like face-to-face; Gen Y likes technology; achieve a way to make both happen.
- Keep boundaries between work and personal life.
- Adopt a "can't eat at desk" policy – you have to get up and socialize.
- The Thursday Evening Event with Victoria Labalme was not only fun, but inspired me with ways to engage the brilliance in my team!

CONSIDER THIS...

- Worry and fear are a wasted use of energy.
- We need to be aware that often the reason and intention might be right but the response we choose is wrong.
- Focus on helping people be successful at work. Empower them to share the responsibility for their own health.
- Don't leave people disconnected from work.
- Look at objectives first and then design your office space.
- Space provides a comfort level that gives you a positive impression of an organization.
- Many organizations are making people sick. Employees are being asked to work as robots and this is not sustainable.
- Remember the importance of grief counselling
- Mindfulness is easier in your mother tongue.

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TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAMS

- You need a smoking cessation champion in your organization and need to provide support to that champion.
 - Make sure that your entire HR department understands the benefits to your organization of smoking cessation.
 - "I used to smoke, but I got that monkey off my back before it turned into a gorilla."
 - Start a "one-on-one" strategy, not a big campaign.
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MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS



Friday's sessions included several opportunities to learn about and discuss the challenges of mental health in the workplace. Insights that emerged included:

- Depression is the most impairing of major workplace illnesses.
 - "When we start treating people with a label (e.g., mental illness), we stop treating them like a human being" Mary Ann Baynton.
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- Deal with mental issues in the same open, honest, caring way as you do with physical health issues.
 - Avoid stigmatizing; demystify mental illness.
 - Talk about workplace issues to your management group so they better understand mental health/mental illness.
 - Isolation deepens depression.
 - It is not enough to manage mental health; it needs to be treated
 - When re-integrating, employee support is needed for the whole group.
 - Perception is reality: proper diagnosis and proper intervention are important in treating mental illness.
 - Initiate an anxiety group program.
 - Identify at work risks.
 - Benchmark mental illness in your organization.

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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



With the pace of business increasing constantly and the needs of employees becoming more diversified across generational lines, there's a growing need to provide more opportunities for interaction between employees. Ideas that emerged from several sessions provided a good basis for further debate:

- Establish water cooler areas for discussion and getting to know one another.
- Look at the needs and wants of the different generations; build empathy.
- Implement a managers' training workshop so they also understand the current needs of a diverse employ base.

NUGGETS FROM THE SPONSORED SPOTLIGHTS

The Sponsored Spotlight sessions at the Health Work & Wellness™ Conference provided valuable information on current effective practices for addressing a wide range of workplace issues. Some of the nuggets that delegates gleaned from this years Spotlights included:

- Position workplace wellness as an investment, not an expense.
- Employees are at the centre of everything we do.
- You can't change behaviour unless you first change the culture.
- Have strong and visible leadership
- Follow stages of change for successful outcomes.
- Understand the links between communications and culture.
- What drives well-being is different for every company.
- Managers need to be taught to empower employees.
- Empower managers to get more engaged helping staff with lifestyle decisions.
- Sick leave is not an entitlement – it is for when you are sick.
- We often forget that diet, exercise and smoking cessation/prevention impact the "workplace", not just "health".

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PETER LEGGE'S FINAL KEYNOTE



Award-winning public speaker, author and entrepreneur, Peter Legge, provided a fitting closure to this year's conference by sharing his knowledge and experience as one of Canada's most successful publishers. His insights included:

- Consistency outperforms intensity – you become what you think most of the time.
- Read a book a week.
- Write down your goals.
- Move from success to significance. Observe why others are successful and model their behaviour.

FINAL FEEDBACK FROM 2009 DELEGATES...

- I loved the community of like-minded individuals.
- Idea generation with other leaders in the field was the most valuable part for me. Knowing there are colleagues for support all over the country is great!

For more information on the Health Work & Wellness™ Conference, please visit our website – www.healthworkandwellness.com