

FACTS & FIGURES

EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION (ENWHP)

Making the Case for Workplace Health Promotion

"Making the case for" implies putting together an argument to prove something, i.e. like a lawyer does for a client. Making the case for workplace health promotion would therefore signify putting together an argument to demonstrate the positive impact and outcomes of WHP programmes.

The Case for WHP tries to answer *why* WHP is important and forms an element of a global strategy of the European Network of Workplace Health Promotion within the framework of the 4th Initiative, together with *how* WHP can be implemented (toolbox project) and the building of infrastructures to *disseminate* WHP (forum project).

Mapping the Case

The case for workplace health promotion can be made for various stakeholders, on different levels, for several topics, ... This is due to the fact that the effects and outcomes of WHP programmes will differ according to various factors including the level and the group they are targeted at.

The model Mapping the Case for WHP gives an overview of the different levels, settings, topics and stakeholders that could be targeted.

The elements of the Case Model are especially important for setting up the communication process for convincing stakeholders. For example the case regarding the ageing of the workforce made to members of the European Parliament would use a totally different set of arguments to the case made to CEOs regarding setting up an integrated health management system.

At European policy level for instance, the case for workplace health promotion should be linked to the concept that creating a more qua-

litative working environment is necessary to create the conditions for an innovative and sustainable economy. Making the case for national social security bodies relies mainly on the argument that workplace health promotion results in a reduction in the use of the healthcare system.

The focus of the Report and the Facts & Figures Making the Case of WHP is on the "company" level. The report gives a detailed analysis of the private sector company case for investing in WHP (Business Case) based on an extensive literature review and a description of selected models of good practice provided by a number of ENWHP member organisations.

Management practices

Looking at companies who already implement workplace health promotion, a wide range of arguments can be found. Most of the companies initiated WHP programmes to improve the health of the employees. However, evidence suggests that the most successful programmes can be found in companies where WHP is looked upon as a comprehensive issue, integrated into the company management and aligned with the companies' goals and strategy.

This idea can be linked to changes in company management concepts. Here the concept of the balanced scorecard sets a good example. Company performance is not only measured in financial terms but also other aspects such as the customer, internal business, innovation and learning factors are taken into consideration (Kaplan and Norton, Harvard Business School).

Moreover, the balanced scorecard strategy maps show how "an organisation will convert its initiatives and resources – including intangible assets such as corporate culture and employee knowledge – into tangible outcomes".

These management developments provide possibilities for identifying workplace health promotion as an important business enabler that can push companies to perform better. The consequence of this is that it is less necessary to show which costs investment in workplace health promotion brings and more to indicate to what extent workplace health promotion can make a contribution to the achievement of company objectives.

Arguments for workplace health promotion

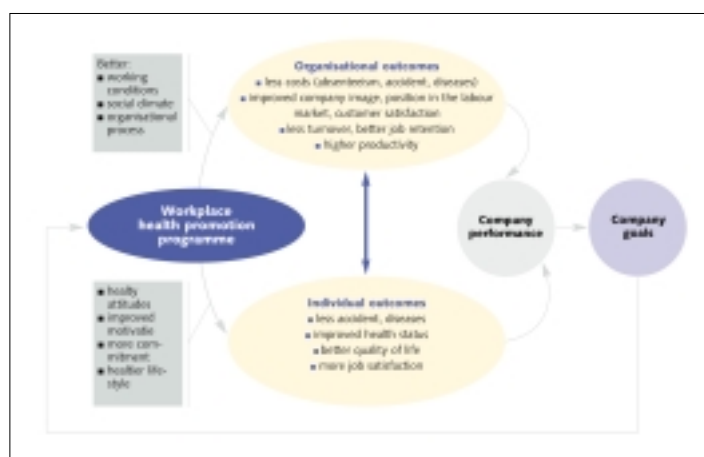
The framework for describing arguments for WHP proposes a concept of workplace health promotion, integrated in the business strategy and aligned with the company goals, influencing both individual and organisational components. The workplace health promotion programme generates effects and outcomes that influence company performance positively and which contribute to the company goals. In this respect, it forms part of the business strategy and also the continuous improvement circle that drives a company towards excellence.



Mapping the Case for WHP



Figure – Framework for describing arguments based on the effects and outcomes of workplace health promotion



At organisational level, a workplace health promotion programme leads to change by creating better working conditions, improving the social climate and the organisational process. The results are organisational outcomes such as

- Less costs: costs due to absenteeism, accidents and diseases reduced
- Improved company image: the company becomes more attractive both to customers and to employees
- Less job turnover and greater staff retention: the human resources management becomes more effective in retaining employees
- Higher productivity

On an individual level, a workplace health promotion programme leads to a greater health awareness (healthier lifestyle) and to improved motivation and commitment. These changes result in several outcomes:

- Less accidents and diseases
- An improved state of health
- More job satisfaction

Moreover, the framework shows that important additional effects and outcomes can be obtained since there is a clear link between the different outcomes and between the organisational and individual level. Individual effects such as an improved job satisfaction will have an additional positive impact on the organisation, leading for instance to lowered costs due to absenteeism or a higher productivity.

On organisational level, workplace health promotion can lead to better working conditions, e.g. adapting a workstation in order to prevent back pain, resulting in less diseases, an improved image, less staff turnover, etc. But at the same, this can have a positive impact on the individual worker improving motivation and job satisfaction. It becomes clear that the added value of workplace health promotion programmes lies especially in these additional effects.



<http://www.enwhp.org>

Arguments for workplace health promotion

■ Workplace health promotion leads to an improved working situation

A holistic and integrated workplace health promotion programme focuses not only on the individual well-being of the workers but also aims to improve the working conditions. Several indications can be found to back up the fact that workplace health promotion programmes can be successful in achieving this goal.

■ Workplace health promotion improves health-related outcomes

Implementing workplace health promotion programmes leads to success with regard to decreasing absenteeism rates, occupational accidents and disabilities. Reductions in absence from work range from 12% to 36% for participants in WHP programmes

■ Workplace health promotion generates an enhanced image

Setting up workplace health promotion programmes has a significant influence on the image of a company or organisation.

■ Workplace health promotion leads to an improved human resources management

Human resources management has to focus on creating the human resource capacity needed to strengthen business performance. Management concerns for recruitment and retention of qualified staff offer possibilities for the implementation of workplace health promotion programmes.

■ Workplace health promotion boosts productivity

Strong indications are available that workplace health promotion has a positive influence on productivity. For instance evidence on the financial benefits of workplace health promotion show that the cost-benefit ratios of workplace health promotion programmes vary between USD \$3 and \$8 for every \$1 invested.

■ Workplace health promotion leads to more health awareness and more motivation

WHP contributes to the fact that workers become more aware of health risks and adopt healthier lifestyles such as smoking cessation, greater fitness, healthy nutrition, etc. It also has an impact on the commitment of workers and their motivation for the job.

■ Workplace health promotion leads to healthy workers

A healthy lifestyle improves the health of the worker. Most studies confirm the effectiveness of comprehensive programmes on occupational health promotion with regard to the reduction of the employee health risk.

■ Workplace health promotion generates more job satisfaction

Workplace health promotion motivates employees, resulting in increased job satisfaction.

Further information on The Case for Workplace Health Promotion

The report Making the Case for Workplace Health Promotion. Analysis of the effects of WHP is the result of a project within the 4th Initiative of the European Network for workplace health promotion (ENWHP). Prevent, as the national contact office for Belgium, assumed the task of coordinating this project together with a project group of the network. The full report is available as a printed report (96 p.) or can be downloaded at the website www.enwhp.org

The report and additional information are available at:

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