

GETTING STARTED

Before you start planning your workplace health and wellbeing program, there are a few things that you need to consider. These include gaining management support, identifying a health and wellbeing coordinator and forming a health and wellbeing committee if appropriate. These things are important as they help ensure the success of your program.

Build a business case

Gaining management support for your health and wellbeing program is important for a few reasons:

- » Senior managers can commit resources (time and money) to the program,
- » Seeing managers get involved with the program can encourage employees to join in, and
- » Evidence suggests that the most successful programs are those that have widespread support and leadership from the CEO or senior management team.(1)

How you go about gaining and maintaining management support will depend on your workplace. If you're in a small workplace, you may just need to meet with the company owner or a senior manager to discuss your plans. If you're in a larger workplace, developing a business case may be the best approach.

Why build a business case?

Many managers will ask "what's in it for the business?" Managers need to ensure that the program is going to be worthwhile before committing money, employee time and other resources to it. A great way to gain this commitment is to provide evidence on how investing in health and wellbeing will benefit the business. This can be done by building a business case.

Building a strong business case

The detail that you provide in your business case will depend on the size of your planned project, the needs of your workplace and any existing processes your workplace has regarding business case development. You may need to speak with your manager to help you decide on the best approach and see if there are any resources to help you (e.g. a template). The following are some of the elements that make up a successful business case:

- » **Description of the problem:** Why are you doing this? Include key workplace statistics (see our [Business case brochure](#)), as well as specific information about the health status of your employees to help emphasise your point, e.g. current sick leave rates, response to health surveys, rate of overweight / obesity if known.
- » **Outline of the planned program:** What do you plan to do and achieve? E.g. Implement policy, improve environment etc.
- » **Description of the benefits to the workplace:** What are the gains for business? e.g. potential money saved, increased productivity, improved business reputation, reduced sick leave and staff turnover. Use our [Workplace Health Savings Calculator](#) to find out what your organisation could save by implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program, and add this to your business case.

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- » **Description of the risks:** What could go wrong and how are you planning to minimise or manage this risk? E.g. Risk: High level of employee criticism over new policy Management of Risk: Undertake high level of consultation and communication with staff before, during and after implementation.
- » **List and describe the resources needed:** Include monetary costs as well as other resources such as time and someone to coordinate the program.
- » **Outline the proposed timeline of events:** Are there major milestones? When do you intend to have completed particular strategies?
- » **Describe the evaluation methods:** What will you report on? How will you know if the program has been successful? E.g. pre and post program surveys (see our [Evaluating Your Program](#) factsheet).
- » **Describe how you developed the business case:** What evidence did you use? Who did you consult with?

Use the free information and resources on the HWWA website, which are also listed at the end of this factsheet to help you answer these questions.

The advantage of preparing a business case is that it encourages you to think thoroughly about your program - what you intend to do and why, what you need to make it successful and how you will manage it. The information gathered to develop your business case, will also help when developing your action plan.

If developing a written business case is not the best approach for your organisation, take a look at our [Sample presentation for management](#). This PowerPoint presentation can be used to verbally present the importance of health and wellbeing to management.

Identify a health and wellbeing coordinator

To ensure your program is implemented as planned, you need to identify a key person who will be responsible for coordinating your program. In larger organisations, this may be the person who is already in charge of human resources or health and safety. In smaller organisations, this may be a manager or volunteer workplace champion who is enthusiastic about health and wellbeing. Ensure that an appropriate amount of time and resource is given to the coordinator to develop and deliver the program within normal working hours.

Form a health and wellbeing committee

Forming a committee is a great way to ensure your program is effective across all areas of your workplace. For example, you may have office staff, field staff and depot staff. Having a committee with a representative from each different group will ensure your program is tailored to meet the needs of everyone. Also, it will allow for greater engagement of staff, as the committee member from each group can assist with promoting the program within their area.

Set up regular meetings to start planning your program and identify and assign roles and responsibilities to each committee member (e.g. consulting with staff, researching appropriate strategies).

Forming a committee may not be realistic for smaller workplaces. In this case, you might like to enlist the help of [Healthier Workplace WA](#) to assist with program development and initiative ideas.

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Role of the health and wellbeing coordinator and committee

It is important to ensure the coordinator and all committee members are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Tasks can include:

- » Conducting a [needs assessment](#) of your workplace to identify areas that can be improved relating to policy, environment, education and activities.
- » Identifying the most important needs of the organisation by consulting with staff (see our [Appendix A: Consulting with staff](#) factsheet).
- » Identifying potential barriers or concerns that may stop things happening.
- » Determining what resources, facilities and assistance are needed to carry out the program.
- » Developing an action plan (see our [Action planning](#) factsheet and our [Best practice guide: Health and wellbeing strategies](#)).
- » Organising and implementing program strategies.
- » Promoting the program and encouraging staff participation (see our [Engaging staff](#) factsheet)
- » Evaluating the program to see if the goals and objectives are being achieved, and if staff are participating and feel satisfied with the program (see our [Evaluating your program](#) factsheet).

Keep management informed

It is also important to keep managers informed and involved to maintain their support for your program. Do this by:

- » Discussing the program goals so that everyone is clear about what the program is expected to achieve.
- » Ensuring managers are aware of and agree to the required time and resources needed for the program to be successful.
- » Encouraging senior and middle managers to show their support for the program by taking part and role-modelling healthy behaviours.
- » Regularly reporting back on the program's progress, outcomes and participation levels.

▼ [Resources](#)

Business case brochure

Workplace health savings calculator

Sample presentation for management

Consulting with staff factsheet

Action planning factsheet and template

Best practice guide: Health and wellbeing strategies

Engaging staff factsheet

Evaluating your program factsheet

1. "Getting Started." Healthy workers initiative. 13 November, 2013.
<http://www.healthyworkers.gov.au/internet/hwi/publishing.nsf/Content/started>