

Pitney bowes employer health strategy

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Pitney Bowes Pitney Bowes has been providing software, hardware and services that integrate physical and digital communication channels for over ninety years.

Pitney Bowes' innovate mindset has enabled them to not only stay in business, but to evolve and remain a recognized leader in the " flow of physical and digital mail, packages and information to and from organizations and homes, also referred to as mailstream" (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 1). Pitney Bowes' commitment to innovation and productivity can be seen in every aspect of the organization, starting with the health and wellness of the employees. This paper will examine Pitney Bowes' approach and evolution of their innovative and integrated approach to employee health care. While most organizations were cutting health benefits Pitney Bowes could be found increasing their spending on employee health. This is because Pitney Bowes has a fundamental understanding of the relationship between organizational health culture and the bottom line that is shared by few.

Michael Critelli, Pitney Bowes Executive Chairman explains that, " when our employees become ill, it directly affects our bottom line" (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 1). Through research, new initiatives and studies they have been able not only save millions, but become recognized as pioneers in improving employee health while controlling spending. Pitney Bowes' approach is centered on preventative care, an idea that has managed to slip by many organizations around the world. Through proactively removing barriers to receiving health care and " providing resources which empower employees to take control of their own health" (Pitney Bowes, 2011), Pitney Bowes has

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dramatically reduced health care cost while increasing the quality of employee health throughout the company. One of the ways the company adds value is through their health and wellness programs such as disease management, health risk assessments, disability management and their Health Care University (HCU) programs.

HCU is the Pitney Bowes' umbrella program to “ encourage health and wellness through education” (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 16). By having these health and wellness programs potentially very harmful and expensive conditions can be prevented through education. If an employee is simply unaware of the risks they are at there is no way they can take control of those risks. In 2002 a third party contractor estimated that Pitney Bowes “ had lost \$51.

7 million over the past year due to presenteeism or reduced productivity at work. Productivity losses caused by simple common illnesses like the cold and flu accounted for nearly \$10 million” (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 10). Small initiatives such as stressing the importance of hand washing and other ways to prevent infection along with other initiatives like offering flu-vaccines are ways the company proactively control costs and maintains health. Pitney Bowes' health and wellness initiatives are supported by on-site clinics who offer these vaccinations and other services including varying levels of specialty services from allergy and asthma care to gynecology.

The company's approach to selecting and designing a health plan and pharmacy benefits is an ever evolving process and one that the leadership at Pitney Bowes like CEO Michael Critelli and Corporate Medical Director Jack

Mahoney knows will always be a work in progress. The mentality at Pitney Bowes to continue to innovate and pioneer new and efficient ways to health care is what makes their programs so great and is why they have become recognized leaders with employee health. Pitney Bowes' employee health evolution started after World War II and has been growing ever since.

Through the constant information and purchasing initiatives and creation of new programs Pitney Bowes has laid the blue print to employee health.

Along the way not everyone saw the added value in what the company was doing, in fact consultants “ often advised Pitney Bowes to ‘ cut overhead’ by reducing its benefits staff” (Porter & Baron, 2009, p.

10), and doctors thought some of the decisions like reducing or eliminating co-payments for drugs treating the firm's three most expensive conditions was a “ a little scary” (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 0). On face value during the thick of their overhaul one could evaluate the company's approach as misguided and slightly reckless, a desperate attempt to drive down soaring costs. It is clear now that the research has come back and proven results have been laid down that Pitney Bowes' approach was a well thought out one executed in a brilliant manner. While it is clear that Pitney Bowes is a pioneer with employee health there are still areas that can be improved as they continue to strive for innovation and improvement. Pitney Bowes has around 12, 000 ‘ dispersed employees’ based over 600 client sites averaging 39 years of age and who tend to earn a lower income than employees at their corporate facilities.

This group of people being dispersed is inherently going to be detached from the culture of health within the organization. This is especially problematic

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because this group of employees tends to represent the people who need help the most. Critelli explains, “ It is critical to our bottom line that we find a way to bring them in to our culture of wellness” (Porter & Baron, 2009, p. 8). You hear that ‘ attitude is everything’ from the time you are a child, this is no different in the corporate world. Pitney Bowes’ programs will continue to thrive and the health of their employees will continue to prosper because of their willing and positive attitude toward employee health and their commitment to constant improvement.

References Pitney Bowes. (2011). [www. pb. com](http://www.pb.com) Porter, M. E.

, & Baron, J. F. (2009, February 24). Pitney Bowes: Employer Health Strategy. HarvardBusiness School Case Study.