Wellness Benefits And Your Bank

by Steve Brown Topics: human resources, employees, performance

Summary: Wellness programs are an increasingly important employee benefit. We give you the lay of the land.

An Adobe survey finds consumers go to multiple places when researching something they want to purchase. While some apply more to a retail setting, banks should note the major ones include: a personal visit (49%); company website (44%); mobile app (16%); over the phone (11%); using home assistants (10%). Also, younger generations use social networks and video channels not only for research but also for post purchase interactions.

As you think about your changing customer base from the data above, we also offer some information below related to changes that are occurring with your employees. Here, we point out that Optum research finds wellness programs are an increasingly important employee benefit.

Based on a survey of more than 1,200 full-time employees at companies with at least 3,000 employees, Optum found that nearly half (48%) of workers who frequently participate in health and wellness programs are extremely likely to recommend their employer as a place to work.

Not only that, but employees who had access to 7 or 8 health and wellness program categories were 1.5x more likely to continue working for their current employer and were around 3x more likely to recommend their employer as a place to work vs. those with no access to such programs. This group was also about 3x more likely to be proud to work for their employers.

Nowadays, there's no shortage of health and wellness options banks can offer. One category relates to preventive health. This can mean offering annual flu shots, health assessments, gym discounts or fitness challenges. Banks could also opt to host on-site medical clinics or offer healthy lifestyle coaching. Other popular wellness programs are designed to help employees in ways such as curbing nicotine addiction and managing diabetes.

Wellness programs are more than just a nice perk, so banks should at least annually see what options are out there. View offerings as an essential tool for recruiting and retention efforts. For one thing, they give you an edge when courting top talent. As we have reported earlier, there's ample research to indicate that candidates consider more than just salary when job hunting, and the overall benefits package factors heavily into decision-making.

Another consideration is the potential cost savings. A widely quoted, though somewhat controversial study out of Harvard indicates that overall medical costs fall $3.27 for every $1.00 a company spends on wellness. It also finds costs from absenteeism drop about $2.73 for each $1.00 spent. While these figures are the subject of some debate, the takeaway for banks is clear: done right, wellness programs may offer significant cost-savings. Additionally, it's well-documented that deftly-designed programs can improve employees' overall satisfaction levels. Of course, engaged, motivated workers tend to be more productive and more loyal too.

The trick here is finding the right mix of wellness programs to match your budget and the needs of your employees. Certainly these programs can have many tangible benefits. But, the costs need to be weighed carefully to ensure you get the most bang for your buck while employees get the most appropriate and meaningful programs.

BANK NEWS

Payments

As reported in the Wall Street Journal, Citigroup announced it has launched a new payments unit that will offer merchants a suite of consumer payment options, as it seeks to combat growth in digital wallets and digital payment offerings of competitors.

Fed Speakers

Chicago Fed President Evans said he does not see an interest rate hike in the US until the latter part of 2020. He said interest rates are close to neutral and the latest data shows that "risks from the downside scenarios loom larger than those from the upside ones...It's a good time to stop, pause, look and see how things are going to progress and be cautious." Meanwhile, Philadelphia Fed President Harker noted that the US outlook is "pretty good" even if the possible risks are slightly more notable than before. He also said that "my current view is that, at most, one rate hike this year, and one in 2020, is appropriate, and my stance will be guided by data as they come in and events as they unfold." Next, St. Louis Fed President Bullard said he agrees with "being cautious on rates" and that he wouldn't move either up or down in 2019 until the data comes in through the spring and summer. Finally, Atlanta Fed President Bostic said all possibilities are available regarding interest-rate policy for the Fed right now.

Compromised

1B people globally had their information compromised in 2018, according to NordVPN.

WHITE PAPER: TRANSITIONING TO SOFR

Bankers have heard that SOFR will replace LIBOR as a benchmark in 2021. But, what is involved in this transition? To learn more about the impact and how your bank can plan for it, download our white paper, "Moving from LIBOR to SOFR: Smoothing the Transition for your Financial Institution" now.