

WORKSITE WELLNESS AT KAHN, LITWIN, RENZA & CO., Ltd.
By Steve Loffredo, Human Resource Manager

When 92% of your employees respond positively in an independent survey to the following two statements: “My place of employment is a positive place to work with a common sense of purpose and connection between employees”; and “My organization provides a work environment that supports a balance between work and my personal life”; management should be satisfied. After all, being selected by the *Providence Business News* as one of the Best Places to Work in Rhode Island in 2006 and 2007 is an obvious indication of the value Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. (KLR) places on creating a team environment that attracts, retains and motivates employees who want to be a part of a successful workplace.

For some employers, attaining this prestigious award for two consecutive years would be sufficient, but at KLR we strive to reinforce our commitment to make our firm a better place to work. We maintain this distinction by offering our employees the opportunity to improve their personal health and well being by voluntarily participating in worksite wellness programs that can impact their personal and professional lives in a positive and healthy manner.

Under the leadership and direction of our Managing Director, Alan Litwin and the Partner Group, KLR makes work/life balance and employee wellness an integral part of our Firm’s strategic plan, by supporting worksite wellness through personal health assessments, individual and group health programming and by establishing personnel/employment policies mandating a healthy lifestyle at the worksite. It is through their commitment to wellness, continuous encouragement, and the allocation of financial and staff resources that we have embarked on our results-oriented wellness program. In addition to the senior level support at KLR, our program success also relies on the establishment of a fully functioning Wellness Team that is well balanced with members from our organization who are results oriented and passionate about creating a Wellness Operating Plan to serve as a measurement tool against which to judge the success of our programs.

Another important part of our wellness plan is the collection of critical data that provides us with appropriate health and demographic information. In confidential surveys conducted recently through the Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Rhode Island Good Health Benefit Program, over 63% of employees at KLR responded, identifying the following topics of interest:

- Exercise / Physical Activity (Walking / Running Clubs)
- Group Classes on Nutrition and Weight Loss
- Stress Management
- Personal Health Screenings
- Group Health Seminars
- Life / Work Balance
- Resistance & Strength Training

Our Worksite Wellness Team met to review the survey data with Blue Cross and together decided on a schedule of topics, programs and activities to address the health and wellness needs of our employees. Programs planned for the 1st half of 2008 include:

- Walking club designed to encourage participants to pursue more active lifestyle by increasing physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight
- Nutrition and portion control workshops that provide practical advice to enable participants to make healthy dietary choices part of their everyday life, along with guidance on how to understand food labels and approved dietary guidelines
- Living and working more effectively with others by learning more about your personality; recognizing other major personality types that surround your daily life; and learning how to develop strategies for dealing with stress associated with them

We also wanted to incorporate some fun into our program and with the prodding of some of our newer staff have decided to offer Chair Yoga, which incorporates yoga movements and techniques that can be done from a seated position.

Finally, to address the interest in health screenings, the committee settled on a Dermascan Skin Screening program designed to create awareness around the risks of skin cancer, and provide life enhancing suggestions for protection from the sun. Handouts, individual consultations by a health educator and a non-invasive test of the participant's facial area will be offered.

The next challenge for the KLR Worksite Wellness Committee is to overcome the obstacles most commonly associated with preventing employees from participating in worksite wellness programs. These barriers include; what is the best time of day to offer these programs; what is the preferred length for a wellness program; and the most significant, not enough time in the day and other work / life priorities.

In deciding how best to meet this challenge, our Worksite Wellness Committee surveyed staff and the majority of respondents stated a preference for the mid-day, 1 hour lunch period. Fortunately, with the program scheduling flexibility offered by Blue Cross, we are able to accommodate our employee schedules.

With a successful health initiative, we hope to witness an improvement in employee health habits and celebrate the complete integration of worksite wellness programs into KLR and successfully transform our firm into a well workplace. With the challenges that our employees face every day balancing work responsibilities with outside personal / life challenges, we continue to reinforce our commitment as a Firm focused on attracting and retaining quality staff, enhancing career opportunity, encouraging and developing future leadership and fostering a business culture based on teamwork.

KLR is a Rhode-Island based certified public accounting and business consulting firm founded in 1975. The 125-person firm serves public and privately held clients throughout the United States. Services include auditing and accounting; tax planning and compliance; strategic advisory services; personal financial and estate planning; executive recruiting; forensic accounting; mergers and acquisitions; succession planning; business valuation; Sarbanes Oxley 404 consulting; technology consulting and litigation support.