

Everyone Wins with a Health Risk Assessment and Here's Why





White Paper: Everyone Wins with a Health Risk Assessment and Here's Why

Creating a picture of health ...

The Health Risk Assessment (HRA) captures the health of your organization. In order to understand the amount of health-related productivity loss in your organization, being aware of the health risks present is key. For example, are you aware of the rate of absenteeism, turnover and health-related productivity loss? What are the top five health issues in your organization that contribute to health-related costs and what steps are taken to address them? The best way to find answers to these questions is to offer a Health Risk Assessment (HRA). Best practices dictate that offering a company-wide HRA is the first step in linking health and productivity and associated costs. The HRA consists of two components: the collection of clinical data and the responses to a confidential, scientific questionnaire about health risk factors that have been proven to link to major chronic diseases and employer costs. Clinical data such as height, weight, waist measurement, blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar are collected and entered as part of the lifestyle questionnaire. HRA questions focus on lifestyle health indicators such as diet, exercise, stress, sleep, coping skills, mental outlook, and safety. The assessment is easily coordinated and carried out at your workplace in a confidential manner and clinical data are collected by trained health professionals.

The HRA generates reports for both the employee and the employer. The HRA provides each participant with a private and confidential complete report about their current health and lifestyle based on up-to-date guidelines for optimal health. The report includes the employee's overall wellness score, health age and identifies areas for improvement.

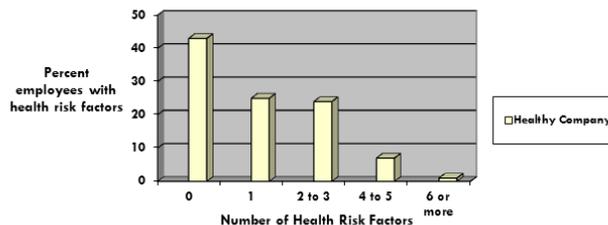
On the employer side, the HRA provides an aggregate report for the whole organization, *that does not identify individual employees*. This report outlines the major health issues in the organization, the readiness of employees to change, their interest in specific wellness interventions and the recommended interventions to address the identified health issues.

Does your organization fit the profile of a healthy company?

One of the many benefits of the HRA is that it provides valid baseline data used to compare your organization's health profile from year to year. The main goal of the HRA is to create a comprehensive profile of the health of your organization and determine how that picture changes from year to year and if it fits the profile of a healthy company. This helps to offer programs tailored to your organization's unique needs that will help you decrease your health-related costs and increase productivity. As shown in Figure 1, in a healthy company the largest proportion of employees (close to 70%) have either zero or one risk factor, indicating lower overall costs for the employer. From our research we know that too often the trend moves in the

opposite direction with the largest proportion of employees (over 60%) having 2 or more risk factors, resulting in higher costs for employers. Further, with no wellness interventions, research has shown that the natural flow of risk is from low risk to high risk. Therefore, an effective workplace wellness strategy is to stop people from moving into the high risk category and keep low risk people at low risk.

Figure 1 Profile of a Healthy Company - How Does your organization measure up?



The HRA helps move your organization closer to the profile of a healthy company. Results of the first HRA offered form the baseline data needed to design appropriate wellness programs and to measure the change in health and employer costs. From there, results of annual HRAs are used to track how healthy your organization is becoming as a whole and the effect it has on your health-related employer costs.

Comparing the HRA results yearly will show the change in percentage of your employees in high, medium and low health risk categories as well as any change in average wellness score, average health age and top health issues. An annual HRA is also very valuable to employees as the personal report they receive outlines changes in their health status and marks their progress from each year. And observing the difference in results from year to year is a powerful tool to recognize and motivate employees on their way to wellness. As many employees have often stated, receiving their personal HRA report was a “wake-up call” to take action toward a healthier lifestyle.

Knowing your numbers through an annual, company-wide Health Risk Assessment sets the course for a successful **organizational** journey to wellness. And offering employees the opportunity to assess their personal health through the company-wide Health Risk Assessment sets the course for a successful **personal** journey to wellness.

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