

6 STRATEGIES FOR SETTING UP YOUR EMPLOYEE FINANCIAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

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Employee financial wellness is not just the latest trendy talking point in human resources circles. The need for it is real—the reality is that many employees are struggling with finances, and it can affect their work.

Only about 41% of Americans have enough money to cover an emergency from savings. On top of that, about one in three employees have missed at least a partial day of work due to personal finances.

Creating a financial wellness program for your employees can reduce their stress and increase your company's productivity. Beyond the bottom line, it's also worth noting that, according to a recent [GuideSpark survey](#), 87% of employees believe companies should be involved in helping them prepare for their financial future.

Your employee financial wellness program should be about more than just telling your workers to save for retirement. Here are a few strategies for setting up an effective employee financial wellness program:

No.1 | Understand Financial Segmentation in the Workplace

Start by looking at financial segmentation in your workplace. Generally, employees fall into broad categories that reflect their circumstances. These categories include those with income struggles and spending challenges. Other categories include employees who are building savings, have extra income, and are financially secure.

Before you implement a financial wellness program, it's vital to understand the challenges faced by your employees. Ask your employees to fill out an anonymous financial assessment. This assessment can help you understand the segmentation in your workplace, helping you understand your workers' immediate financial needs.

No. 2 | Meet Your Employees Where they Are

Once you know where your employees stand, meet them where they are. Workers that need access to credit counseling have different needs than workers that want help with long-term tax planning.

Acknowledge that personal finance really is personal, and create a program that allows for employees to get the help they need.

No. 3 | Maintain a Holistic View

Financial wellness encompasses more than planning for retirement. While a good retirement plan is an essential part of any workplace financial wellness program, it's not the only thing to keep in mind. Your program should maintain a holistic view, recognizing that your employees have various needs at different stages of their lives.

An employee financial wellness program that includes counseling in areas of debt, credit, budgeting, college planning, tax planning, and other shorter and longer term financial goals is more likely to help your employees meet their needs and improve their overall finances.

No. 4 | Include Access to Financial Professionals

One of the best ways to help your employees is by including access to

financial professionals. Consider setting up your employee financial wellness program so that it offers access to financial planners and counselors. Some workplace programs include access to between two and four sessions free of charge to the employee. After that, employees can access services at a discount. This is one way for workers to easily find reputable professionals to help them navigate their tricky financial situations.

No. 5 | Know the Goals of the Program

Set program goals that are realistic and attainable. Your goals should be set based on the results of the financial assessment. Do your employees struggle with credit? Maybe you need to set a goal to help your employees reach a credit score of at least 680. You can also set goals related to debt reduction, retirement plan participation, and college planning.

Perhaps your employee financial assessment discovered that many of your workers are concerned about the costs of taking care of their pets. Adding a pet insurance benefit and educating employees about how to use it effectively can go a long way toward reducing stress related to pet costs.

Create a program that focuses on positive financial outcomes for your employees, and measure the overall progress.

No. 6 | Add Rewards and Encourage Engagement

Finally, setting up your employee financial wellness program should include a focus on rewards. It's one of the best ways to encourage engagement. You can hold financial wellness challenges, like offering a partial match for employees who boost their savings contributions within a set period of time. You can also set up timelines that gamify different outcomes, allowing your employees to earn badges and unlock rewards.

In the end, though, your employee financial wellness program should be about education and improving financial outcomes. Once you understand the needs of your workers, you can create an effective program that offers them the tools required to improve their financial outcomes.

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