

Wellness Program On A Budget: Engage Employees With A 5k Race

Tribe recently conducted on-site research with corporate runners at the Windward Challenge, an annual 5k event staged by our client LexisNexis. This race is considered their most successful employee event of the year, but it also draws participants from many other companies in the area.

Of our survey respondents, 91 percent said they would encourage co-workers who didn't run this year to try it next year. More than a third (37 percent) said they ran the race because "others in my company were doing it." And almost a quarter were introduced to competitive running through this event, with 24 percent saying this was the first race they'd ever run.

Beyond the obvious wellness benefits, running a race together can also strengthen employee bonds, and thus raise engagement. Comments from the runners included:

"It builds strong relationships with coworkers."

"It allows me as a manager to get on a personal level with my unit members."

"By getting to know them better in a fun environment, I think it will help to build more trust."

"Good team building."

"We will be more willing to work together."

"We will work closer and communicate more."

Not all companies have the resources to develop their own race, but here are five low-cost tips for reaping those engagement benefits, even with a very small budget.

Skip organizing your own race and just take advantage of any other race in the area. Print T-shirts for everyone from your company running the race. Plan a specific meeting place for your company to get together before and after the race. And make sure to take plenty of photos to post on your employee intranet.

1 Organize training runs at lunchtime or at either end of the workday. Don't underestimate the engagement that can take place during the weeks prior to the race. Training together can build relationships within departments, between departments and offer opportunities for managers to interact with employees outside the corporate structure.

2 Use the buddy system to increase success. Assign first-time runners a running mentor to encourage them along the way and answer any questions. And/or match up running partners according to their usual pace and distance. Being accountable to someone else is a proven advantage in both exercise and diet programs.

3 Recognize your runners. After the race, make certain your corporate running team gets some visible recognition. You can award first, second and third place finishers, most improved speed, best team spirit, oldest runner and so on.

4 Blog it. Assign one person or the entire group to post updates and experiences on a blogsite. Even better, locate that blog on your employee intranet.

5 Record the story. The process of training together towards a goal and then achieving that goal has all the elements of a good story. Bring that story to life by taking photos or video during training sessions and at the race. Have runners state their goal for the race in the beginning of training and then celebrate the goals that they reach on the big day.



Best Practices

TRIBE

Tribe is an internal communications company working with national and global brands. We develop strategic plans, employee communications and engagement programs to build internal culture.

Kara Bullock
Senior Vice President +
Account Director
kara@tribeinc.com

Elizabeth Cogswell Baskin
President + CEO
elizabeth@tribeinc.com

www.tribeinc.com

