



A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO WORKPLACE HEALTH & WELLBEING

If your workplace is like most, you may have several activities related to employee health and wellbeing – a weight loss competition, a walking steps challenge, a smoking cessation program, a nutrition workshop. These activities, while potentially good in promoting health, don't always have outcomes that can be measured easily, and are not necessarily tied to a company's overall safety and health management system. How can more workplaces embrace an integrated, total worker health and safety strategy? Last year, the Campbell Institute proposed a systems approach to workplace health and wellbeing that involves two things many safety professionals will be familiar with: risk assessments and a Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) model.

Safety professionals know the PDCA model as a continuous improvement process for safety management systems. It's a way to find areas, activities, or behaviors that are most in need of improvement, implement improvement plans, and make sure that those improvements are maintained. The Campbell Institute proposes that we look at worker health and wellbeing in the same way, through a PDCA systems approach. The steps can be summarized as follows:

General Approach

- Plan:** analyze information, ask for ideas, select best actions
- Do:** implement plan of action (either as a pilot or fully deployed)
- Check:** gather information to see if action plan is having desired impact
- Act:** maintain the gains made, make corrections as needed

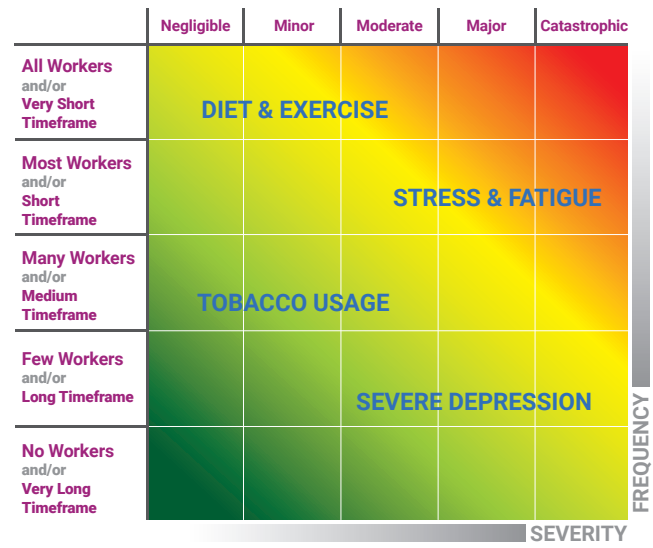
Actions for Workplace Health & Wellbeing

- Obtain employee buy-in, guarantee anonymity of data, agree on data collection process
- Collect data through worker survey, biometric screenings, etc.
- Create a heat/risk map of most common employee health behaviors/conditions, decide where to put resources
- Create plans to address highest risks, determine which metrics to track

In the "Plan" stage, a company should be focused on getting employee, leadership, and stakeholder support, being transparent about their genuine concern for everyone's wellbeing, and guaranteeing anonymity of health information. In the "Do" stage, an organization could launch a worker survey and/or conduct biometric screenings to gather data on the types of health conditions and behaviors that are most common among the workforce. The "Check" stage is where a company would organize the data from

the survey/screenings to find the health behaviors and conditions that are highest risk, and decide where to allocate resources to mitigate the highest risks. In the "Act" stage, the organization creates plans to address the highest risks and determines the metrics to track to measure progress.

Below is a sample risk matrix for health and wellbeing that could be generated from an organization following the PDCA model. In this heat/risk map, we can see that conditions like diet/exercise and stress/fatigue tend to be of moderate to high concern for this organization because of the severity those conditions pose and the number of employees they affect. This company may want to address these conditions by creating opportunities for physical fitness and healthier diet, or by offering an employee assistance program, rearranging work schedules, or teaching meditation techniques.



Sample risk/heat map for health & wellbeing

The systems approach that the Campbell Institute proposes is a way to develop an integrated total worker health and safety management system. First, find the health conditions and behaviors that are most common among the workforce. Then isolate those that are of highest risk according to a traditional risk matrix. Finally implement strategies to address those highest risks and measure your progress.

For more details and results from this research and many other interesting topics, visit thecampbellinstitute.org/research.

