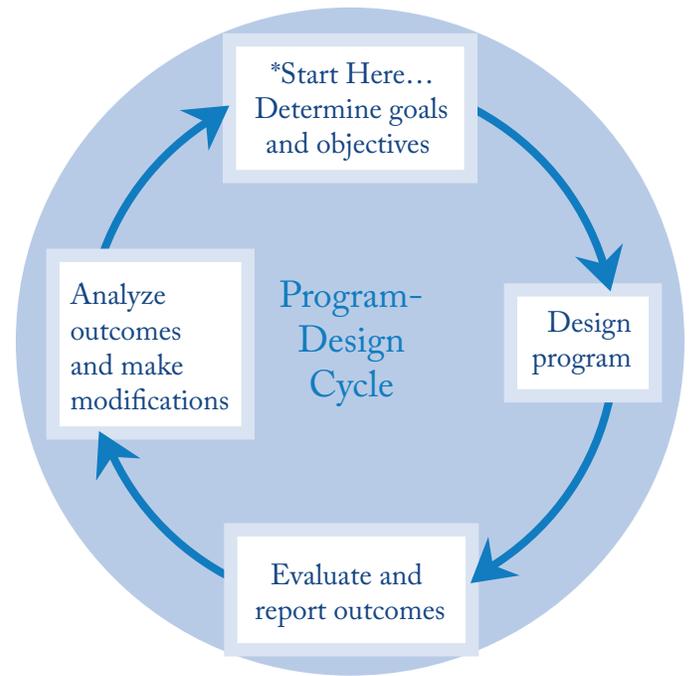


# Evaluating Your Wellness Program for Success!

To develop a successful, results-based program, you need a clear understanding of your overall goals and objectives. Successful program design, implementation and outcomes should be a continuous cycle, with each element impacting the others. Before starting a wellness program, determine what results you wish to achieve. Here is an example of a successful program-design cycle that supports/promotes a successful and sustainable wellness program.



Now that you have developed and implemented a results-based wellness program, it's time to evaluate its success. Start by asking these specific questions...

- What do I want to demonstrate?** What you measure should correlate back with your program's objectives and goals. Your main focus should be on key metrics that show behavior change, such as adoption of healthier habits like smoking cessation, increased physical activity and consuming more nutrient-rich foods. Other metrics that are still valuable are demonstrating savings in health care costs and lost work days, improved morale, etc.
- How will the data be used?** Are your metrics going to be used in a monthly operations report or a more detailed annual-results report going to upper-level management? Where and when your data is used should determine how in-depth you want your results to be.
- Will you make changes to your program based on the data?** If your results don't effectively address the goals or objectives, consider making the necessary modifications to your program design. If your data indicates an area in which additional wellness programming is needed, you may need to reassess your goals and objectives to include these areas.
- What's feasible?** Consider your company's culture—what information is readily available to you (and appropriate to obtain) and what can you realistically accomplish with the information provided?
- What's important to the key decision makers in your organization?** Determine what is ultimately important to your organization's key decision makers. Ask early on what is valued. Use this chart to help:

Financial outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost savings Medical costs, absenteeism, short-term disability</li> <li>Return on investment (ROI) Presenteeism</li> </ul>
Health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee adherence to recommended medical screenings and treatments</li> <li>Behavior change, risk reduction, health improvement</li> </ul>
Humanistic and productivity outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement in quality of life</li> <li>Improved functioning and productivity</li> </ul>

# Evaluating Your Wellness Program for Success!

## Create Your Evaluation

Now that you've addressed the above questions, it's time to create your evaluation.

Key metrics of most evaluations are **Participation**, **Program Satisfaction** and **Behavior Change**. When evaluating using these individual metrics, remember to tie back to the big picture of demonstrating the efficacy and success of your programming efforts.

### 1 **Participation: Capture absolute metrics, percentages and relative comparisons to provide a clear and meaningful picture.**

- Absolute metrics include things such as total number of participants and number of participants who completed the program.
- Relative-comparison metrics include the percentage of targeted participants who enrolled in the program and percentage of participants who completed the program.
- Program use and completion are essential to demonstrating the program's success at engaging participants and allows you to assess if your motivational tools were effective.
- Decreased medical-service costs demonstrate successful participation.

### 2 **Program Satisfaction: Identify the quality of the program, the participant's experience, what aspects of the program were effective and possible areas for improvement.**

- Use a 5-point rating (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) versus Yes and No statements.
- Ask questions in the first-person so that respondents can answer it from their frame of reference ("I felt..." vs. "You felt ...").
- Use open-ended questions where appropriate to solicit more in-depth feedback.

\* Consider creating a custom survey, which can be administered to employees on paper or online.

### 3 **Behavior Change: By showing positive changes in specific, modifiable health factors, you can show an association with avoided health care costs and long-term health care savings. Assessing for change in attitudes and intent to change behavior provides short-term results as well. Some common, modifiable health factors are:**

- Physical activity
- Consumption of healthy foods
- Weight loss
- Lower cholesterol, blood pressure
- Smoking cessation

\* Use employee tracking forms and/or food and physical-activity records to capture behaviors and assess change over the duration of the program. Behavior-change questions can also be included in your customized employee wellness-program surveys.

# Evaluating Your Wellness Program for Success!

## Report Data Outcomes

Once the evaluation step is completed, it's time to report data outcomes. Here are some examples of ways to report data that effectively convey the results of various programs:

- Since implementing the healthy-foods vending program, there was a 30 percent average increase in the number of healthy snacks purchased, as well as a 20 percent decrease in total soda purchases.
- 15 total participants signed up for the 60-day smoking cessation program, 80 percent of whom stayed engaged throughout the entire program.
  - 20 percent reported that they had successfully quit smoking by the end of the program.
  - These same three people were still not smoking at a 6-month follow-up.
  - Since CHR data shows that smokers incur \$1,600 more per year in health care costs, the ROI for helping these three employees quit smoking translates to a \$4,800 cost savings.
- Our walking program targeted 150 employees. Program participation was 74 percent, or 111.
  - Out of these 111 participants, 80 percent, or 89 of them, completed the entire 6-week program.
  - Behavior change was measured via a post-program survey. Out of the 89 employees who completed the program, 60 percent increased their physical activity by two to three days per week, 40 percent lost weight, 35 percent experienced reduced stress, 70 percent experienced increased energy, 55 percent felt more productive at work and 80 percent reported improved attitude.

For additional resources to implement a successful workplace wellness program, use Dairy Council of California's free online [wellness toolkit](#).