



Client Profile

# At the intersection of safety and wellness



When StayWell first began working with Ace Hardware Corporation, with more than 4,800 employees with 14 warehouse locations across the country, there were many important questions. What were the most significant and costly health risks? What health behaviors were supported or not supported in the workplace? And how did those vary by location?

4,800

Employees

14

Warehouse Locations

## Building a culture of health



**But one thing was certain: Ace had a long-term goal of building a culture of health across the organization.**

After four years, results for Ace show they're well on their way to improving health and well-being for employees, and to achieving a big-picture shift in culture. Ace leadership attributes the steady progress to a creative long-term plan with one-of-a-kind strategies.

---

Steady health and well-being progress attributed to a creative long-term plan.

---



### SAFETY+ WELLNESS

---

What were the most significant and costly health risks?

---

What health behaviors were supported or not supported in the workplace?

---

And how did those vary by location?

---



- + Proper hydration
- + Overall health and well-being
- + Safety goals

## Safety and injury prevention



Workplace safety and injury prevention can be accomplished in many ways. A key area of focus for Ace was preventing dehydration. Numerous [studies](#) have shown that dehydration contributes to decreased mental and physical performance and that an estimated 80 percent of adults go through their normal workday at least mildly dehydrated. Even mild dehydration can produce negative side effects, such as:

Decreased productivity

---

Decreased cognitive function

---

Slow reaction time

---

The wellness program that was implemented for Ace included a focus on proper hydration, which contributes to overall health and well-being, while also feeding the company's safety goals.

A comprehensive well-being program also supports workplace safety by enabling employers to target at-risk employees and by helping employees increase their stamina, strength, flexibility and overall energy.

And as these factors improve, the chance of injury and related workers' comp claims decrease. Ace's focus on safety and health also incorporated proper stretching as a focus area, since warehouse employees require physical strength and stamina to do their job without injury. Stretching, as part of a well-being program, can increase flexibility and improve balance and posture, contribute to muscle coordination, and boost energy levels.

These positive outcomes were all important to Ace, which saw back care, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and nutrition as leading health risk factors — higher than StayWell's overall book of business — on their annual employee health assessment.

---

An estimated **80 percent of adults** go through their normal workday at least mildly dehydrated.

---



An example of employee communications designed to help encourage proper hydration

# Launching an integrated wellness program



“These campaigns help support the specific needs of employees so they can live their best life at work and at home,” said Anne Polacheck, StayWell Wellness Consultant. “The approaches are new for StayWell, but are right on target for Ace.”

Ace’s wellness program was rolled out over several years, and included a wide variety of individual, group, in-person and digital offerings, such as:

---

**Health assessments**

---

**Biometric screenings**

---

**Preventive exams**

---

**A tobacco-free workplace policy**

---

**Lunch-and-learns**

---

**National workplace campaigns**

---

**Health coaching**

---

**Digital wellness programs (educational videos and webinars)**

---

**Incentives (health plan discounts, as well as raffles and giveaways)**

---

Local wellness champions and a full-time, onsite StayWell wellness consultant were instrumental to launching three wellness campaigns with the goal of keeping employees energized, healthy and happy. Onsite campaigns included:

## **Stretch Out**

Employees receive job-specific Stretch Out cards, stretch bands and a fitness tracker. They complete a warm-up stretch break before each shift and earn wellness points for their efforts. Points earned can apply to a monthly medical discount for the employee medical plan, with the additional opportunity to earn giveaway prizes.

## **Drink Up**

Ace established water-filling stations at most locations to make staying hydrated easy. Employees receive a hydration tracker that allows them to earn wellness points toward a medical plan discount and a bonus water bottle incentive.

## **Keep Moving**

A Keep Moving tracker and other onsite communications and signage help remind and motivate employees to be more physically active. Employees who complete and turn in the Keep Moving tracker are entered into a bike sweepstakes. There were 15 lucky winners of a brand new bike; one from each of the company’s locations.

Local Wellness Champions are charged with building a culture of health at their respective locations. They do this by following StayWell best practices for incentive design, wellness champion network structure, and custom communications (with the support of an onsite wellness team and local management). Locations earn points quarterly, based on their engagement and participation in the wellness program. At the end of each quarter and at the end of the year, locations can earn additional dollars for their wellness budget.

# Employee awareness and engagement

According to Polacheck, participation in the wellness program is up from the previous level of 38 percent in just one year, due to a strategic incentive design, a comprehensive communications campaign, and on-site staff that works hand-in-hand with wellness champions to drive employee engagement throughout the year.

---

“We are still working to build awareness of Ace’s wellness program and to create a culture of health throughout the workplace. However, in 2016, we were able to move the needle and we have a record high of 63 percent of employees participating in the medical premium incentives program.”

---



## Additional outcomes include:



Campaign participation: Ace has distributed to employees 4,800 stretch bands and 1,000 water bottles, and has generated a high level of excitement about the Keep Moving bike sweepstakes.



The company has received national recognition for having an exemplary worksite wellness program, including successful strategies in leadership commitment and support, wellness and benefits strategy and program design, and measurement outcomes.



Thanks to the efforts of the Wellness Champion network, nearly all locations have changed their traditional vending to an open market vending concept, giving employees the option to choose healthy, fresh foods.



Because of this momentum and success, Ace plans to continue all three campaigns, and offer even more worksite support to help employees make healthier decisions while at the workplace.



#### **About StayWell**

StayWell, a subsidiary of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA (“Merck”), is a health engagement company that helps its clients engage and educate people to improve health and business results. StayWell brings decades of experience working across the health care industry to design solutions that address its clients’ evolving needs. We fuse expertise in the science of behavior change with an integrated portfolio of solutions and robust content assets to effectively motivate people to make positive health care decisions. StayWell programs have received numerous top industry honors, including the C. Everett Koop National Health Award and the Web Health Award for health engagement programs. StayWell also has received URAC and NCQA accreditation for several of its programs. StayWell is headquartered in Yardley, Pennsylvania, and also has major locations in Salt Lake City, Utah, and St. Paul, Minnesota. To learn more, contact us at [engage@staywell.com](mailto:engage@staywell.com).

© 2017 The StayWell Company, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

#### **Contact a StayWell representative today:**

Call us at  
800.373.3577

Email us at  
[engage@staywell.com](mailto:engage@staywell.com)

