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The Wellness Exchange



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Solutions for a Healthier Workplace™

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New Year - New Goals Making Plans To Achieve Your Goals



Think back to the beginning of 2005. Like most, you probably started the New Year with many goals. Maybe 2005 was the year you were going to lose weight, save more money, meet someone new, learn a second language, volunteer, or quit smoking.

How many of those goals did you accomplish? It's ok to admit that you didn't accomplish any of goals you knew you "could have" or that you "really wanted to". Awareness and honesty are the first steps toward creating positive changes. Only you can be the source of your change.

Achieving Your Goals

Here are some questions to ask yourself to help you achieve your goals:

Q: What do I really want to achieve? This gives your mind direction. It allows your imagination to sketch a picture and begins the brainstorming process.

Q: Why do I really want to achieve this? Understanding the "why" should help with your motivating factors. If you are truly motivated towards a goal, you are more likely to work towards achieving it!

Q: What price am I willing to pay to achieve my goals? This is the most important question. There may be some sacrifices involved in obtaining what it is you want. Therefore, being realistic about the journey can then prepare you for the road that will take you there.

Q: What must I do today to work towards my goal(s)? Allow this to become a question you ask yourself each morning. The answer to this question will determine your daily agenda. It gives each

day direction, purpose and meaning. It designs each day as an investment of your time, talent and resources. Consider this question a motivational jumpstart to each day.

"Change is usually not a question of capability; it is almost always a question of motivation."

- Anthony Robbins

Contact BHS

*Getting yourself to make changes is hard, even if it's something you really want. If you are ready for a change and need some assistance getting started, contact **Business Health Services (BHS)**, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). BHS provides free, confidential services to employees and their household members. Don't stress...call BHS today!*

See, Think, Plan, Act

Developing a plan to achieve your goals can be surprisingly simple. See the steps below to help guide you:

Step 1: See: See and assess the situation, issues, habits, or behaviors as it currently is - Describe it, Define it, Analyze it.

Step 2: Think: Think about what you want or how you want to change a situation, issues, habits, or behaviors. Think about what resources are needed to create the change? Lastly, think about the benefits of the change?



Step 3: Plan: What steps do you need to take to achieve your goal(s)? Research the various aspects of your plan. Develop a plan that will allow you to take action in small steps. Create deadlines for yourself or a 'by when' date. For example, "I will create my top three goals for 2006 'by when'?". The most important components to successfully implement your plan are making goals focused and achievable, as well as your personal commitment.

Step 4: Act: Now it's time to begin implementing change towards achieving your goals. If you get stuck, re-evaluate your plan; this is normal and part of the process (see **Step 2**).

Step 5: Assess: Realistically evaluate your progress. Has the action created the change you wanted? Are you happy with the results thus far? Are your needs being met by the changes? **If the answer is 'Yes'**, continue on with the plan created in **Step 3**, one step at a time. **If the answer is No**, proceed to **Step 6**.

Step 6: Restructure: What didn't work? What do you need to change to get the result(s) you want? Who can help you reach your goal(s)? Ask yourself if the goal is specific and realistic? Is this something you "really" want? If you aren't truly invested in your goals the plan won't work, so identify your commitment to the changes.

Step 7: Reward: Reward yourself for creating and achieving your goal(s). Goals are unique to the individual and should be taking you through a process towards a more fulfilling life.



Post Holiday Blues

How to get back on track at work



The holiday festivities are over, you're back at work and must resume daily routines. To top it off, the short winter days continue and we must find things to look forward to in the upcoming months. Together it's a recipe for the 'post holiday blues.'

Of course it's normal to feel a little down or frustrated when you return to work after the holidays. Back-to-work blues tend to be temporary, unlike depression, which usually means experiencing a set of symptoms for an extended period of time, such as not finding pleasure in things you normally enjoy. Still, being back at work can be difficult for many people after the holidays.

Blues Factors

Factors that commonly contribute to the blues tend to fall into three major categories:

Psychological - Perhaps you promised yourself you'd keep a better perspective on work problems or not let work run your life, and you're already struggling to stick to them. You may have unrealistic expectations for your job and colleagues and are feeling disappointed when those expectations fall short.

Financial - You may be worrying about paying for those holiday gifts you couldn't really afford.



Physical - Strains of journeying to work by car or standing on a packed train, combined with a lack of exercise at work can leave you feeling fatigued. It's possible that you gained weight over the holidays from too much food and alcohol and it isn't going to disappear overnight.

All of this can add a great deal of pressure to being back at work.

What can you do to keep some of the holiday spirit alive? Try these important strategies:

Acknowledge Your Feelings

If coming back to work leaves you feeling disinterested with your work "routine", remember it's normal to feel a bit down after the holidays. It is important to evaluate your job and yourself if you continue to feel uninspired at work after the holidays. Think about what you enjoy about your job. Develop creative activities, goals, and interests for the New Year. Update your resume to see in writing the goals you have accomplished. Plan a luncheon to bring a festive spirit to your office. Introduce yourself to other co-workers you don't know very well. Choose your after holiday attitude to bring about positive changes for you and others around you!



Budget

Financial pressures at home can seriously affect how you feel at work. If you are worried about money and paying off credit cards, don't pretend the pressures aren't there. Instead, make a plan of how much debt you are in and what you can afford to start paying off. Seek assistance! BHS, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), can offer resources to assist you in creating a financial plan, while also providing coping strategies to manage your stress.

Quiet Please!

Work tends to pile up while you're away from the office. It is important to plan some time to think and prepare a focused task sheet for each work week. Keep interruptions to a minimum; ask others to come back if their issue isn't an emergency or to email you with their request. If you don't block the time out, it will get used up with other tasks and distractions. Check emails every 30 minutes vs. each time a new one arrives to remain focused. Research shows that thinking-time increases your effectiveness and creativity at work. Taking a lunch break regularly, take a walk outside, or just take a break from your work area to rejuvenate your mind and energy level.

Don't Abandon Good Habits

Don't let work pressures lead you to eating too many unhealthy foods. They often contain added sugar and salt, which aren't good for your health when taken in excess. Work pressures can also lead you to skip meals and snack on sugary foods or fast foods. Many people feel fatigued at work because they get dehydrated, so try to drink at least eight glasses of water every day.

You will feel much better about work if you make sure you get plenty of sleep and some regular physical activity, such as walking for 30 minutes each day. Not only will exercise help get rid of any extra pounds you may have gained, it will give you extra stamina and energy to get through the day. Stretch throughout the day too, this can easily be done at your desk and it's a great stress reliever.

Getting Through It

Incorporate the activities that you enjoy into your daily life. Find new ways to enjoy life and see how you become more productive at work, home, and play. Take action steps today towards making changes and soon you will see the positive effects both personally and professionally. Getting back into positive work habits after the holidays can be difficult, so it is important to create and adhere to a plan that will keep your motivation in place.

BHS is Here For You!

Need help fighting off the post-holiday blues? Start by calling Business Health Services at 1-800-765-3277. BHS will assess your needs and connect you with the appropriate professional and resources. This is a free, confidential service for you and your household members. BHS, your EAP, is available 24 hours a day – 7 days a week. Just call us!