

# Culture of health: A large and multinational employer perspective



For multi-nation and large corporations worldwide, a culture of health can sustain a healthy, gainful workforce. More and more employers are understanding the importance of an environment that values well-being and encourages employees to perform at the highest levels. After all, a culture of health offers economic payoffs tied to reduced health care costs, improved attendance and increased productivity. However, while many employers understand the value of creating a culture of health, there are gaps in realizing it. This white paper:

Examines how employers approach health and wellness



Compares wellness offerings of large (3,000+ employees) local and multinational companies in the UK and the US



Highlights differences between employers offering **2+ programmes** and employers offering **0–1 programme**

**2+** vs. **0–1**  
**programmes** **programme**

Our insights are based on findings from the International Wellness in the Workplace benchmark study of health management programmes — a research survey of more than 200 UK large local and multinational employers with added insight from nearly 350 professionals from large and multinational companies across the US. This paper offers an in-depth look at programme penetration, strategy, incentives, success metrics and emerging engagement approaches. It also highlights differences among companies in both the UK and the US. Our goal is for companies to use this research to see how they compare with their peers and to gain insights into evolving practices in the health management field globally.

## Five key insights



### **Achieving the goal**

Most UK and US employers believe it is important to establish a culture of health, though few have achieved it.

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### **Applying a winning strategy**

UK employers offering two or more wellness programmes demonstrate a well-developed strategy focused on overall well-being. Those without a wellness strategy are open to implementing one.

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### **Maturing the programme**

When compared to the US, UK wellness programmes are still relatively young.

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### **Engaging employees**

Health and wellness incentives are used by a majority of large UK employers and US employers.

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### **Identifying the benefits**

UK employers look more to wellness programmes to improve absenteeism and productivity and less for medical cost savings, as in the US.

**In the following pages, we'll look more closely at each insight and the data behind it.**

▼ The following statistics are UK only, unless otherwise noted. ▼

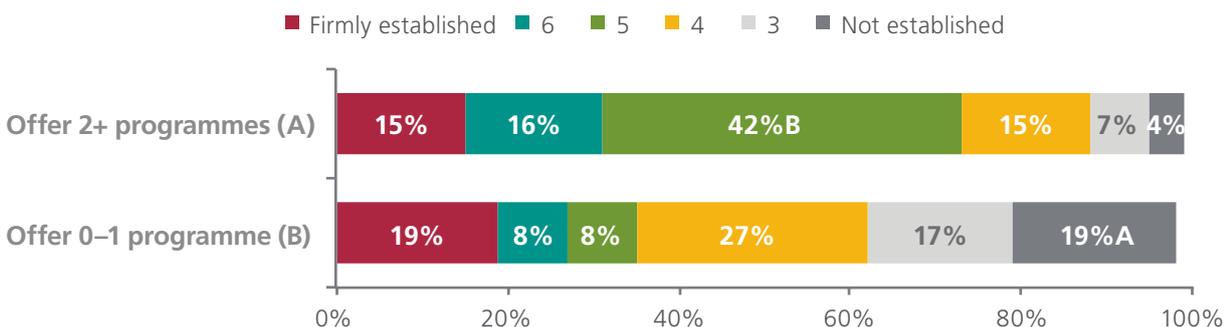
# 1 Achieving the goal

A culture of health ownership and overall well-being

The survey focused on UK companies offering 2+ wellness programmes and 0–1 programme. Not surprisingly, those UK employers offering 2+ programmes have made the most progress toward establishing a culture of health ownership (especially those offering 8+ programmes) and also find it more important to do so.

UK employers are more likely to feel they have established a culture of health ownership than US employers.

## Extent to which culture of health ownership has been established

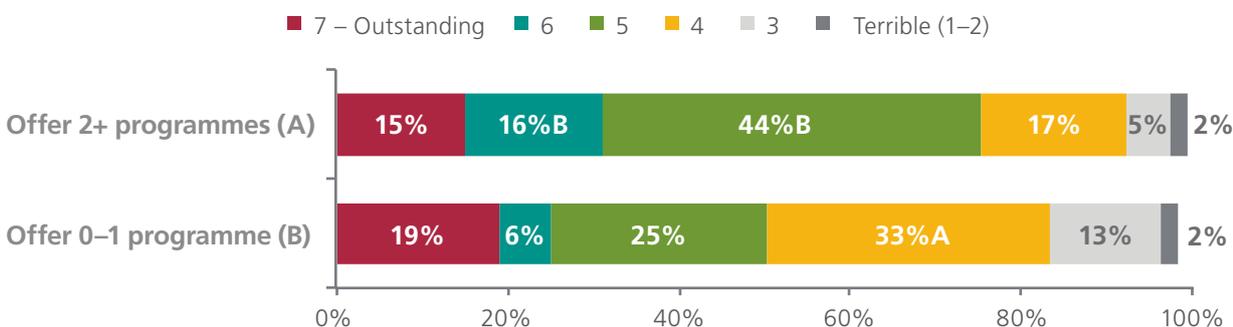


### UK:US fast stats

Established (2+ programmes)	UK	US
Firmly (6–7)	31%	20%↓
Neutral (3–5)	65%	70%
Not established (1–2)	4%	10%↑

When it comes to overall well-being, UK employers offering 2+ programmes rate their employees’ overall well-being more favorably than those offering 0–1 programme. Thirty-two percent of UK employers and 24 percent of US employers rate employees’ overall well-being as outstanding.

## Employees’ overall well-being



### UK:US fast stats

Overall well-being (2+ programmes)	UK	US
Outstanding (6–7)	32%	24%
Neutral (3–5)	65%	73%
Terrible (1–2)	2%	1%

Letter indicates a statistically significant difference vs. group associated with letter. Arrow indicates a statistically significant difference for US vs. UK or Large vs. Jumbo.

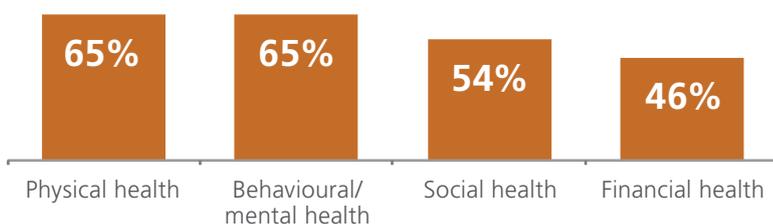
## 2 Applying a winning strategy

A comprehensive set of health and wellness programmes

Among UK employers offering 2+ wellness programmes, the majority offer at least five or more programmes. On average, large UK employers offer 6.5 programs.

Within those programmes, physical and behavioural/mental health are equally addressed in the UK while physical health programmes are far more common among US employers.

**Wellness strategy addresses**  
(among those with 2+ programmes)

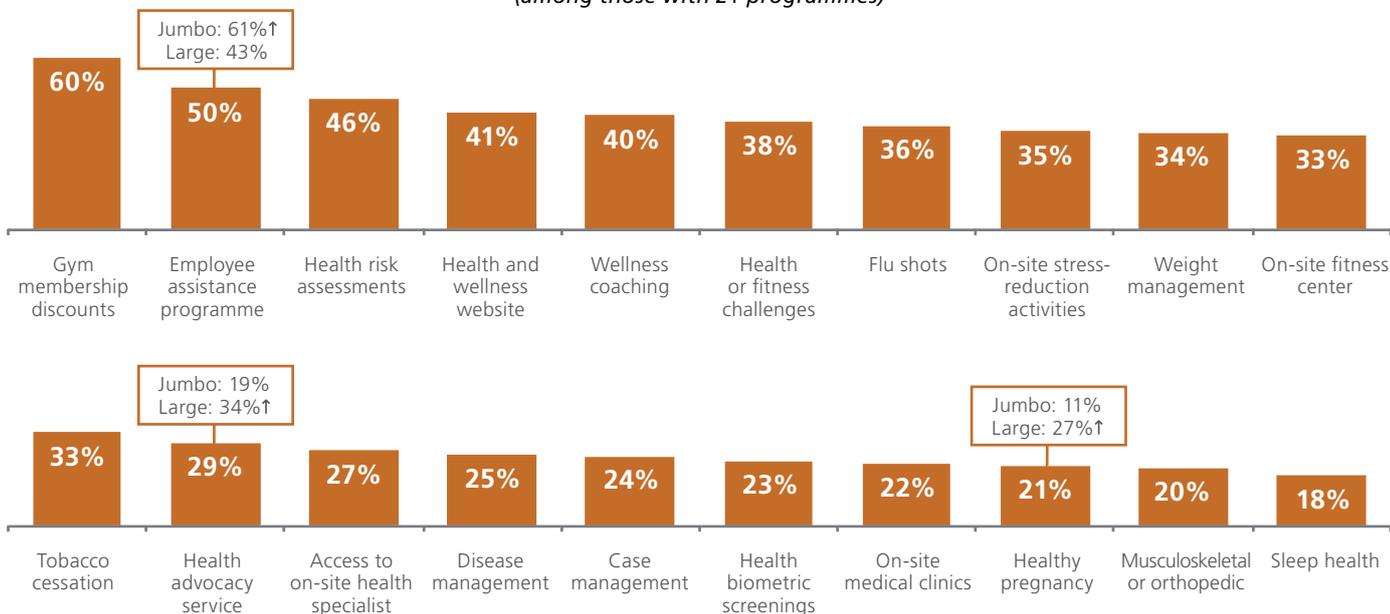


**UK:US fast stats**

Wellness strategy addresses	UK	US
Physical health	65%	95%↑
Behavioural/mental health	65%	68%
Social health	54%	42%↓
Financial health	46%	38%

The most prevalent wellness offerings in the UK include gym membership discounts, employee assistance programmes (especially among jumbo companies) and health risk assessments.

**Current wellness programmes offered**  
(among those with 2+ programmes)



Arrow indicates a statistically significant difference for US vs. UK or Large vs. Jumbo.

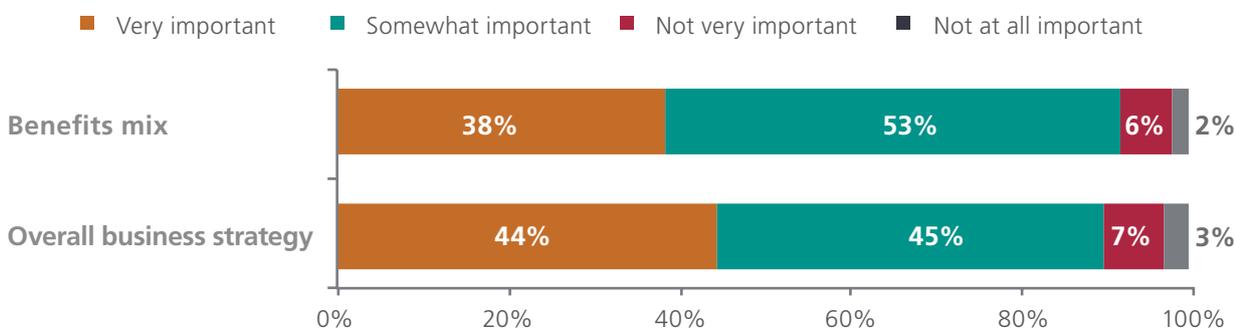
In the UK, wellness coaching most commonly addresses stress, while in the US, more areas are addressed such as exercise, weight, nutrition, heart health, sleep management, diabetes health, tobacco cessation and pregnancy.

**UK:US fast stats**  
**Current wellness programmes offered**  
*(among those with 2+ programmes)*

	UK	US		UK	US
Gym membership discounts	60%	61%	Tobacco cessation	33%	66%↑
Employee assistance programme	50%	82%↑	Health advocacy service	29%	23%
Health risk assessments	46%	61%↑	Access to on-site health specialist	27%	29%
Health and wellness website	41%	68%↑	Disease management	25%	39%↑
Wellness coaching	40%	57%↑	Case management	24%	25%
Health or fitness challenges	38%	62%↑	Health biometric screenings	23%	50%↑
Flu shots	36%	84%↑	On-site medical clinics	22%	26%
On-site stress reduction	35%	33%	Healthy pregnancy	21%	30%↑
Weight management	34%	58%↑	Musculoskeletal or orthopedic	20%	10%↓
On-site fitness center	33%	46%↑	Sleep health	18%	10%↓

In the UK, wellness solutions are considered significantly more important to the overall business strategy — even more so than in the US — and to the benefits mix.

**Importance of wellness solutions to ...**  
*(among those with 2+ programmes)*



**UK:US fast stats**

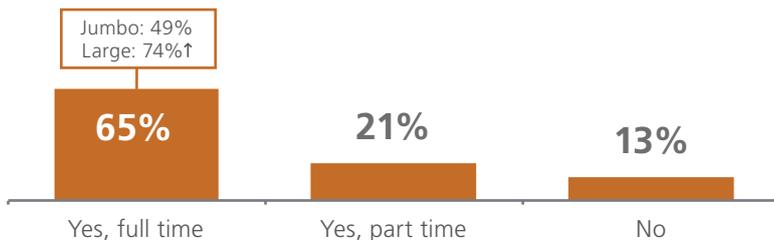
	UK	US		UK	US
<b>Benefits mix</b>			<b>Overall business strategy</b>		
Very important	38%	41%	Very important	44%	35%↓

Arrow indicates a statistically significant difference for US vs. UK or Large vs. Jumbo.

Most UK employers with 2+ programmes have a formal wellness plan, though few have both an annual and a long-term plan. By comparison, UK employers (86 percent) are more likely to have a formal wellness plan than their US counterparts (67 percent). UK employers are significantly more likely to have a dedicated staff member as well, when compared to the US.

### Staff member dedicated to wellness and health management promotion

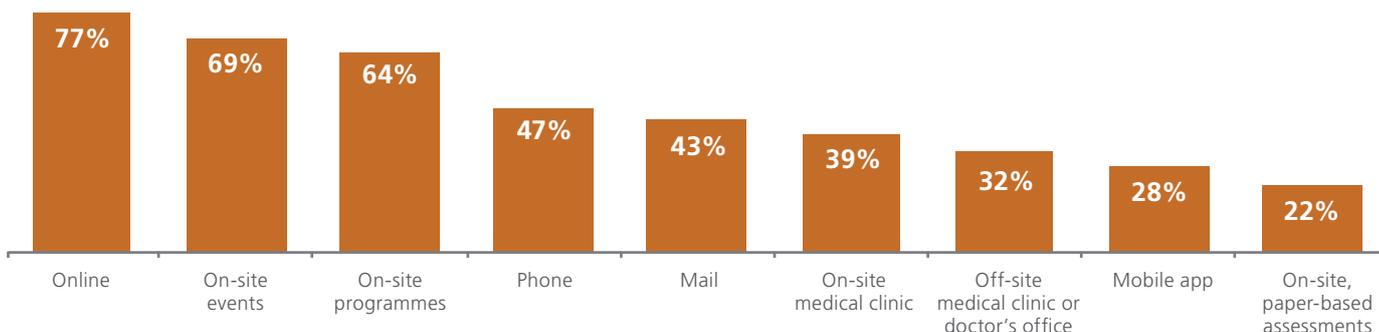
(among those with 2+ programmes)



### UK:US fast stats

Staff member	UK	US
Yes, full time	65%	52%↓
Yes, part time	21%	14%↓
No	13%	33%↑

### Wellness programmes are primarily offered



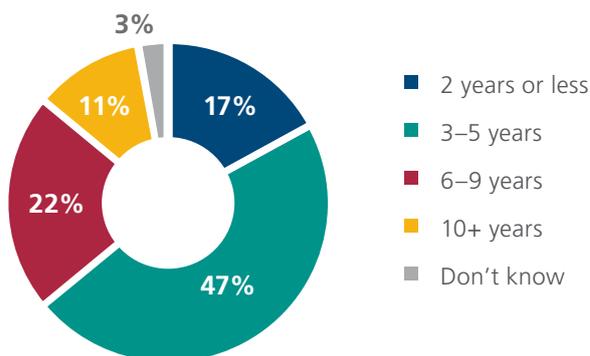
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### 3 Maturing the programme

An evolutionary process

When considering the number of years a company has been offering wellness programmes, it's interesting to note that many UK employers with 2+ programmes have only been offering them for five years or less. US employers tend to have longer-tenured wellness programmes with a quarter of the respondents having offered them for 10+ years.

**Years company has been offering wellness programmes**  
(among those with 2+ programmes)

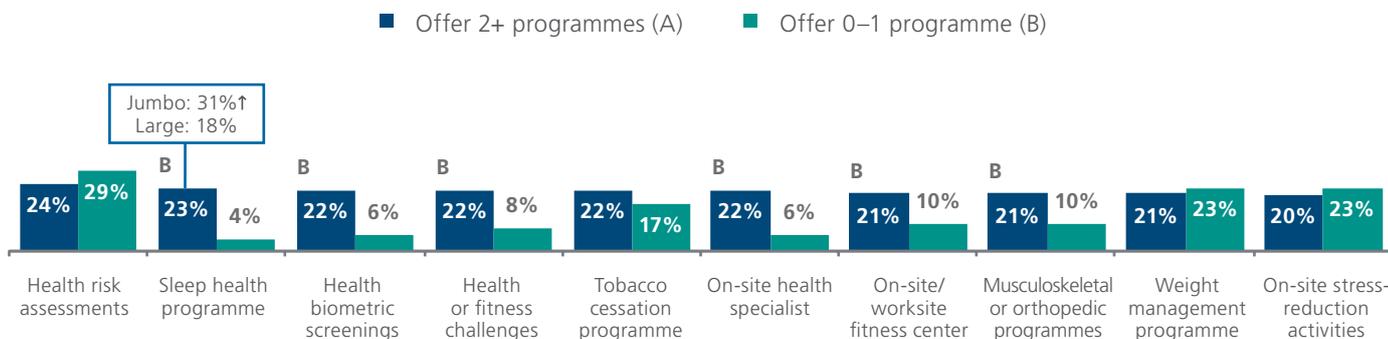


**UK:US fast stats**

Years offering	UK	US
2 years or less	17%	13%
3–5 years	47%	35%↓
6–9 years	22%	24%
10+ years	11%	25%↑
Don't know	3%	4%

Among UK employers currently offering 0–1 programmes, future consideration is highest for health risk assessments and gym membership discounts.

### Wellness programmes considered



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Regarding additional programmes, those with 0–1 programme expressed some interest in expanding, and over half are likely to do so within the year. Financial concerns are a key barrier to wellness offerings among those with 0–1 programme, followed by uncertainty on how programmes deliver value, administrative complexity, limited support from leadership, employees’ lack of interest/time/motivation and programmes being difficult to access.

Interestingly, just 36 percent of UK employers offer wellness programmes to family members. This is vastly different from 66 percent of US employers.

When asked about anticipated changes to wellness spending, half of UK employers expect wellness spending to increase over the next three years, more so than in the US, primarily due to employee interest. Few expect funding to decrease.

### Changes in wellness programme spending over next three years (among those with 2+ programmes)

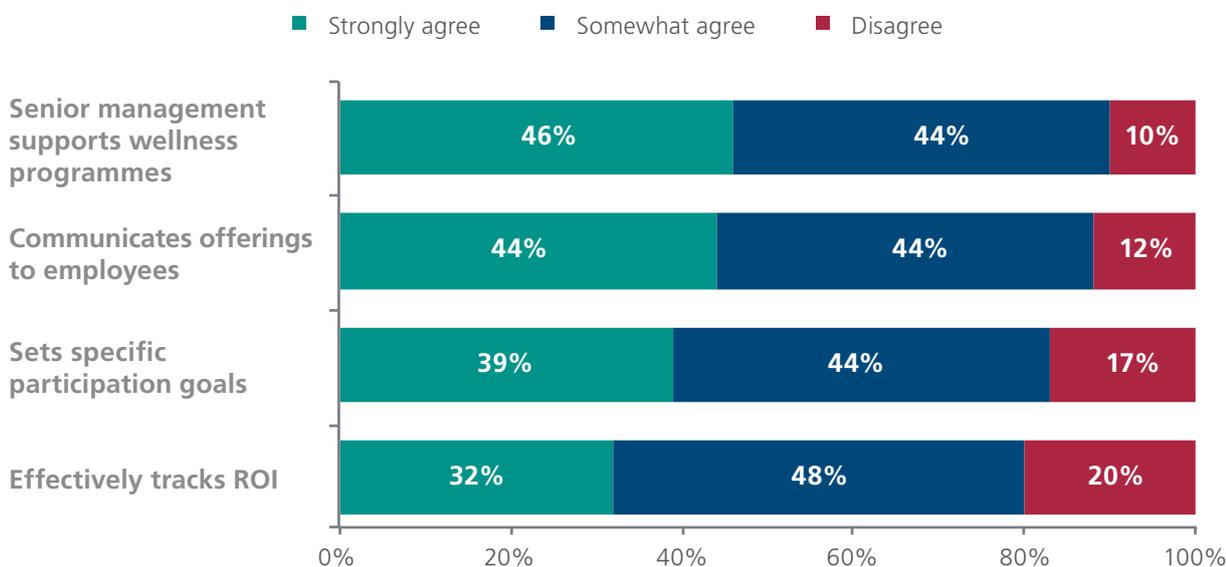


### UK:US fast stats

Changes in wellness programme spending	UK	US
Increase	54%	38%↓
Stay the same	37%	52%↑
Decrease	7%	9%

Overall, UK employers agree that senior management support, communication, goal setting and effective ROI tracking are in place.

### Company’s approach to wellness programmes (among those with 2+ programmes)

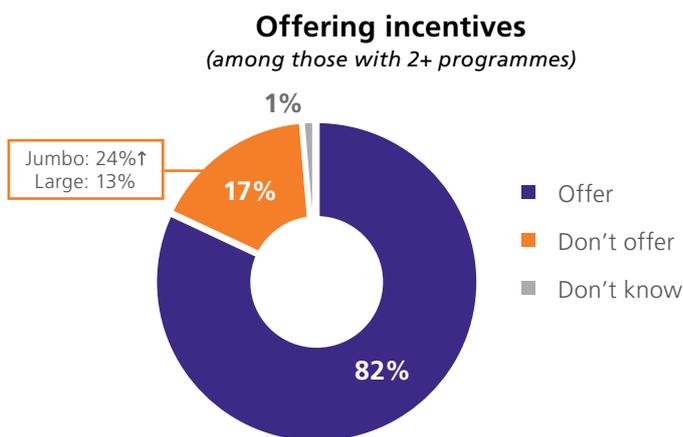


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## 4 Engaging employees

### Wellness incentives and a healthy workplace environment

Rewarding good health is one way to capture employee attention and participation. The majority of UK employers surveyed offer incentives for participation in wellness and health management programmes. Incentives are more likely to be offered as the numbers of programmes offered by the employer increases.



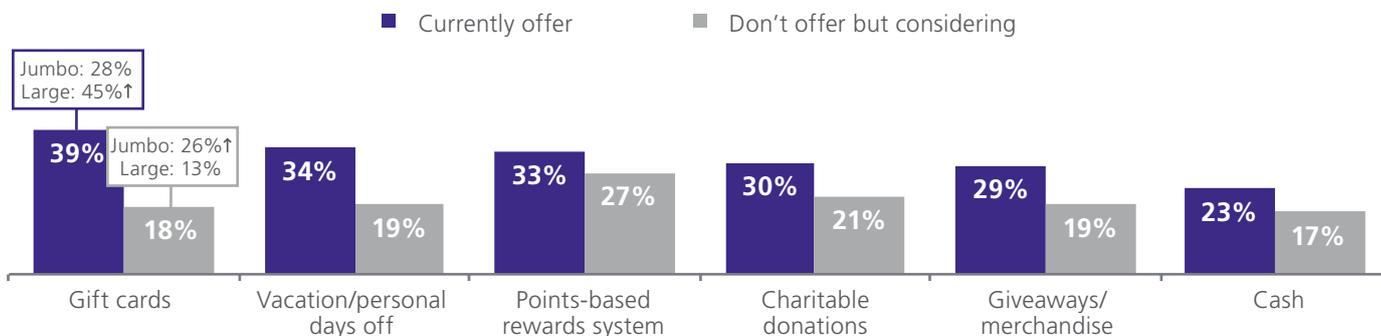
#### UK:US fast stats

Offering incentives	UK	US
Offer	82%	88%
Don't offer	17%	12%
Don't know	1%	<1%

While employers use a mix of incentives, gift cards are most common, especially among large employers. Points-based rewards are more often used in the UK than in the US.

#### Incentives offered to workforce

(among those with 2+ programmes)



#### UK:US fast stats

Incentives offered to workforce	UK	US
Gift cards	39%	29%↓
Vacation/personal days off	34%	13%↓
Points-based rewards system	33%	21%↓
Charitable donations	30%	9%↓
Giveaways/merchandise	29%	34%
Cash	23%	19%

Note: Incentives considered not addressed in US survey.

Arrow indicates a statistically significant difference for US vs. UK or Large vs. Jumbo.

### Most effective incentive

When asked what was the most effective incentive overall, the answer was gift cards over vacation/personal days off, points-based rewards system, cash, giveaways/merchandise and charitable donations. Jumbo employers prefer vacation/personal days.

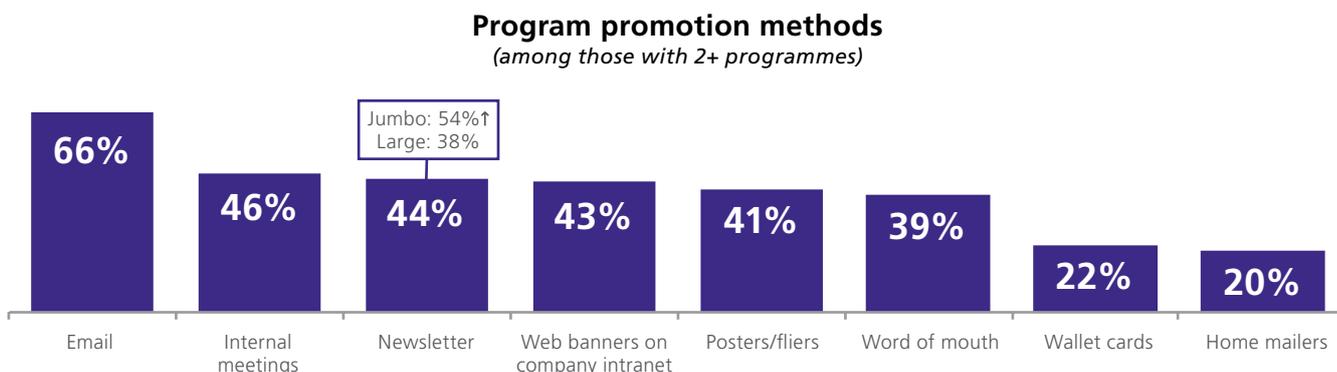
### Rewarding for action

Fifty-nine percent of UK employers reward completion of a wellness programme. Many reward for achievement of a specific health outcome (48 percent) and enrollment in a wellness programme (44 percent).

### Environmental changes

Physical changes to the work environment are another way to capture employee engagement. UK employers offering 2+ programmes — especially large employers — are slightly more likely to have made changes to help employees make health changes. Bike-friendly initiatives, healthy catering and vending machine options are the most frequently implemented or considered changes. UK employers are less likely to focus on healthy vending options or a smoke-free campus than the US.

### Promoting wellness



### Emerging engagement strategies

As for emerging engagement strategies, social networks, online competitions and activity tracking are used most often. Less popular are game-like features, mobile messaging and mobile apps. Social networks are more prevalent in the UK.

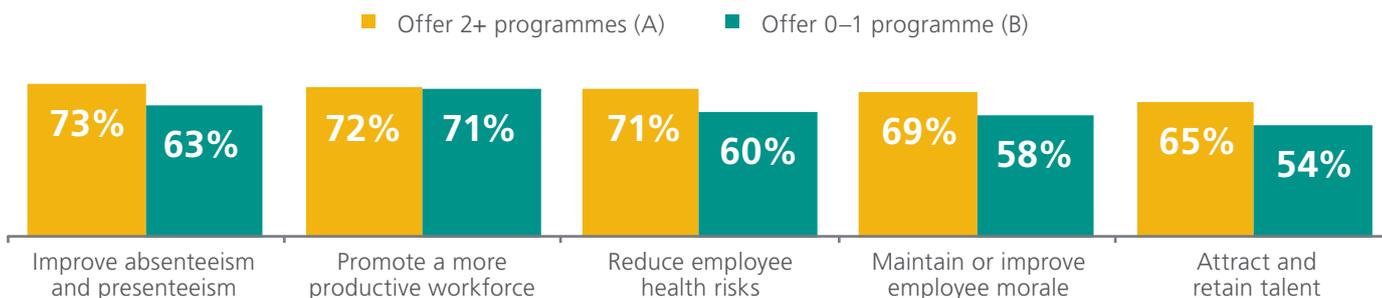
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## 5 Identifying the benefits

### The case for wellness programmes

There are many reasons for employers to offer wellness and health management programmes to employees. When asked why their company is motivated to provide programmes, UK employers most often reported improving absenteeism and promoting productivity.

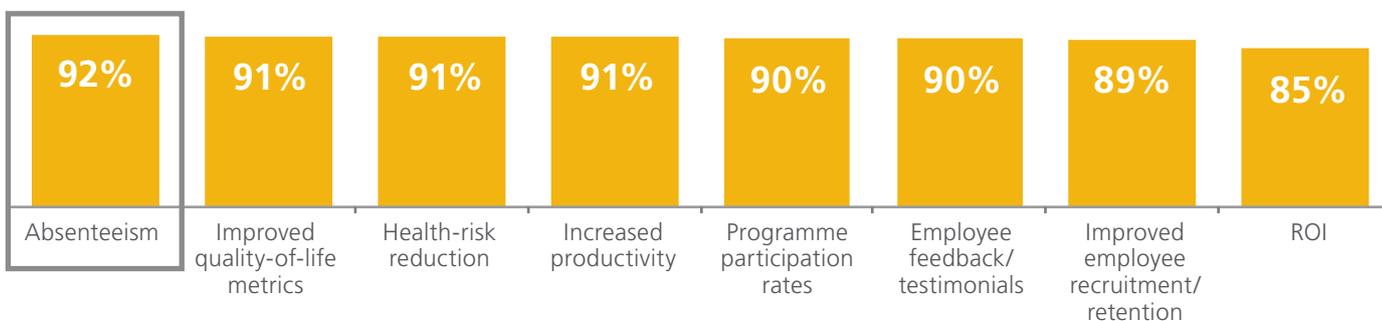
#### Reasons for offering wellness programmes



What determines the success of wellness programmes? A variety of factors, absenteeism chief among them.

#### Factors in determining success of wellness programmes

*(Very/somewhat important — among those with 2+ programmes)*

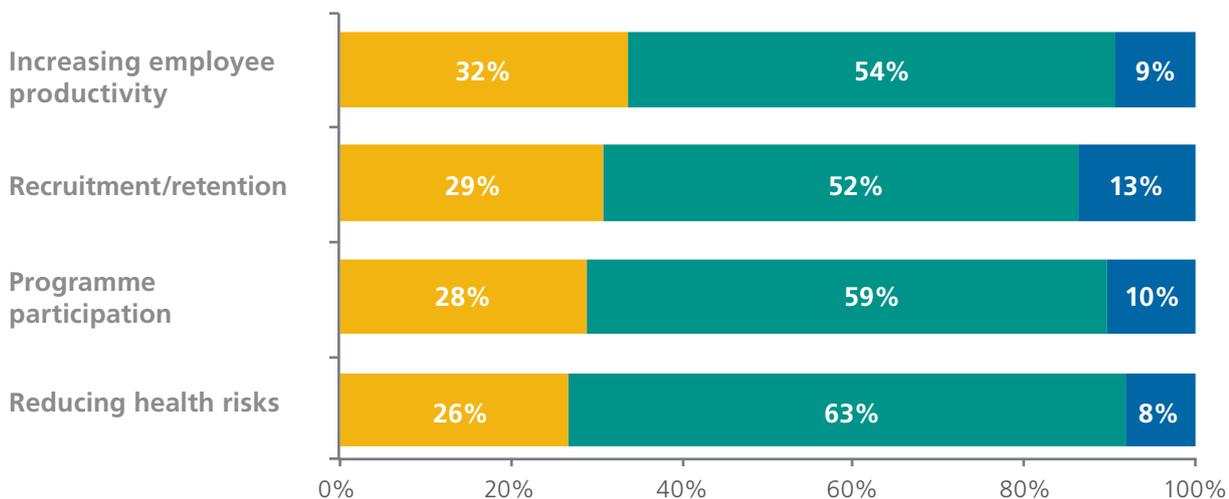


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UK programmes have been most successful in terms of improving productivity. However, responses show opportunities for improvement in each area: productivity, recruitment/retention, programme participation and reducing health risks.

**Success of health and wellness programmes in ...**  
(among those with 2+ programmes)

■ Highly successful ■ Somewhat successful ■ Not successful



**UK:US fast stats**

	UK	US		UK	US
<b>Increasing employee productivity</b>			<b>Recruitment/retention</b>		
Highly successful	32%	18%↓	Highly successful	29%	20%↓
Somewhat successful	54%	49%	Somewhat successful	52%	54%
Not successful	9%	18%↑	Not successful	13%	16%
<b>Programme participation</b>			<b>Reducing health risks</b>		
Highly successful	28%	32%	Highly successful	26%	19%
Somewhat successful	59%	54%	Somewhat successful	63%	59%
Not successful	10%	11%	Not successful	8%	13%

Arrow indicates a statistically significant difference for US vs. UK or Large vs. Jumbo.

# Encouraging a culture of health

To improve your culture of health, ask these questions:

## 1 Achieving the goal

Most UK employers believe it is important to establish a culture of health, though few have achieved it.

- How important is a culture of health to our organization?
- How might our employees and company benefit from a culture of health?

## 2 Applying a winning strategy

UK employers offering two or more wellness programmes demonstrate a well-developed strategy focused on overall well-being. Those without a wellness strategy are open to implementing one.

- Are we offering a comprehensive set of health and wellness programmes through a multi-modal platform? If not, why not?
- What wellness offerings do we most value? How do they align with our business strategy?

## 3 Maturing the programme

When compared to the US, UK wellness programmes are still relatively young.

- How do we envision growing our wellness offerings? What are the barriers to growth?
- How much are we willing to invest in our programme over the next three–five years?

## 4 Engaging employees

Health and wellness incentives are used by a majority of large UK employers.

- What types of incentives do we currently offer our workforce?
- What changes have we made (or are we willing to make) to our physical work environment to help employees make better health decisions at work?

## 5 Identifying the benefits

UK employers look more to wellness programmes to improve absenteeism and productivity.

- Why are we (or aren't we) offering wellness and health management programmes to employees?
- How will we define success for our programme?

# Appendix

## UK profile survey background

- The online survey was conducted from February 19 – March 7, 2015
- n=202 employers offering 2+ programmes, n=48 employers offering 0–1 programme
- Statistically significant differences are reported at the 95 percent confidence level and all noted differences by subgroup are significant differences
- Maximum margin of error for a sample of 202 is ± 6.9 percentage points, and ± 14.2 percentage points for a sample of 48

### All respondents were:

- Employed by a large national or multinational employer
- Functioning in a human resource or executive, management or administration role
- Involved in health benefits decision-making/instituting employee wellness programmes for their company

### Results:

- Percentages in charts and tables may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding
- UK results are compared to US only among large employers (3,000+ employees)

