



HEALTHY FRIDAYS

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▪ *Abstract*

Issue

CPD Ltd. (Centre for Pure Development) provides specialised services in the field of organisational development. CPD's main service categories are evaluation, strategy development, system building and implementation support. The clients are public sector institutions, private companies and NGOs (Non-governmental organisations) from all over Europe that are looking for high-quality support while dealing with specific challenges. CPD Ltd. employees have teleworking opportunities and flexible working hours. For each team member the most suitable combination of work, study and family life is applied. Working on topics that matter to each individual is supported.

Action

In CPD Ltd. the first Friday of every month is Healthy Friday. The aim of these health promotion events is to increase team members' awareness of healthy lifestyle, create team spirit through common activities, and increase trust as well as consideration of each other's individual needs. One of the employees of CPD Ltd. currently studies health promotion, and therefore serves as an initiator for health activities in the company. During the Healthy Fridays, advice on how to have a healthy lifestyle is given and other activities are conducted, for example, brainstorming about how to improve working conditions etc. The 12-team members have, in total, 12 small children and from time to time the Healthy Friday is open to all family members of the employees.

Results

Healthy Fridays have enhanced the team's awareness of a healthy way of living that also includes a balance between work, study and family life. Growing awareness of healthy lifestyle has brought the focus to consideration of the individual needs of CPD's employees.



2. Organisations involved

Centre for Pure Development (CPD Ltd.) – CPD Arenduskeskus

3. Description of the case

3.1. Introduction

CPD Ltd. provides specialised services in the field of organisational development. The main service categories are evaluation, strategy development, system building and implementation support. The clients include public sector institutions, private companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all over Europe that are looking for high-quality support while dealing with specific challenges.

CPD Ltd. was founded in 2002 and offers evaluation projects on public sector development programmes as its core activity. Since then, it has evaluated a wide range of issues from strategies and projects to institutional capacity and business plans. Since 2008, CPD Ltd. has been a member of the Estonian Network of Health Promoting Workplaces, which is coordinated by the National Institute for Health Development (National Contact Office of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion).

CPD Ltd. considers it very important that the activities taken provide interest for its employees and value to the wider society. Smart Work is practiced, which means that CPD Ltd., as an employer, is providing teleworking opportunities and flexible working hours. For each team member CPD Ltd. tries to find the most suitable combination of work, studying and family life. Working on topics that matter to each individual is supported. Health is one of the most pervasive subjects. CPD Ltd. regards it as very important to support and encourage its employees to live healthy. CPD Ltd. pays a lot of attention to creating a culture that is psychosocially positive and supporting the team to feel psychosocially well. To achieve this it is important to spend time together as a team for reflecting on the aspects concerned.

3.2. Aims

The aims of the health promotion events (Healthy Fridays) at CPD Ltd. are to increase employees' awareness of healthy lifestyle, create team spirit through common activities, to increase trust as well as develop a culture for the consideration of each other's individual needs.

3.3. What was done, and how?

In CPD Ltd. the first Friday of every month is Healthy Friday. This is the time when aspects of physical and psychosocial health can be raised and employees are encouraged to share their opinions and experiences with regard to any matter that refers to a healthy lifestyle. Healthy lifestyle advice is shared between colleagues, and sometimes, creative brainstorming sessions about current work topics are held. Each Healthy Friday is organised as group activities where the sharing of information is encouraged. Examples of Healthy Friday activities include tasting of healthy teas, discussing the food pyramid, decorating the office at Christmas time, donating blood at the blood-centre, practising Chinese calligraphy, creating ideas for the new CPD Ltd. logo etc. It is hoped that through such initiatives a more balanced and motivated team will be created, and this may help in setting and achieving goals for the team and the organisation. See examples of Healthy Fridays' activities in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Figure 1: Healthy Friday: Group activities such as Chinese calligraphy or donating blood



Figure 2: Healthy Friday: Employees are often accompanied by their small children to the office and a super-friendly Labrador sometimes greets them at the door.



One of the team members of CPD Ltd. currently studies health promotion, and therefore serves as an initiator for health activities in the company, encouraging new topics to talk about, raising discussions on various health aspects and proposing activities.

CPD Ltd. faced some challenges that were overcome:

- Achievement of work results – the fact that Healthy Fridays are carried out during working hours should not affect the achievement of work results. Since CPD Ltd. is using Smart Work principles, which (among others) involve flexible working hours, its employees are used to managing their own working hours and concentrating on results.
- Finding suitable and interesting topics for the events – since all the employees can suggest topics, the extent of topics can be rather large. Ideas are generated from, amongst the other things, travelling, hobbies, news, families etc. Employees welcomed enthusiastically the idea of conducting Healthy Fridays and therefore actively contribute with suggestions and input.
- Sustainability of employees enthusiasm – this is achieved by varying the content of the events which can take place in the office or elsewhere. Employees appreciate an opportunity to present their hobbies and subjects they care about and the positive team effects of the get-together.

There is certain motivation for the employer to invest in this long-term workplace health promotion (WHP) and for the employees to be involved in such activities.



For employers:

- increased employees' satisfaction, happier workforce;
- a positive image as an attractive employer;
- opportunity to be an employer who values health promotion and recognises its importance (rather prevent illness than pay for a sick leave);
- reduced turnover;
- a positive and appreciating company culture and tradition;
- opportunity to serve as a role model for other employers.

For employees:

- getting new ideas for a varied and healthy lifestyle;
- be inspired to keep up a healthy lifestyle,
- gaining inspiration for new hobbies;
- opportunity to bring children along and to combine home and work life;
- socialise with colleagues on a wide variety of topics, discover new interests;
- feel as part of the team.

3.4. What was achieved?

- CPD Ltd. is a desirable place to work, where people are encouraged to strive for their dreams. **Healthy Fridays have enhanced the team's awareness of a healthy way of life that includes balance between work, study and family life.** For better achievement of the equilibrium in life Smart Work is promoted. Within regard to their current assignments, employees work in the most suitable locations – at the office, from home or in a cafe – at the most convenient time.
- Due to teleworking the team members spend less time together in the same physical surroundings (the office). **Healthy Friday is the mean to enhance team spirit, spread ideas and positive energy among all members.**
- **Growing awareness of healthy lifestyle has brought focus to consideration of the individual needs of the team members.** CPD Ltd. regards this highly important as it allows to enhance their potential and through it to develop the company. Employment planning requires taking into account the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of a person in the working environment.

3.5. Success factors

Employees initiative is welcomed and valued at CPD Ltd. where employees are free to suggest topics to be covered during the Healthy Fridays' sessions. In this respect employees participation is encouraged. The employees are the ones deciding on the event and its content and as a consequence are more motivated to participate.

Healthy Fridays are always carried out in an informal atmosphere and are meant to be fun and rewarding.

The events take place during working hours, about 4 hours each month including preparation time. This is quite a small amount of time invested compared to the large positive effect it has on the employees including the energy boost it gives to work productively after the event.

Doing healthy things together gives the team new joint topics for lengthy discussions and activities. This, in turn, has a positive effect on the team's work-related interaction and team spirit.



Healthy Fridays create a good opportunity for employees to balance work and private life, for example employees often bring their children to work.

The idea of the Healthy Fridays rises from the concept of health promotion which stresses the importance of health improvement and disease prevention rather than cure.

3.6. *Further information*

CPD Ltd. is a member of the Estonian Network of Health Promoting Workplaces which enables the team to get the most up-to-date workplace health information and incorporate it in its activities.

3.7. *Transferability*

Any small or medium-sized enterprise can start a team event tradition. Managers should assess the possible success factors and show leadership and/or support for such events. Descriptions of good practices gathered by case studies spreads ideas and encourage managers and employees take up similar activities to enhance team spirit.

4. References, resources:

- Centre for Pure Development homepage <http://www.cpd.ee/?id=4&sid=95>
- Good Practices in Workplace Health Promotion (in Estonian)
<http://www.terviseinfo.ee/index.php>
- Workplaces' Best Practices (in Estonian) – to be published on
<http://www.ti.ee/index.php?page=1135&>
- National Institute for Health Development <http://www.tai.ee/?id=4052>