

A new era of *wellness*

2009 Alla tua Salute! awards recognize the next level of wellness program development

STORY BY SEAN FITZGERALD

Scrapping unhealthy lifestyles

LONGSTANDING STEREOTYPES about metal scrap yards as filthy waste dumps being tended to by burly, overweight and out-of-shape men couldn't be further from the setting illustrated at Sadoff & Rudoy Industries in Fond du Lac.

This third generation metals recycling outfit with seven locations – including Oshkosh, Berlin, Green Bay and its corporate headquarters in Fond du Lac – provides an innovative, cutting edge wellness program with outstanding tangible support and participation from employees. Each department begins its shift with a team stretching exercise, including the office staff, which is lead by one of the owners.

With five years of gradual wellness program development under its belt, our panel was impressed with the overwhelming support from ownership and top-level management at Sadoff & Rudoy Industries, garnering it our 2009 Emerging Success in Wellness Award.

"From initiating their Team Welloff (employee wellness committee) to identifying the factors most negatively impacting their plan costs and moving to educate and motivate and reward their plan participants to address them underlines the seriousness with which they treat this," wrote Brand in an evaluation of Sadoff & Rudoy's nomination.

Since 2004, Sadoff & Rudoy has been offering an employee assistance program and annual HRAs to its 230 employees. Unlike Miles Kimball, HRAs aren't mandatory for employees on the company's health insurance program, partly because some groups at Sadoff are represented by a labor union. Generally it's the case – our panelists indicated – that tying a health risk assessment to health insurance coverage in a labor contract is a challenging task to accomplish.

Nonetheless, Sadoff does encourage its employees to take the HRA with a \$20 award for each participant. Results of the HRAs have been crucial for the employee wellness committee – known as Team Welloff – in appropriately directing wellness resources.

A number of employees registering moderate to high-risk concerns about blood pressure a few years ago prompted the company to purchase seven portable blood pressure monitors – one for each location, said Tonya Smith, human resources coordinator for Sadoff & Rudoy. And the nearly \$100 devices aren't just sitting on a shelf collecting dust. Smith said the company tracks the use of the devices, and indicated a 23 percent increase in the number of employees regularly checking their blood pressure during 2008.

Another issue to stem out of HRA results – low seatbelt use among employees – prompted a simple, yet, effective initiative in late 2008 to encourage employees to improve their healthy behaviors while driving. Random surprise checkpoints when employees entered the parking lot at the beginning of their shifts allowed belted-in employees the chance to receive \$25 in cash. It made an impact. Seatbelt use among employees increased from 50 percent in 2007 to roughly 62 percent last year.

Seatbelt campaigns, Morrill stressed, are among the least costly ways an employer of any size can make a substantial impact improving employees' lifestyles in a relatively short period of time.

"Think about it. One of your employees gets into a serious car accident and isn't wearing a seatbelt, your company will be facing large insurance claims and that employee might be off of work for a long period of time," Morrill said. If such an unfortunate incident occurs while the person is wearing a seatbelt, Morrill added, the injuries could be less severe, and corresponding health care costs and lost time on the job could be minimized as well.

Helping to prevent injury on the job, Sadoff last year worked with Fond du Lac-based Agnesian Healthcare on each of the jobs at the company's Fond du Lac location and developed 3-minute job specific stretching routines for employees to exercise on paid time at the beginning of their shift. As mentioned earlier, the

office staff stretch is lead each morning by the vice president and one of the third-generation owners of the company.

"I think what set them apart is having the owners out there on the floor leading the exercise," said Morrill, who stressed that ownership and upper level management support for wellness activities is critical to their success.

Cleverly branding its wellness program with the tagline "Scrapping Unhealthy Lifestyles," Sadoff & Rudoy also provides a \$500 annual "wellness benefit" to each person on its health insurance plan to use toward preventive care.

Employees firmly know the importance of taking care of themselves, and when they do need to use health care services, it's been communicated how important it is to use those services wisely, such as staying in network.

"Every dollar spent on health insurance is another dollar we are taking out of our own pockets," Smith wrote in the nomination for Sadoff & Rudoy.

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