

Champions in Health Care: Employer, Rockland Trust

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If you are an employee at Independent Bank Corp.'s Rockland Trust, you have the ability attend onsite seminars on work-life balance, watch cooking demos and browse the RockFIT website to participate in a health-related poll or glean health-care tips.

As a full-service commercial bank headquartered in Massachusetts, Rockland Trust is aware of the role wellness programs can play in lowering health care cost and boosting employee productivity.

But when it comes to its own 1,000 employees across more than 80 locations, including retail branches, lending centers, and corporate offices, the company has decided to use social media to communicate lifestyle issues effectively to employees as well as their spouses and children, said Raymond Fuerschbach, senior vice president and human resource officer.

"We try to do it in a way that the information is available to them 24/7 outside of work, and engage them in a more complete dialogue about wellness," he said.

Rockland Trust teamed up with Wellness Workdays to launch a comprehensive wellness plan in 2009.

Now, more than 80 percent of its employees are involved in at least one wellness program, according to Maria Harris, director of recruitment and employee relations.

To be sure, for the past year and a half, Harris has taken the RockFIT wellness program to new heights, focusing resources and generating meaningful results when it comes to boosting employees' mental and physical health. As part of the initiative, Harris created an Employee Resource Group, similar to a steering committee, which is comprised of employees from all areas of the bank to discuss potential programs and set goals relative to the company's employee wellness. "Ultimately, we'll lead to a better fit, more engaged workforce," she said.

In addition to its obvious health benefits, the program also offers incentives and rewards to participants who make exemplary progress. Examples of program perks include a chance to drive a Ferrari for two hours, a weekend at the Ritz Carlton and an iPad.

"Wellness should be fun," said Debra Wein, president and founder of Wellness Workdays. "It's important to make it interactive, engaging and interesting as well as educational for employees."