



9 questions to ask wellness technology vendors

By Henry Albrecht

Commentary: Employers today face two key challenges: 70% of U.S. employees are disengaged and health care costs have increased by 80% in the last decade. And the same disengaged, unsatisfied and uncommitted employees are more likely to be unhealthy and unproductive.

But it is possible to break down the wall between engagement and wellness with a platform that addresses the whole employee. Just make sure to ask these 9 questions before you select a technology partner.

1. How will this program support my company's business goals?

Research shows that a successful engagement strategy must tie to at least one of your company's top strategic goals. Look for a single flexible platform that can measurably improve health, well-being and performance initiatives.

2. How can technology link to my existing people initiatives?

An effective wellness platform offers targeted rewards, communications and challenges that support your overall employee engagements strategy. It should also have the ability to incorporate initiatives like onboarding, training, team building and satisfaction surveys.

3. To what degree can I customize the look and feel of my program? Can I incorporate my company's color palette, graphics, logo and brand standards?

A single flexible platform should reflect your brand and culture to make it feel more relevant. Bonus points if your provider takes the time to truly understand what makes your business tick. By making your program relevant to employees, you can expect higher engagement and greater user adoption.

4. How do you use your platform to promote culture initiatives?

Your wellness platform plays an integral role in reinforcing your company culture because everyone in your organization interacts with it. This is a great opportunity to bring your culture to life by incorporating all aspects of the employee experience – from training to volunteering to your company picnic – into one place.

5. Will it allow my employees to set their own vision for improvement?

Just as you need to update rewards and challenges to target all employees, you need an engagement strategy that responds to each individual's interests. Look for personalized targeting capabilities and resources for employees to forge their own path to wellness.

6. How will I manage and act on user data?

You need to know what's working, what's not, and how to evolve your wellness program. Understanding how a platform presents data and drives analytical insights about participants should be at the top of your decision list.

7. How many applications and device integrations does your platform offer?

To engage your employees, you need a fresh program that meets employees' expectations of what's current in the world of wellness technology. Be sure your employees can seamlessly connect their favorite fitness apps and devices. And make sure your vendor is planning for what the future brings.

8. What outside initiatives and programs can you partner with (such as career planning, financial advising or community volunteering programs)?

You've already invested in a range of people initiatives – some of which you aren't using to their full potential. A true platform lets you optimize existing initiatives while implementing new ones. Ask your vendor if and how they can pull in other HR programs, share data and report on metrics across programs.

9. How does your platform connect benefit programs, interventions and communications in a cohesive way?

Your engagement platform should be the core connective tissue of your benefits ecosystem — a central nervous system — and not just another vendor to manage.

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