

# Forget Resolutions: Create Sustainable Plans.

*Spoiler alert: This blog is not actually about resolutions or losing weight!*

## **My Weight Loss Goal**

My husband and I received a Nutribullet for Christmas that came along with a 7-day transformation book; it's by far the best gift we received for Christmas. Rather than make a new year's resolution to lose weight, we decided to utilize the Nutribullet and 7-day plan to lead us into making a much-needed lifestyle change. For the past nine months we were falling down a slippery slope that many new parents face: finding time to make healthy choices.

We knew we needed to make time to exercise, prepare healthier food options and be more mindful of what we were putting into our bodies in general. Losing weight would just be one of the many added benefits. We created smart goals for ourselves: They were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and we decided to set a timeline for every seven days to reevaluate our future. For example, as part of my goal I said I wanted to maintain a weight that is 20lbs less than what I weigh now, *for life*. You might think, I should have set an end date for hitting that 20lb mark but I didn't want to become obsessed that I needed to lose 1-2lbs every single week. If I did, I didn't want to feel disappointed if I had a bad week, was retaining water, or wanted to enjoy a night out with friends. Instead I created a life goal, with a 7-day accountability on-going timeline. Once I hit that goal, I accept that my work will never be done because I will always want to make time for exercise and be mindful of what I'm eating and drinking. Plus, I actually want to lose a total of 30lbs, but I'm giving myself a cushion of 10lbs since I know there will be times when we will go on vacation or I'll want to indulge around the holidays. Plus, the reality is there will be times where work or family situations will prohibit me from my usual activities – that's just a fact of life!

## **Creating Sustainable Change Requires Reflection**

Every seven days my husband and I sit down to talk about our successes, our lessons learned, and how we can support each other. My husband realized he was snacking at work too much and that he needed to arm himself with healthy snacks so that he'd skip the pretzels, cookies, or candy that often ended up in meeting rooms or near his desk. I personally realized just how sedentary I had become during the day time sitting at my desk and vowed to get up and walk around for a few minutes every 45 minutes, even if it was just to refill my water, or walk to the printer or bathroom. The 7-day transformation book came with recipes that seemed new and exciting – and we often now cooked together – a bonus for our relationship. Perhaps the most unexpected change was how much we enjoy doing Yoga together at night (the book suggests daily yoga). We both find that the yoga has helped to reduce our stress and we are actually sleeping better at night.

## **Settings Your Goals**

Anytime you set goals for sustainable changes, whether personal or professional, the principal is the same. You'll want to create SMART goals and incorporate planned moments of reflection into your plan. Whether it's regular weekly or monthly meetings, midpoint evaluations, or end of the year debriefs, make sure you are seeking feedback from others and reflecting on your successes, failures and adjusting your plan for the future. Sustainable changes never end, they evolve!

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## Health and Wellness in the Workplace

Whole body wellness is a great topic to focus on when trying to improve engagement and it's a wonderful benefit that should be incorporated into your 2018 recruitment and retention strategy too. There is numerous research on the benefits of creating wellness plans for your team members. By focusing on health and wellness, the organization is promoting healthy behaviors.

Healthy behaviors are known to lead to lower health risk and decreased chance of injury or disease. By reducing the risk of health concerns, you are also reducing healthcare costs and the financial stress of these costs.

Last month I was struggling with lower back pain (perhaps because I am overweight and never rebuilt my core muscles after having a C-section last year!). For the past few weeks I've been going to physical therapy three times a week. Some employers might see this as a scheduling nightmare, having me start a little late or leave a little early. Yet I was applauded at work for taking the steps to relieve my back pain and strengthen my body so I can return back to work without pain. Back pain is one of the leading causes for absenteeism from work. By simply allowing me the flexibility of going to my appointments I have not missed any work.

## How One Client is Focusing on Whole Body Wellness to Drive Engagement this Year

One of our clients has decided to focus on whole body wellness to drive engagement this year. Team member engagement is an overall arching goal for this particular client and in 2018 they specifically plan to make great improvements to their wellness program in order to support larger long-term initiatives.

They started by creating a committee that is responsible for promoting a balanced home and work life. They promote the benefits of their EAP, solicit ideas from team members on how they can be supported of whole body health, and they have begun to research corporate program opportunities. They are also responsible for creating plans that fit within their overall wellness budget.

The benefit: Happier, healthier, more engaged team members. An added benefit: You're creating an even more attractive work environment as well, and saving dollars in the long-run if done right.

So far, the committee has started to look into having a weight-watchers group (20% of their staff has already said they'd want to sign up!) and local classes on financial wellness. Keep in mind stress is another leading cause of absenteeism – and financial worries is a major cause of stress.

## Looking for ideas to kick-start your health and wellness program?

Whether it's a weight-watchers group, a Nutribullet in the staff room, or onsite yoga class for team members, look into different ways to promote healthy living at work. The key is making healthy choices easier for your team members. Many organizations host health fairs that offer coupons or discounts to local dentists, doctors, gyms, or massages. My past employer even had bi-annual blood drives so we could help save lives and give back to others as part of our wellness plan.

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