

RELATIONAL WELLNESS: Corporate America's Business

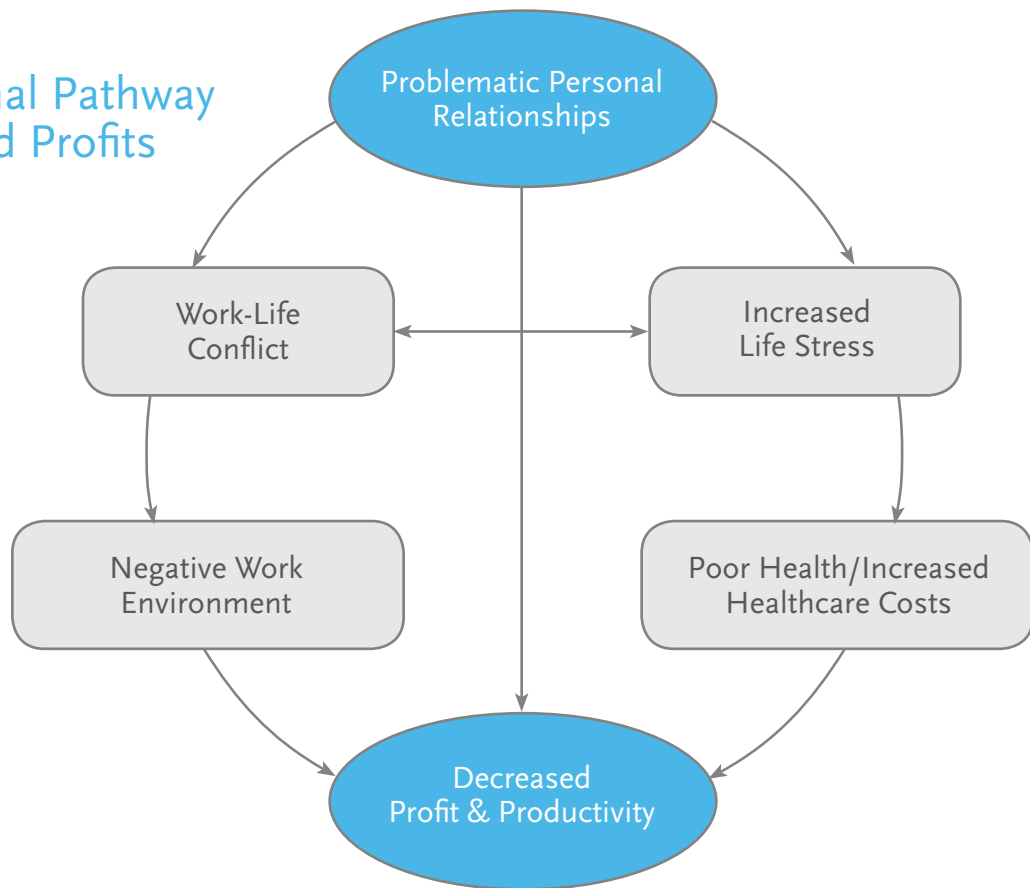


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The Relational Pathway to Decreased Profits



“You can’t expect people to do well in their business if they’ve got problems at home.”

S. Truett Cathy,
CEO of Chick-fil-A,
USA Today,
June 22, 2006

Positive Benefits of Relational Wellness for your Company

Organizations need to realize that relational wellness affects their financial bottom lines. Promoting healthy relationships can be a major part of any company’s focus – succeeding relationships lead to greater profits. As noted demographer Bradford Wilcox notes, “insofar as the family is a major generator of human and social capital, and a major engine of consumption, I think it’s fair to make the case...that strong families play a key role in sustaining long-term economic growth,...the size and quality of the workforce, and the profitability of large sectors of the modern

economy” (Wilcox, 2011). With some flexibility in relating to employees and in determining what type of policies fit best with existing corporate culture, organizations can reap incredible benefits in the loyalty of their employees, reduced turnover, increased productivity, and overall morale of the workforce.

Couples in healthy relationships are more loyal and stable employees

Married couples experience a socio-economic phenomenon known as the “marriage premium,” a widely researched and documented trend (Gallagher, 2002). Married couples earn more than their unmarried counterparts; in many countries studied, married men earn up to 40% more than single or divorced men (Waite & Gallagher 2000). Happily married men have reduced job turnover rates, have lower rates of absenteeism, and are generally considered more dependable and motivated (Corporate Resource Council, 2002). One study found that when dual-income couples are happily married, they have a greater level of commitment to their employers (Curtis, 2006).

Companies that support families through corporate policy are seen as more desirable to work for. In fact, a survey of MBA graduates noted that 70% rated work-family balance as more important to them than salary (Chincilla & Torres, 2006). When considering that it costs 150% of a blue-collar worker’s total benefit package to replace him or her, and 250% of managerial and sales professional benefit packages, it makes a great deal of sense to reduce turnover and invest in employee relationship health (Tangri, 2003). All of these factors contribute to the importance of employees’ relational health to a company’s overall health.

Employees in succeeding relationships are physically healthier

Couples in successful relationships experience a number of positive health benefits. Immune system functioning is improved for happily married couples (Waite & Gallagher 2000). For males, being happily married is the equivalent of being 18 months younger than chronological age; for women this effect is approximately six months younger (Waite & Gallagher 2000).

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Obviously, workers who are healthier and younger tend to have lower rates of health service utilization and fewer chronic health problems (i.e., stress and anxiety-related conditions) and thus can lead to lessened expenditure on healthcare costs for employers.

Relationship skills transfer from home to the office

One study of office productivity compared the most productive and least productive departments on a wide measure of relationship skills (Olson, 2006). Despite equally high levels of work stress, the group with greater relationship skills from their couple and family relationships were found to be the most productive.

Prevention programs are a great investment

Federal and state governments spend \$1 to promote healthy marriages and relationships for every \$1000 spent to deal with the effects of family disintegration (Fagan & Rector, 2000). Many studies have examined the return on investment (ROI) attributed to employer-sponsored programs targeted at reducing stress and increasing workplace health. Estimates of \$1.40 - \$4.90 saved for every \$1.00 spent were found in one analysis of nine companies ranging in size from 50-50,000 employees (Goetzl, Juday & Ozminkowski, 1999).

Other studies have attributed an ROI of up to \$6.85 for every dollar invested in employee wellness programs (Tangri, 2003). Disease management companies work in concert with large healthcare insurers to guide employees at high risk for excessive healthcare utilization to better manage their health behaviors. These companies consistently guarantee an ROI of at least \$1.50 for every dollar spent on their services (Wilbert, 2006). Relationship management operates under the same premise – that by helping employees monitor their high-risk relational behavior, employers can see a positive ROI.

Couples in healthy relationships increase company profits

In general, happily married employees make a more productive work environment. This environment is wholly conducive to a healthy financial bottom line. When companies consider that happily married workers are healthier, more productive, and result in lowered liabilities, it becomes clear that happily married employees increase profitability.

The Relational Pathway to Increased Profits

