



New Solutions for HR's Biggest Productivity Challenges

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A study by a leading US benefits broker conducted among 400+ senior Human Resources and Finance executives at mid-sized employers looked at key employee priorities and concerns in benefits. **Employee Productivity and Wellness** and overall **Benefit Costs** were identified as the top two employer concerns, with productivity/wellness identified by 80% and benefit cost concerns coming in as a close second.

These concerns are echoed in data from other sources. Overall US worker productivity is waning, and employee engagement is startlingly low. The US Department of Labor reports that **productivity gains are at the lowest level since the 1970s** and a recent Gallup poll reported that **less than a third of US workers are actively engaged** in their jobs.

Because health care insurance costs continue in a long-term upward spiral, the tendency is to identify the insurance industry as the cost driver. Such simplistic scapegoating overlooks the elephant in the room: Over 70% of health costs are driven by so-called lifestyle diseases and poor worker health habits. US obesity rates are at the highest level in history; 15-17% of Americans still smoke; and the Centers for Disease Control say only about 22% of U.S. adults engage in the recommended daily exercise to maintain good health.

The Productivity Problem: A Continuing Conundrum

These findings correspond directly with our own research and experience working with more than 3,000 HR and Finance executives at employers throughout the country. In fact, employee productivity losses driven by employee personal problems led to the emergence of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) as a solution.

At ESI Employee Assistance Group, we began with just such a mission more than 30 years ago. A decade later, we began to broaden our definition of employee assistance to cover virtually any issue or problem that might detract from an employee's productivity. Today ESI delivers the broadest suite of benefits of any other EAP. This comprehensive approach resulted in a utilization rate that is more than triple the levels found with traditional EAPs. Perhaps more important is the fact that employees who use the ESI EAP experience a 23% reduction in employee lost productivity due to those personal problems.

But personal problems are not the only issues inhibiting employee performance and productivity. There are several other productivity killers. **Poor worker health, low levels of engagement** and a **lack of adequate training** all contribute to low worker productivity. To begin to build solid productivity improvement strategies, these issues need to be addressed.



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Total Approach to Closing Productivity Gaps Required

Our focus at ESI had been to focus on the one in five employees who experienced a personal problem severe enough to impact productivity. We work to resolve those issues quickly and get the employee back to the job. But it became obvious that to help our client employers make a more substantial impact on productivity, we needed to address not just 20% of the employees with problems, but to help 100% of the work force to maximize performance and reach full potential.

That's what led us to introduce **Peak Performance Benefits** and the **ESI Employee Engagement Program** as extensions of our comprehensive EAP benefits. These offerings encompass three components designed to help you engage, nurture and develop your employees to maximum performance and productivity:

- **One-on-One Personal and Professional Development Coaching** - delivered by our senior clinicians to help employees improve performance at home and on the job.
- **Online trainings and self-help resources** - Employees have access to a deep library of more than 300 on-demand, state-of-the-art personal, professional and management development trainings, and more than 25,000 self-help resources.
- **Certified Wellness Coaching** - unlimited telephone access to Certified Wellness Coaches.

Our Peak Performance results have been impressive. Employees who access the training and coaching programs enjoy higher levels of engagement and commitment. The professional and management trainings help create improved performance and productivity.

Two-thirds of the employees who access the wellness coaching reach their health improvement goals. And we do all this while delivering a stunning return on the modest investment the program requires.

To us, it is patently obvious—employers who foster learning along with personal and professional development in their organizations, do better. And Peak Performance Benefits are the backbone of just that sort of effort.

ESI's EAP represents the most effective solution for those 20% of your employees who are confronted with personal problems. Peak Performance Benefits and the Employee Engagement Program offer cost-effective opportunities to improve productivity, performance and employee health status.