



Break Room Snack Table

the people

The City of Presque Isle is a rural municipality located in Northern Maine. The City has a diversified group of employees ranging from police, fire, and public works, to recreation and leisure, office personnel, airport, landfill, and recycling. On average, there are 107 full-time employees. The City's Wellness Committee is made up of representatives from the police and fire departments, public works, and City Hall, which represent the majority of City employees.

the need

The City wished to promote better nutrition by making healthier snack choices accessible to employees. Additional objectives were to expose employees to a wider variety of healthier snack alternatives, inform employees on the nutritional content of typical snacks, and teach employees to evaluate the nutritional value of snacks on their own.

the idea

Healthy snack tables were created, making healthier foods conveniently available at a low cost to employees.

the idea at work

The City's Wellness Committee heard about another employer's efforts to make healthier snacks available to employees and decided it would be beneficial to create healthy snack tables at several facilities. Collectively, the Committee developed a shopping list for healthy snacks and created a process for shoppers to be reimbursed. Department representatives were responsible for getting the snack program started in their building. For about six weeks, healthy food options (fresh fruit, baby carrots, celery, low-fat cereal bars, canned fruits, 100% juice, bottled water, raisins, etc.) were made available at no cost in order to determine what snacks employees would consistently eat. The committee was concerned whether employees would actually purchase the healthier snacks once the free introductory period was over, but money appeared in the collection can and the snacks disappeared without any problems. Snacks are priced just high enough to break even, and the program has been self-sustaining now for over one year.

2.2 Nutrition Success Stories

Break Room Snack Table (continued)

Nutrition labels and information sheets were provided on various fruits, vegetables, and snacks. Food guide pyramid posters were purchased for a nominal fee and placed near the snack tables for employees to see how the snacks fit into daily recommended servings and what proper serving sizes were.

the costs

Overall monetary cost: \$1,119.50

\$1,094—Six weeks of healthy snacks offered at no cost and seed money to get the honor system going.

Time costs—It did take time to buy, monitor, replenish, track costs, and adjust pricing when necessary. Additional time and paper resources were used to obtain nutritional information via the Internet for reproducing as handouts. Approximately two hours per week is spent on the above tasks.

Additional monetary costs—Food guide pyramid posters cost \$1 each. Two were purchased for every facility. Over 100 daily food guide pyramid brochures were purchased for \$5.50. These were passed out to all City employees. A dry-erase board was utilized for listing snack items and to be able to change pricing when necessary. A few markers, eraser, and cleaner were purchased at the cost of about \$10.

the results

This initiative has been highly successful for the City of Presque Isle. Employees were pleased to have healthier snack alternatives available and appreciated the convenience and variety. The most popular items were those that could be conveniently eaten on the go. The program was successful in that it is still self-sustaining. Only one department was unable to sustain their healthy snack table.

Some of the comments offered by employees suggested that if these snacks were not available they would be eating candy bars, potato chips, and less nutritional snacks. Several employees shared that fruits were not available at home, so having the opportunity to eat some fresh fruits was greatly appreciated. The City Manager supported the Wellness Committee's efforts and helped maintain the snack table at City Hall. He also encouraged each department head to appoint employees to keep the tables replenished.



Employees were surveyed at the beginning of the project and again approximately 14 months later. One question asked employees to rate the City’s efforts to provide fruits and vegetables. Of the 60% of employees responding to this question, there was a 93% increase in the number of employees who either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the City provides opportunities to consume fruits and vegetables at the end of the 14-month period. (See survey chart below.)

With the tremendous success that has been achieved, healthy snack tables have been offered in all other City facilities.

contact(s)

LaNeice Winslow, Human Resources Director, 207-764-2522,
lwinslow@presqueisle.me.us

Thomas Stevens, City Manager, 207-764-4485, tstevens@presqueisle.me.us

**See the graph below for employee survey data.
My employer provides opportunities for me to consume fruits
and vegetables.**

