

St. Luke's: Emerging strategy

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ST. LUKE'S

EMERGING STRATEGY

SELECTED BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Primary Industry Sector:	Health Care Provider
Type of Organization:	Not-for-profit
Worksite Locations (countries):	United States
Size of Workforce:	7,093 employees. The workforce increased in size from 2007-2008
Average Age of Retirement:	62 years

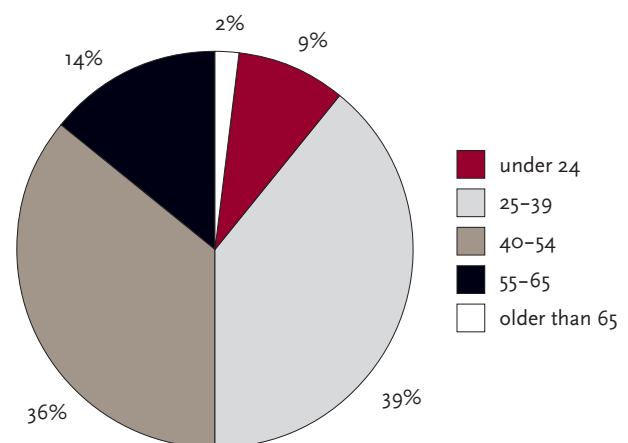
INTRODUCTION

St. Luke's is Idaho's largest not-for-profit community health system, and includes the state's first designated Magnet Hospitals. St. Luke's mission is "to improve the health of people in our region." St. Luke's Health System encompasses a network of four full service medical centers along with outpatient treatment centers and diagnostic clinics serving people throughout southern Idaho, eastern Oregon, and northern Nevada. St. Luke's employs over 7,000 individuals, the largest segment of which is between the ages of 25 and 39 years, and the average age of retirement is 62 years old. St. Luke's is also aware that many of its employees will be retiring soon and is beginning to evaluate how to address its changing age demographics in order to maintain its status as an employer-of-choice.

THE BUSINESS CASE

Employer-of-Choice is more than just a popular buzz word. Twenty-First Century Employers-of-Choice understand what motivates employees, and are committed to developing 21st century solutions to recruit, retain, and engage a diverse, multigenerational workforce. While there is more than one set of indicators for an employer-of-choice strategy, Figures 2A-B focus on eight important dimensions. These essential components comprise the Center's Quality of

Figure 1. Age Distribution of the Workforce



Employment Framework (Pitt-Catsouphes et. al, 2007). Of course, different employers are likely to focus on different aspects of the employer-of-choice strategy depending on the organization, the needs of its workforce, and the country context. Some actions – such as the expansion of workplace flexibility – can help organizations simultaneously reach goals and objectives related to multiple components of the employer-of-choice strategy. Employers may tailor their employer-of-choice policies and practices depending on the stage of employment (recruitment, engagement, and/or retention) they seek to affect.

St. Luke's strategies and practices, with respect to changing age demographics in the workplace, exemplify several aspects of this Framework.

As a result of awareness that it will be facing multigenerational issues down the road, St. Luke's is always searching for best practices with respect to changing age demographics. St. Luke's strives to provide its employees with attractive benefits, opportunities for development, and promotion of constructive workplace relationships in a number of ways.

St. Luke's has a long, rich history with flexible work options such as varying shift lengths, opportunities to adjust starting and quitting times, remote work, and gradual return to work after leave. In addition, St. Luke's offers a range of other amenities such as dependent care and retirement planning, and works to provide opportunities for learning and development and employability via programs such as their shared governance model, Employee Advisory Council, and "Employee Buzz" CEO forum.

St. Luke's will work to maintain its position as an employer-of-choice by improving its approach to recruitment, retention and knowledge transfer.

Recruitment

Like many other hospitals in the country, St. Luke's is concerned about the pending clinical discipline shortages and its effects on the organization. To that end, St. Luke's has fostered many partnerships with local and regional universities, colleges, and high schools as part of its commitment to provide clinical development opportunities for students as well as a strategy to assist in recruitment. The organization provides clinical experience sites for a wide variety of professional and technical students. St. Luke's also provides an observation site for high school students and is a corporate partner for curriculum development and governance for two unique high schools. St. Luke's provided 129, 707 hours of clinical experiences in 2007.

Retention

St. Luke's is particularly concerned about retention of current staff and the implications of an aging/retiring workforce. The employee turnover for the Boise, Meridian, MSTI, and Wood River campuses was 13% for 2007, in comparison to the national average for health care organizations of 13.5%. St. Luke's is investigating benefits for older workers, phased retirement programs and other workplace redesign based on the high physical and mental demands placed on its workforce.

Knowledge Transfer

St. Luke's is also concerned with knowledge transfer as its workforce ages. It is important for the future of the organization that it develops ways to pass on critical skills to new employees as they replace retiring generations. Some options that are being applied are mentoring, simulation, work

Figure 2A. Quality of Employment: Strategy



shadowing and narrative transfer. St. Luke's has incorporated concepts of evidence-based practice in its nursing shared governance structure for the past several years. Evidence-based nursing is the process by which nurses make clinical decisions using the best available research evidence, their clinical expertise and patient preferences. These concepts will assist St. Luke's with their exploration, development, execution and evaluation of a knowledge transfer plan.

THE RESPONSE

St. Luke's is aware of the "complex and intertwined" challenge that the changing demographic of its workforce presents. Although the organization does not yet have a formal strategy to address these challenges, it is not for lack of a burning platform for change, and the steps are in motion. For example, St. Luke's has implemented the Leading for Tomorrow's Workforce program, which consists of leadership development activities concentrated on fostering "employee engagement, a great patient experience, and great financial results." The organization also offers what it calls the Professional Ladder Program, which offers additional salary with the accomplishment of additional educational goals and advances. Finally, St. Luke's offers its Employee Wellness Program as a method of improving the health and general well-being of its employees. This program is the focus of the Promising Practice section.

"Our practices and policies are evolving as we gain insight into our multigenerational work force and our changing demographics."

PROMISING PRACTICE

FEATURED PROMISING PRACTICE AT-A-GLANCE

Employee Wellness Program

Description:	A program comprised of “challenges” for employees to improve their health habits and become more educated on how to live a healthy lifestyle.
Purpose:	To promote the health and well-being of St. Luke’s employees and create a healthier workplace.
Target Population:	All employees enrolled in the corresponding health benefit package.
Launch Date:	2000

IMPLEMENTATION

St. Luke’s Employee Wellness Program was implemented for several reasons. First, there was strong employee interest in the availability of some kind of wellness program that would improve the health of the workforce as well as the overall workplace. Second, as a health care organization, St. Luke’s felt it was important to offer a program that supports the health of its employees. St. Luke’s also recognizes a link between poor health of employees and increased levels of absenteeism and decreased productivity. Finally, the organization recognized that it was an efficient business move, since healthy people typically have lower overall healthcare costs.

St. Luke’s wellness program is comprised of several components. It begins with health awareness activities to identify risk factors, and includes ongoing health education and activities regarding nutrition, exercise, stress management and medical consumerism. It is rounded out by a variety of health incentive programs to reward employees for taking responsibility for their personal health and self-care practices. (See Table below.)

Health Awareness:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Personal Wellness Profiles ■ Health Screenings
Health Education:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exercise & Nutrition Counseling ■ Brown Bag Lunch Classes ■ Freedom from Smoking ■ Weight Watchers at Work ■ Medical Self-Care & Consumerism ■ Headache Support Group ■ Special Programs & Events

Figure 2B. Quality of Employment: Practice



Health Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Massage & Reflexology Services ■ Fitness Center Usage ■ Water Aerobics ■ Yoga ■ Dance Lessons
Health Incentives:	<p>Short-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exercise, Nutrition & Weight Loss Campaigns <p>Year round:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Healthy Pregnancy Program ■ Wellness Challenge ■ Tobacco Challenge

Multiple incentive programs are offered during the year. Some are targeted intervention programs that focus on a particular modifiable health behavior. Others are year round and focus on healthy pregnancy, wellness or tobacco cessation with specific goals or criteria necessary for achievement.

The Wellness Challenge is a year-long health promotion program designed to increase employees’ awareness of personal health risk factors and provide strategies for individuals to improve or maintain their health and well-being. Participants can earn a \$125 to \$175 bonus for meeting 5 of 6 criteria (see below) during each six month program period.

Injury Free & Safety: Have no work-related injuries or disease occurrence, including blood or body fluid exposures, during the program period or identify, report and resolve a potential safety hazard.

Medical Consumerism & Self-Care: Complete 2 classes or online modules (Dealing with Depression and Emergency Conditions) or a combination thereof, during the program period.

Prevention, Education and Participation (PEP): Accumulate 8 credits of prevention, education and participation (PEP) during the program period.

Physical Activity: Earn a minimum of 72 credits during the program period by engaging in physical activity. One credit is equal to 30 minutes of accumulated physical activity.

Five a Day: Earn a minimum of 72 credits during the program period by eating five-a-day fruits and vegetables. One credit is equal to eating 5 servings of fruits and/or vegetables.

Work-Life Balance: Earn a minimum of 72 credits during the program period by engaging in enjoyable activities outside of work. One credit is equal to 1 work-life balance activity.

The Tobacco Challenge is a year long health promotion program designed to help employees stop using tobacco products and reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. Participants can receive up to \$125 reimbursement for nicotine replacement products during the first six month period, and a \$125 bonus for sustained abstinence during the second six month period.

EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS

St. Luke's has developed a research design for the Wellness Challenge and plans to analyze this data, comparing employees who participated to those who did not participate in the program. In evaluating the Employee Wellness Program, St. Luke's examines a number of factors, including:

- Participation in offshoot programs, such as the Wellness and Tobacco Challenge;
- Frequency of achievement of goals;
- Health improvement of employees;
- Average health care costs per employee per year;
- Frequency of need for worker's compensation;
- Participants' satisfaction with the program as indicated by survey data.

MOVING FORWARD

In the future, St. Luke's plans to make obesity, nutrition, and physical activity a central focus of the Employee Wellness Program. The organization would also like to increase the level of commitment to the program in hopes of achieving even higher results.

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The Sloan Center on Aging & Work has developed the Executive Case Summary Series to provide Center Partners and members of Learning Circles with current information about workplace strategies, policies and practices established for today's multi generational workforce.

These cases have been prepared to foster the sharing of information among talent management experts and to accelerate "just-in-time" insights about employer-response to the 21st century workforce even as strategies, policies and practices are just emerging.

The Case Summaries contain confidential (and in some cases, proprietary) information about organizations. Therefore, the Center provides these cases only to organizations that are Center Partners and members of Learning Circles.

Interested in additional information about this Case Summary? Please contact Samantha Greenfield at 617-552-9117.

Pitt-Catsoupes, M., et. al (2007). *Employers-of-Choice in Countries-of-Choice* (Global Executive Insight No. 01). Chestnut Hill, MA: The Center on Aging & Work/Workplace Flexibility. Retrieved from http://agingandwork.bc.edu/documents/Globalo1_Employer-of-Choice.pdf