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EMPLOYERS NEED TO MEASURE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS, SAYS BUCK CONSULTANTS STUDY

LONDON, Thursday 21st March 2013 – Too few UK companies are measuring the impact of their workplace wellness strategies on business and employees, according to the fifth annual *Working Well, A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies Report**, from Buck Consultants.

The report finds that employers know what they want from their workplace wellness strategy, but only one in 10 (9%) is actively monitoring and measuring specific outcomes against their original objectives.

Increasing employee morale and engagement (73%), improving staff productivity and reducing presenteeism (69%), and reducing absenteeism (66%) are the three top goals for UK businesses. Encouragingly, half of respondents (50%) stated their company has a health promotion or wellness strategy and almost three quarters (71%) have been in place for more than two years. Furthermore, 45% offer an incentive to employees to take part in wellness initiatives (up from 24% in 2010).

However, employer engagement beyond the point of implementation is low and companies are falling short of following their strategies through to the end.

Fraser Smart, Managing Director, Europe, Buck Consultants commented: “Many employers are making ‘faith based purchases’ where they are investing in wellness because they think it is the right thing to do, without knowing if it is having a positive impact or not on employee health. A wellness strategy should be treated in the same way as any other business strategy where commitment, measurement, evaluation and review are the keys to success. If employers don’t measure the outcomes, how do they know whether it’s working and how can they strive to improve?”

Three quarters (74%) of the companies that do not measure the impact of their wellness strategies said it is due to limited resource. Wellness programmes will vary according to the organisation, however, examples of how employers might measure their effectiveness against the top three objectives include:

- Employee engagement – including questions on employee health and wellbeing in engagement surveys.
- Employee productivity and presenteeism – self reported health and productivity questionnaires which can be linked to regular performance reviews.
- Employee absenteeism – through analysis of employer sickness absence data.

Smart continued: “Demonstrating a genuine interest in creating a healthier and more productive workforce is a key part in boosting employee engagement, and complements the impact of other employee benefits. The importance of engagement has been further propelled by the advent of auto-

enrolment, and should be the big HR topic both while we're in a recessionary environment and as companies prepare to move into less austere times where the war for talent may intensify. However, when leadership at an employer is not engaged in wellness initiatives, it can seem a bit half-hearted to the employees."

Smart concluded: "A tailored strategy that takes into account the specifics of a workforce is crucial. Our approach is to use data from providers to help guide employers in how they purchase employee benefits and tackle their employees' health issues. Our data led approach helps employers get maximum impact for their investment and to change their approach as their business needs and employee health risks change over time."

Other key findings from the UK special report include:

- The top four health risks targeted by a UK strategy are stress, workplace safety and work-life balance issues and depression - mental health issues are a key concern
- The top three components of a strategy are an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), cycle to work scheme and health risk appraisals. These are low to no cost benefits. Occupational health is number four and is the first element that attracts a significant employer investment;
- On-site health coaching is the fastest growing component of strategies, followed by improving the psychosocial work environment
- 72% see their EAP as the main tool for assisting with the issue of stress. Leadership training (50%) and awareness campaigns (41%) were the next most popular tools
- 67% do not offer any assistance in respect of smoking cessation
- Top methods of communicating in respect of wellness are: posters / flyers (nearly seven in ten or 66%), web portal / intranet (three in five or 62%) and newsletters / articles (over half or 55%). Social media is underused with only 6% of participants adopting this approach

For a copy of the full UK report please contact Chris Evans, Senior Consultant, on +44 (0) 20 7429 1089 or Andrew Supple, Health & Productivity Consultant, on +44 (0) 20 7429 1128.

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Notes to editors

* Buck Consultants' *Working Well: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies* is in its fifth year. The survey investigates emerging trends in employer-sponsored health promotion and wellness programmes. The survey data was collected in July 2012.

United Kingdom - Of the 1,356 organizations that responded to the survey, 70 are included in the UK Report.

Buck Consultants' survey was conducted in association with Integrated Health, a Pfizer Solution, Cigna®, vielife and Wolf Kirsten International Health Consulting.

[Integrated Health, a Pfizer Solution](#), lives where insights and outcomes meet. Built on Pfizer's heritage of data-driven health innovations, we are creating value-based services and technology solutions that aim to improve health outcomes and reduce wasted costs.

[Cigna®](#) is a global health service company dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being, and sense of security. The operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation provide an integrated suite of health services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, vision, and supplemental benefits to people around the world. These services include health coaching and wellness programs.

[vielife](#) provides global health and wellbeing solutions that are available in over 26 languages. An online suite of products empowers organizations to track and improve the health and productivity of their employees, through assessments, personalized reports, lifestyle management programs, employee engagement and challenges.

[Wolf Kirsten International Health Consulting](#) helps international corporations, organizations, and governments improve the quality of life of their respective populations through innovative, culturally appropriate, and cost-effective health promotion programs.

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Insightful thinking. Real-world solutions.™

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- Benefits and Actuarial Consulting
- Compensation Consulting
- Global Investment Consulting
- Global Technology and Delivery Solutions
- Health and Productivity Consulting
- Strategic Communications Consulting
- Talent and Human Resource Solutions

News and other information about Buck Consultants is available at www.buckconsultants.com

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