



Whelans is a leading WA-owned consultancy business in the areas of surveying, aerial surveying and town planning for both private and government sectors.

Medium-sized business
(20-199 workers)

Professional, scientific and technical services

Background

Whelans was referred to the Healthy Choices Healthy Futures (HCHF) team by Diabetes WA, another Specialist Service Provider (SSP) as part of Healthier Workplace WA.

Before launching into all things nutrition, the HCHF team spoke extensively with Julie Wilson, Whelans Human Resources Manager to understand the business and to develop an appreciation of the workplace health promotion (WHP) activities currently being delivered.

What this discussion helped HCHF identify were the key barriers and enablers at play. It was evident that there was a positive culture at Whelans, where health and wellbeing is actively supported:

- management have a good understanding of the need for WHP and are supportive of healthy changes through environmental reform
- there are existing facilities that encourage and support general healthy behaviours, including a secure bike cage (converted car space) and shower facilities, as well as a kitchen and eating area
- health and wellbeing initiatives are driven by the Whelans Human Resources team, who gauge the health and wellbeing needs of the workforce through whole staff surveys
- there are a number of health and wellbeing initiatives in place, including education sessions, cooking demonstrations, a walking challenge and exercise classes.

HCHF service

This discussion also helped to identify where HCHF could be of assistance:

Workplace facilities

The facilities provided to workers e.g. microwave, provision of milk, coffee etc



Fundraising

Food and drink at fundraising or social club events, and used as gifts or rewards



- Whelans has an impressive kitchen and eating facilities available for staff to use. This includes a large fridge, toasted sandwich maker, two ovens, a coffee machine and storage facilities
- Available in the kitchen are some basic food items, but Whelans does have the capacity to offer staff other food choices, for a small donation or in some cases, free of charge
- Also available to staff are a selection of Cadbury chocolate fundraisers, with proceeds going to the social club.

The plan

Goal

To create a supportive environment where healthy behaviours are encouraged by influencing the supply and sale of food and drink in the workplace

Objectives

To increase the **supply** of healthier food and drink choices available to Whelans staff in the kitchen and dining area
To encourage the **sale** of alternative, non-food fundraising items by Whelans social club

Strategies

Ensure the **availability** of healthier food and drink items in the staff kitchen and dining area
Provide food and drink items in recommended **portion** sizes
Reduce the **availability** (range) of fundraising chocolates on offer
Position the healthier food and drink items more prominently in the staff kitchen and dining area compared to the fundraising chocolate



The process

These strategies were further supported by other nutrition-focused initiatives already in place, such as nutrition education sessions and cooking demonstrations, provided by Diabetes WA.

- The HR team had already established the need for the above changes to occur, based on anecdotal feedback from staff around the office



- HCHF provided a report with recommendations for healthier food items, which included portion size, price and an overall rating as 'Green' or 'Amber' based on HCHF nutrient criteria
- With the recommendations in hand, the HR team set about making some changes based on the strategies identified overleaf.

Results

With the recommendations in hand, the HR team wasted no time at all getting down to business.

- The changes were pitched as a 'complement' to the wider health and wellbeing program
- This ensured the modifications were positive and that staff didn't feel that they were having something taken away from them
- Changes included:
 - » reducing the number of chocolate fundraising boxes on offer (7 boxes -> 4 boxes)
 - » switching to a smaller serve size of chocolate (every small change counts!)
 - » introducing a range of healthier items:
 - cheese/tuna and biscuits snack packs
 - popcorn and pretzels (13 - 25g serves)
 - fruit and nut mix (30g boxes)
 - fruit tubs (140g)



- The changes provided increased choice for staff, especially important since the office is relatively isolated from places to purchase food
- Each item is offered at just over a fraction of the cost price, with all profit being donated to the Whelans social club
- There has been a slight reduction in profits however the social club understands that the changes are for the "greater good" and remain in favour of the changes overall
- To encourage selection of the preferred options:
 - » the healthier items have been placed in a prominent position compared to the fundraising chocolates
 - » signage has been created to inform staff of the items on offer and which are the healthier options.

Feedback



The feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive:

- some people have not touched the fundraising chocolates since the changes started!
- the HR team notes that "we should've done this a long time ago".

The main lesson learned along the way:

- not all products will work - it's a matter of trial and error and it's important to get staff input and feedback on an ongoing basis.

Tips for other workplaces



No longer novices, the HR team at Whelans has the following tips for other workplaces thinking about this type of food environment change:

- highly recommended; complements, rather than contradicts other health and wellbeing activities
- make sure the emphasis on potential changes is positive. This will improve acceptability and uptake.

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