

WELLNESS WORKS



By Lorin Anderson, *Founder*

One would think working in a profession that generally calls for being outside every day would set up our Proponent members to lead a very healthy lifestyle.

Surprisingly, it often does not. Like many other careers, golf instruction makes it easy to abandon the keys to overall wellness. Priority

goes to running the business, squeezing in extra lessons during the busy season or making late-night phone calls to competitive students after their rounds. This list goes on and can quickly add up to a less than healthy lifestyle.

I'm as guilty as anyone. When I started Proponent Group there were many periods when I would work seven days a week trying to build the operation and take care of members. It wasn't good for my personal health, so I took steps to limit the time and energy spent on the business. This is a common issue for entrepreneurs: We have a passion for the work we do and a desire to maximize business opportunities.

But... it can backfire. In the U.S. alone, work-related stress costs businesses \$300 billion annually—that's according to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Companies that don't use "best practices" wellness programs tend to see their bottom lines suffer. According to a study by Health Enhancement Research Organization, from 2009 to 2014 stock-price appreciation for 45 companies with best-practices wellness programs outpaced the S&P 500, 235 percent versus 159 percent. While it's impossible to say

how much of the difference came from healthier employees, it looks to have been an appreciable factor.

So what does this mean for entrepreneurial golf coaches, out there on the front lines either solo or with a few staff instructors working alongside them? At its most basic, it means you need to develop an awareness of the physical, emotional and financial well-being of yourself and anyone who works under you. There isn't much question that healthier employees improve the bottom line. Even if you don't provide comprehensive health insurance, you may consider partial payment of a gym membership or weekly or monthly group golf. Even walking 9 holes once a week can have a big impact on keeping yourself and your team more active. It's stunning how many of our members never or rarely play golf. Honestly, that's not a good sign for personal wellness.

A lot of Proponent members carve out time to recharge their emotional health using meditation and other stress-relieving activities. Many can even be done using apps on a smartphone at minimal cost.

Financial health is an area we talk about often in our Financial Literacy column. The majority of Americans are woefully underprepared for financial crisis, and that can create tremendous stress. Fortunately, our members generally bring in sufficient revenue to effectively save for those rainy days. But it takes the same kind of discipline you ask of your students. Put it this way: I don't remember anyone ever telling me they wish they had saved less money.

Even without a big budget for wellness benefits, you can help yourself and your team at minimal expense. These investments in your lifestyle not only make you feel better, they protect your business' bottom line. PG

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