

# LIFESTYLE



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## Timely Information for Personal Success

### ILLNESS & INJURY

Employees are More Susceptible Than They Realize



Most American workers say they derive satisfaction from their job, but only roughly one-third say they have actively prepared for being sidelined due to an injury or illness, even though nearly nine out of 10 say they know there are steps they can take to protect themselves.

These are some of the findings from a Yankelovich survey among full- and part-time employees conducted for CIGNA.

#### Employee Disconnect

Moreover, many workers don't necessarily make the connection between staying healthy and staying on the job. When asked what can be done to prepare for the possibility of being out of work for an extended period of time, fewer than two in 10 (16%) say trying to be healthier or staying well.

Fortunately, more employers are investing in workplace wellness programs, even in a struggling economy. For example, a recent Hewitt Associates survey indicates that almost two-thirds (65%) of employers say they invest in long-term solutions to improve the overall health and productivity of their workforce and also reveals an emerging interest in absent management.

Another study by Watson Wyatt and the National Business Group on Health reports that 72% of employers with at least 1,000 employees have enhanced their onsite offerings with health coaching, stress management programs or employee assistance programs – or they plan to offer these types of programs in the next 12 months.

However, only 12% of workers Yankelovich surveyed identified workplace wellness programs as a way to help them prepare for the possibility that an injury or illness could keep them out of work for more than just a few days.

“It's clear that insurers and employers need to do more to help workers understand that taking care of their health – both physical and emotional – is one of the best ways to avoid a disabling illness or injury,” said Dr. Robert Anfield, chief medical officer for CIGNA's disability insurance unit. ❖

Source: CIGNA ([www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com)).

### Don't Fall Into the Weakness Trap

By Garold Markle

The most successful managers don't normally try to fix an employee's weaknesses. Instead, they recognize it's better to work *around* them.

Unfortunately, many managers focus their coaching attempts on correcting areas of weakness while praising areas of strength. Certainly, there *are some* weaknesses that must be improved upon in order for the employee to be valuable to the company.

What is questioned in this article is the absolute adherence that some managers have about improving all of a worker's weak areas. Wherever possible, managers should focus their attention on enhancing employees' *strengths*, not on spending an inordinate amount trying to improve areas that an individual has little, if any, aptitude at. Would football coach A insist on putting a 300-pound lineman in the backfield because he “thinks” this person *can* be a good running back? Or, would coach B put this player on the line to take advantage of his size and strength?

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## Healthy Recipe: Tijuana Torta

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 15-ounce can, black or pinto beans (rinse well to rid them of some sodium)
- 3 tablespoons prepared salsa
- 1 tablespoon chopped pickled jalapenos
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted
- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- 1 16- to 20-inch baguette, preferably whole grain
- 1-1/3 cups shredded green cabbage



### DIRECTIONS:

① Mash beans, salsa, jalapeno, and cumin in small bowl. Mash avocado, onion & lime juice in another small bowl. ② Cut baguette into 4 equal lengths. Split each piece in half horizontally. Pull out most of soft bread from center so left with mostly crust. Divide bean paste, avocado mixture and cabbage evenly among sandwiches. Cut each in half & serve.

### NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Calories per serving: 354
- Carbohydrates: 60 g.
- Protein: 17 g.
- Sodium: 682 mg.
- Fat: 9 g.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.
- Fiber: 17 g.



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#### LifestyleTIPS®

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## Are YOU a Tech-etiquette Offender?

While electronic gadgets are designed to make employees more productive, they also serve as a distraction, according to Robert Half Technology, which identifies some of the types of tech-etiquette offenders:

#### > Misguided multitasker –

This person thinks that emailing or texting during a meeting or conversation demonstrates efficiency. But others may regard it as a sign this employee prizes his or her BlackBerry more than the company he or she keeps. It's better to use a handheld device *only* in an urgent situation and even then, step out of the room to reply.

> **Email addict** – Excessive messages, particularly regarding trivial things, can be inefficient. A phone call or in-person discussion can resolve many issues more quickly.

> **Cyborg** – Keeping a wireless earpiece or headphones constantly plugged in signals to others who may need to speak to this person that his or her attention is *not* available. This individual must demonstrate that he or she IS accessible to colleagues by using earpieces in the office with discretion and with consideration for co-workers. ❖

Sounds simple, but many managers and supervisors act too much like coach A, and not enough like coach B. Consider these actions:

❖ **Design around weaknesses.** Whenever possible shift roles and responsibilities to give employees a chance to focus on what they're good at and what they enjoy. Fit the job to the people and the people to the job. Not all accountants have to have identical responsibilities. The same goes for any position. Few of us are universally talented. It is more important to create a team that succeeds by working *together* than to mandate that all jobs with similar titles are carbon copies of each other.

❖ **Shorten improvement cycles.** If you have an employee that has a weakness that you just can't build out of the position (for example, a worker with multiple monthly deadlines who can't juggle priorities to get things done on time), give the individual a *limited* amount of focused attention to make the necessary improvement. In general, if he/she can't start making demonstrable progress in a one- to three-month period, this person is not worth spending additional time on. Great sports coaches move quickly when they determine that a player's aptitude is insufficient for a given role. In business, time is money. Repurposing or replacing usually beats rewiring.



❖ **Focus on strengths.** Do your homework to determine what people are good at – things that give your company a competitive advantage. Identify activities that give people energy. Knowing someone's weaknesses is valuable information for selection and placement decisions. If the individual is a poor match for the position, consider making a change. The key is to focus on what the person is good at, and then improve upon it. ❖

Garold Markle is an executive consultant, speaker, and author of *Catalytic Coaching: The End of the Performance Review*. For more information, visit [www.energize.com](http://www.energize.com).