



BSR Conference 2010
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Healthier People, Healthier Planet: The Link Between Wellness and Sustainability

Breakout Session Summary
Thursday, November 4, 2010 | 2:45-5 p.m.

Speakers

- » **Harriet Hentges**, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, Ahold USA
- » **Cathy Murphy**, Vice President, Human Resources Operations, Blue Shield of California
- » **Judah Schiller**, CEO, Saatchi & Saatchi S
- » **Dave Stangis**, Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, Campbell Soup Company
- » **Kai Robertson**, Director, Food, Beverage & Agriculture Practice, BSR (moderator)

Highlights

- » In promoting healthy lifestyles, a direct, objective approach is less likely to be effective. Caring about health is personal and individual, and it is important to recognize your audience, what types of messages might resonate with them, and how to deliver them effectively.
- » A challenge of increasing employee health and wellness programs is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute improvements to any one thing.
- » It can be easy to get alignment on the intellectual level about the importance of living healthy lifestyles; but the real challenges lie in understanding how to navigate and consider differences in human nature, behavior, and psychology.

Memorable Quotes

"Human sustainability is at the center of sustainability. The planet will self-correct long after we're all gone, so it's really about ensuring that we're taking steps to sustain ourselves as humans, and that includes promoting healthy lifestyles." —Kai Robertson, BSR

"We have gone from a farming/agricultural revolution to an industrial revolution to an environmental revolution; but we haven't quite reached the health revolution, and that's what we need to do." —Harriet Hentges, Ahold USA

"People want to eat garbage and live to be a thousand years old. ... You can make very healthy food that people won't buy. We've tried that." —Dave Stangis, Campbell Soup Company

Overview

Robertson set the context for the session by commenting on the link between the health of people and the health of the planet. Although there are many ways to look at health, this session was designed to focus more narrowly on three aspects: workplace health, the link between employee wellness and engagement, and healthy lifestyle products and services. As she introduced the panelists, she urged the audience to think about new ways to integrate health and wellness with CSR, both during and after the session.

Hentges spoke about the evolution of food systems, eating patterns and preferences, and the resulting health crisis we currently face. Moving through the challenges and changes in our food



system over the past 150 years, Hentges commented that today convenience and pleasure—not health—are primary drivers in how consumers decide what to eat. Although supermarkets have had to respond to the changing demands of the food system, Ahold is taking a proactive approach and has made healthy living of employees and customers a priority of the company's CSR strategy. One area in which the company has taken action is in increasing access to affordable, healthy food in low-income communities (which are rife with obesity) by establishing grocery stores in “food deserts” (areas without grocery stores) and providing nutrition education. Ahold also launched a “Healthy Ideas” label, which enables consumers in all of their stores to select healthier items, and that has motivated suppliers to think about reformulating their products to be eligible to use the logo.

Schiller talked about health as fundamental and a gateway to employee engagement, a relationship that may be even more apparent and stronger when engaging employees around a sustainability initiative or strategy. Schiller sees health as a connector among employees and their peers and communities, and always looks at health metrics when evaluating and enhancing employee engagement. At the same time, Schiller made the point that everyone relates to health and is motivated to change their lifestyles for different reasons. Enabling that personal connection within a company involves both a top-down approach—with the right leadership, support, and metrics in place—as well as a grassroots approach based in social networking, online and offline. As companies work to attract and retain top talent, employee wellness and sustainability programs may prove to be differentiating factors.

Reflecting on his company's approach to health and sustainability, Stangis then spoke about how workplace wellness and CSR strategies can and do reinforce each other. In the same way that an individual is responsible for his or her own health, Stangis aimed to develop the same type of employee empowerment and participation in achieving Campbell's sustainability goals. By developing a strategy to transform the company in the marketplace with 10-year goals, employees could better envision the future and see how they could play a role in shaping Campbell's future.

Beginning with her perspective on the opportunity and necessity to reduce the high costs of health care, Murphy spoke in depth about the behavioral change aspect of promoting healthy lifestyles. In agreement with the other speakers, Murphy emphasized the critical role of employee well-being in employee engagement. However, underscoring that the challenge in increasing uptake of healthier lifestyle choices is not a lack of awareness or understanding, Murphy compared the tipping point to the difference between renting and owning a car. Once people realize they only get one shot at wellness, they begin treating themselves better, consequently extending that care to the people and ecosystems around them. She also emphasized the personal motivation that leads people to healthier lifestyles.

When asked about obstacles to promoting healthier lifestyles, panelists said that potential partnerships (with health organizations, suppliers, etc.) are not being fully utilized. All speakers agreed that the personal connection or access point to valuing health and wellness requires innovative thinking. They discussed opportunities for different sectors to create products and services that contribute to healthier lifestyles. The participants then broke into small groups and presented ideas around commuting, product labeling, consumer incentive and reward programs, children's entertainment, and education.

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