

**DO EMPLOYEE HEALTH &
WELLNESS PROGRAMS
NEED A SHOT
IN THE ARM?**

SURVEYS REVEAL HIGH EXPECTATIONS
AND LOW USE OF PROGRAMS

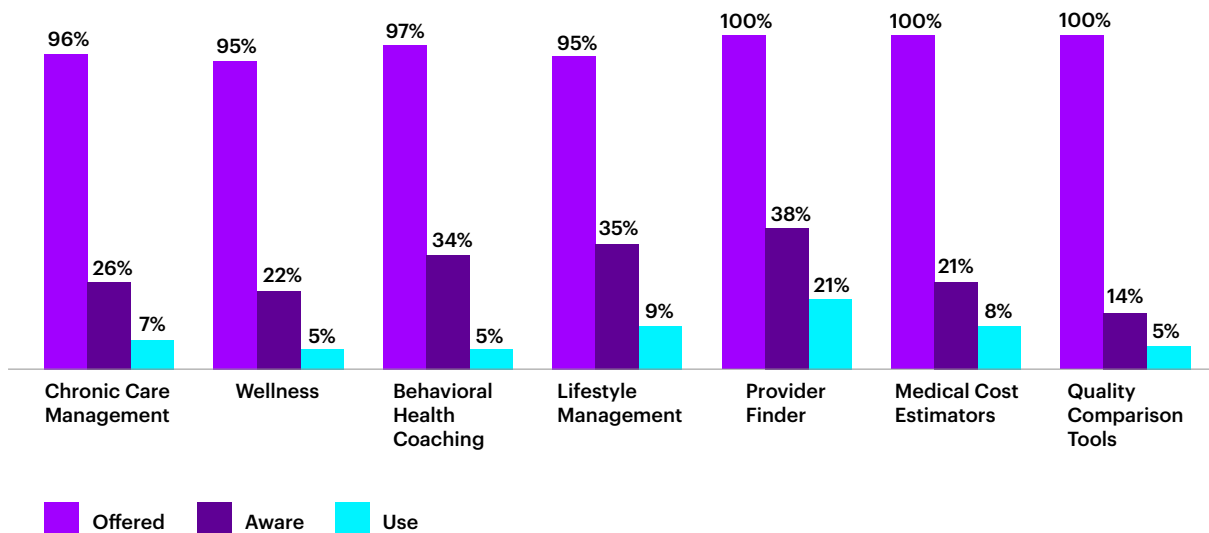
Accenture research shows that 82 percent of employed consumers believe their employers or health plans should provide health and wellness programs—but the programs offered today are falling short of their needs and expectations.

There is a distinct gap between programs offered versus awareness and use of these programs (see Figure 1). The research found awareness and utilization of health and wellness programs offered by health plans was extremely low—62 percent of employees were unaware of basic services, such as a provider finder. In addition, less than 10 percent were utilizing any other programs offered.

HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS

are portfolios of services that help people improve their ability to manage their health and wellness. These services are offered via multiple channels, and span in focus from driving use of preventive care to managing specific health events (e.g., maternity), to providing coaching in support of lifestyle changes (e.g., smoking and weight loss).

FIGURE 1. Employee awareness and use of wellness programs is low



Source: Accenture 2016 Employer Health and Wellness Survey and Accenture 2016 Employee Health and Wellness Survey

¹ The Willis Health and Productivity Survey Report 2014, <https://www.insurancejournal.com/research/research/the-willis-health-and-productivity-survey-report-2014>

² Ibid.

More than half (54 percent) of employees surveyed felt their employer-sponsored health insurance plan should provide these programs. Twenty-eight percent believe health and wellness services should be offered through a specific employer program outside of their health plan and only 13 percent felt their family physician should offer such a program.

Employers are increasingly looking outside of health plans to access health and wellness services. Industry surveys found **44 percent of employers said they used a third-party vendor** to support their wellness program, up 18 percent from the previous year of the survey.¹ Among those using a third-party vendor, 35 percent reported being “very satisfied” and 13 percent were “extremely satisfied.”²

Clearly, health plans are failing to reach and have impact on people through their current health and wellness products, so they must rethink how they design, market, and operate these products or risk being carved out of this business.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT HINGES ON DIGITAL

Health plans are missing the boat on engagement. Many of today’s employees want to interact digitally, as they do in their everyday lives.

Accenture research shows employees engage more with health and wellness programs when there is a digital engagement channel.

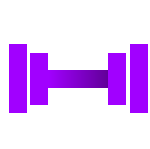
For instance, people who engage digitally respond they access the program weekly—70 percent from a mobile device and 40 percent from a computer.

Unfortunately, most plan-sponsored health and wellness programs lack relevant digital access. Less than 50 percent of employees report having access to these programs via their computers and less than 25 percent report access via their mobile device.

These types of programs are so important to employees some respond that they will pay for them. Top programs where employees responded they would be willing to pay include:



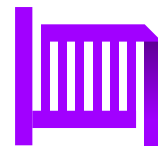
34%
BIOMETRIC



31%
FITNESS DEVICES



26%
BEHAVIORAL TRACKING

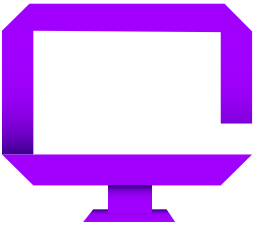


25%
MATERNITY



24%
MENTAL HEALTH

Other business-to-consumer and third-party models in the marketplace are meeting these digital demands. For example:



Digital behavior change program **Omada** helps users lose weight and reduce their risk of chronic disease through programs that seamlessly integrate with users' everyday lives across interaction channels.

On-demand healthcare concierge **Accolade**, which offers mobile, web and telephonic solutions, touts 70 percent engagement and 98 percent consumer satisfaction.

Ovia Health, which offers mobile fertility, pregnancy and maternity programs, states 95 percent of enrolled employees engage in benefits content via the company's app.

EMPLOYEES STRONGLY INFLUENCE EMPLOYER BUYING DECISIONS

Digital access for a broad range of consumer-facing services, combined with the increased availability and popularity of fitness and other health-tracking devices, has elevated employees' expectations for health services. Employers have sought and are acting on employee-generated requirements for health and wellness programs. In fact, employee surveys on care management decisions influence 59 percent of employers, versus 43 percent being influenced by brokers/consultants and 47 percent influenced by industry peers.

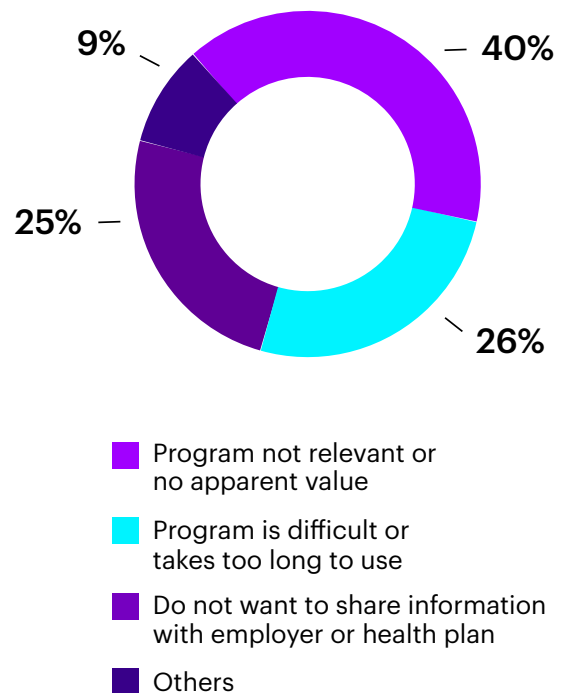
When asked why they are not using health and wellness programs, 40 percent of employees report it is because “one or more components of my wellness program offered by my employer are not relevant to me” or “has no apparent value” and 26 percent of employees report the program is “too difficult” or “takes too much time” (see Figure 2).

Such insights are causing employers to look toward third parties that can deliver on rising expectations. Among employers surveyed, 79 percent selected third-party solutions over health plans. Nearly 44 percent of employers chose a program from a third party instead of a health plan because they felt one or more components was considered more valuable than the carrier offering.

Some of the lack of utilization factors, including engagement taking too much time or program not relevant, may be contributing to 68 percent of employees educating themselves on healthcare versus only 7 percent being educated through their health plans.

If health plans fail to develop digitally accessible products and services that engage consumers and deliver value, they are at risk of losing market share.

FIGURE 2.
Factors influencing lack of program utilization



Source: Accenture 2016 Employee Health and Wellness Survey

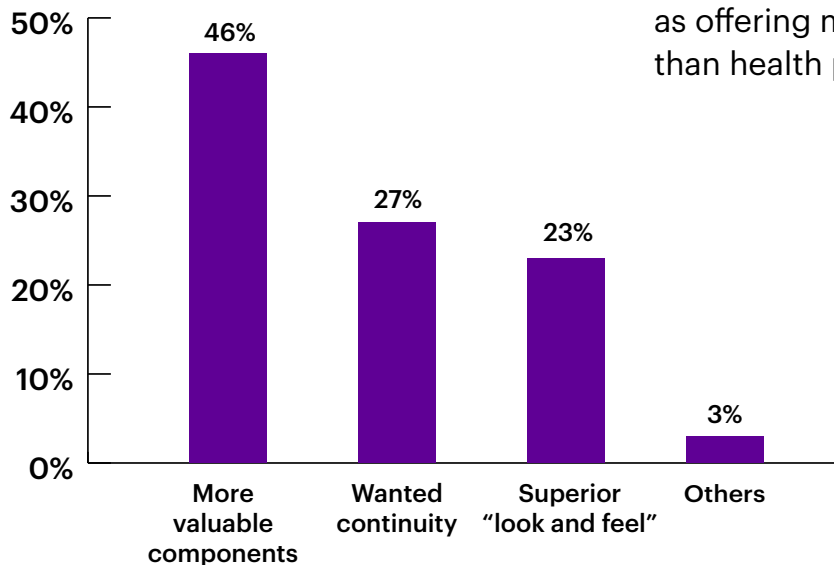
SUCCESS INDICATORS HAVE CHANGED

Employees' expectations are influencing purchasing decisions among employers, while at the same time, employers lack confidence in the value health plans are delivering.

Accenture research on employer buying behaviors reveals employers view employee active engagement as a key measure of success, above same-year claim cost reduction.

When asked what they are looking for in a health and wellness program, employers (84 percent) rated employee engagement number

FIGURE 3. Employer reasons for looking to third-party provider of health and wellness program components



Source: Accenture 2016 Employer Health and Wellness Survey

one overall, higher than return on investment (ROI, 79 percent). ROI continues to be elusive to prove, with only 39 percent of employers responding that they have confidence these programs deliver ROI. Employers understand they need to offer health and wellness programs to demonstrate their commitment to their employees and be competitive against their market peers. The data suggest employers are looking at their employees' use of these programs as the true measure of their value, both in terms of the number of employees who access the programs, and the persistency of that access (how often and for how long).

Perhaps most alarming for health plans, 60 percent of employers report they are looking to reduce scope of services purchased from health plans. The top reason employers are looking to third-party providers of health and wellness program components is because employers see third parties as offering more valuable components than health plans (see Figure 3).

THE GAME PLAN FOR HEALTH PLANS

To compete, health plans must modify their health and wellness products to be designed to better appeal to employees' desires for relevant, multi-channel services that are digitally enabled.

HERE'S HOW:

1 Know your customer's customer. Employers are listening to what employees want, and health plans should listen, too. Understand what key features are most important, what programs are most desired and how employees would want to access programs. For employers measuring success based on employee engagement, these programs must be digitally enabled and user-friendly to promote use.

2 Be future ready. Emerging digital trends are influencing the way services are delivered—and the landscape changes every day. Look to the developing trend of **artificial intelligence as the new user interface** through which voice interfaces and chatbots help solve engagement issues. Also, there is a rising need to manage for individuals, not populations. Artificial intelligence for the enterprise can provide insights into how to modify or expand services, and it can yield opportunities for better personalization through a continuous learning loop. The key is to continually iterate to keep pace with changing demands.

3 Tap into the ecosystem. Creating leading-edge digital solutions isn't a core capability for all health plans, so determine the best path forward. Does it make sense to develop a solution, partner with others and white label, or have an open system where the health plan can collaborate with a number of other providers for services ranging from analytics to security to digital marketing?

Employees want access to health and wellness programs, and employers want to deliver programs their employees will use and find valuable. Active employee engagement may lead to a healthier and happier workforce. Health plans must heed this wakeup call and rethink how they shape and sell health and wellness products, before it's too late.



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ABOUT THE ACCENTURE 2016 EMPLOYER HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY

Accenture conducted an online survey of 253 employers across different industries in the United States. We sought input from employers for the health and wellness program components they offer in their organization. The employers surveyed were of different age, gender, ethnicity and have used or plan to use one or more wellness programs. The survey was conducted in October 2016.

ABOUT THE ACCENTURE 2016 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS SURVEY

Accenture conducted an online survey of 3001 employees across different employers in the United States. We sought input from employees for the health and wellness program components being offered to them by their organization. The employees surveyed were of different age, gender, ethnicity and have used or plan to use one or more wellness programs. The survey was conducted in October 2016.

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