

Individual Wellness Programs Pay Off

At Barge Waggoner Sumner and Cannon, we believe in building the whole professional. Knowing our employees spend a great deal of time in the workplace, work-life balance is not just a theory; it is something we actively support through our wellness program and by building a healthy-living culture across all our offices.

Work-life balance has to start with each individual and that person's situation. We invest a great deal in the training of our employees, whether it is skill training or leadership training, and we take that a step further and offer programs that build individual wellness. The payback for both training and wellness is a workforce that is engaged, healthy and happy.

Wellness is multifaceted, impacting our spiritual, family and work lives. As a company, there are some really basic things that we can do to encourage our employees to seek wellness and work toward an overall improvement in their quality of life.

It begins with our leadership team participating in the various health programs we offer and encouraging their employees to participate, as well. Each employee begins with a health assessment. We have found this accountability to be a great motivator. And we make wellness activities accessible and convenient to our employees. By hosting a boot camp and yoga classes on-site or near the office, we make it easier for employees to participate and work exercise into their schedules.

Providing free flu shots for our employees and their family members helps prevent illness for their families. The payback for us is less absenteeism and higher productivity. One major benefit we have found is the incredible team building that occurs within our firm. There is something special about completing a boot camp as a team or winning a dragon boat race that brings our workforce together and allows them to be competitive as a unified group.

Mayor Karl Dean and other community leaders make it easy for us to support improvement of a total quality of life for our employees. He has built great momentum around healthy living in our city through his successful Walk 100 Miles with the Mayor initiative and last fall's Mayor's Challenge 5K Walk/Run.

We are proud participants in the Mayor's Workplace Challenge, which recognizes and encourages places of work in three areas that contribute to a high quality of life: being green, healthy and involved in the community.

We encourage our fellow businesses in Nashville to participate. Sign up at www.mayorsworkplacechallenge.com.

Education leaders have welcomed our engineers and architects as part of Metro schools' STEM programs. The city also helps by building features into the landscape and infrastructure that enable us to use green space and parks where we hold our boot camp and yoga programs.

The key to the success of Barge Waggoner is our people, and we want them to enjoy success in their personal and professional lives.

Bob Higgins, PE, is CEO of engineering and architectural firm Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon Inc.