Training Manual

Promoting health in Louisiana through informed food choices and an active lifestyle.

www.oyohla.com

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Own Your Health

Physical Activity Challenge and Nutrition Challenge
(How It Works)

The Own Your Own Health (OYOH) Challenge encourages Louisianans to develop healthy activity and eating habits. Participants are encouraged to form teams of 2-10 people or they can compete as individual participants. Kids and teens may have as many as 10-30 members per team. ***Team and Individual participants can choose from one of the three challenges:***

- ✓ **Physical Activity**
- ✓ **Weight Loss Challenge**

REGISTER ONLINE

1. Recruit your Team for program.
2. Visit www.oyohla.com.
3. Click on the "Get Started" button in the middle of the page.
4. On the next page click on "Not Registered" link.
5. Click on the User Agreement and scroll to the bottom and click 'Agree.'
6. Captains sign up first by completing the profile page.
7. Captains click on "Create A Team" link and follow instructions.
8. Then, every member signs up and completes the profile page.
9. Team Members will click on "Join A Team" link.
10. Then locate their team, hover mouse over it and click "Join."
11. A confirmation letter via e-mail from OYOH staff will follow shortly thereafter.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Teams or individual participants involved the Steps Challenge, can enter their steps if using a pedometer, or enter the amount of time it takes to complete one of our listed activities at any time. Team progress will be updated and can be viewed by clicking on 'Challenge Progress,' then scroll to the bottom of the page and see the rankings.

Team captains and individual participants can report their totals via the web site www.oyohla.com or can send an email to: oyohlouisiana@gmail.com.

Own Your Own Health encourages you to set realistic goals and make informed decisions about your health. OYOH Program offers:

- A Free pedometer upon logging on to OYOH for the first 1,000 participants.
- Own Your Own Health t-shirt after completing the program
- Chances to win prizes and incentives every week
- Weekly activity, nutrition and recipe tips via e-mail
- Personalized online dashboard to track your progress
- Team Leader boards
- Personalized meal plans
- Customized Workouts
- Community Message board
- Calorie charts and MORE

Other Prizes: Starting January 16, 2015, there will be weekly drawing for fabulous prizes, and the OYOH crew will continue to give away prizes every Friday while supplies last. Winners will be announced on the OYOH website and by a special e-mail blast to all participants. The first 1,000 participants that sign up will get a free pedometer, and those who complete one of the two challenges will have a chance to win a t-shirt. Every team or Individual Participant will receive a certificate of completion.

LIGHTEN UP LOUISIANA
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Own Your Own Health?
Own Your Own Health (OYOH) is a "3-month" competition that encourages Louisianans to develop healthy activity and eating habits. Louisianans can form teams or sign up as individuals and engage in friendly competition, or if you do not like competition, you may still participate and track your progress.

How many people can be on my team?
Adults can have 2-10 people per team. Can't find a
team? With the new OYOH you can join any team you wish and be on multiple teams.

How much does OYOH cost?
There is no cost at all. The program is absolutely free.

What does my registration include?
Weekly activity and nutrition tips and a chance to win prizes.

Where do I get an entry form?
Entry forms can be downloaded from the OYOH Web site: www.oyoh.org or **you can register online.** For more details see page 4 of this handbook.

When is the deadline?
Entries will be honored anytime during the program.

Is there team competition?
Team and individual competition will recognize achievements in two areas: weight loss (due to healthy, appropriate diet and physical activity while achieving Milestones. Remember, If you don't prefer competition, you may still participate as an Individual Participant.

What does the winning team receive?
Winners in each category will receive a certificate of completion and an OYOH T-shirt.

Who to contact?
If you need more information not found in this handbook, email us: oyoh@gmail.com or call
our toll free number: 1-866-562-9015.

What are the requirements for the weight loss division?
Each member of a team submits an anonymous 'honor' weight when they register on-line. Participants may update their weight any time. Winning teams or individual participants are those that lose the highest percentage of weight over the 3-month program. You may submit your honor weight on the OYOH website.

What are the requirements for the accumulated activity division?
Teams and Individual participants will qualify for prizes by reporting your totals to the OYOH website. Winners will be determined by the order of finish. Totals may be entered on the website or e-mail them to us at oyohlouisiana@gmail.com.

How do we report our team's progress?

Participants can report their progress directly to the Web site by logging in with his/her username and password. Step-by-step directions on how to report team or individual progress are on page 8 of this handbook.

What are the responsibilities of the team captain?

The team captain is the motivational leader of the team. He/she is responsible for sharing the weekly nutrition and activity.

What happens if a team member quits the team? Is our team out of the program?

Not to worry...you can now make adjustments to your team roster or e-mail us: oyohlouisiana@gmail.com.

1. Have the member Logon to the OYOH website
2. Click on the "Join A Team" Link on the left menu
3. Click on "Leave Team" Link beside the team name.

Own Your Own Health

Registration

www.oyohla.com

Participants are asked to complete the Own Your Own Health three-month Challenge

Team Registration (Captains)
Step One:
Captains must register first by clicking on the "Not Registered?" button. On the next page is the User Agreement. Scroll to the bottom and click 'Agree.'

Step Two:
Complete the Profile form on the next page and click SAVE and Continue. You will then be taken to the main tracking page.

Step Three:
Click on "Join A Team" link. Then, on the next page click on "Create a Team" at the top right of the page.

Step Four:
Complete the Create A team page and at the bottom click the "Submit Team for Approval" button.

Step Five:
You will then receive a message saying that your team has been submitted for approval, which is at the bottom of the page. You will then receive an e-mail letter informing you that OYOH received your request to start a new team and it will be configured into our system.

How to Sign up Team Members

Step One:
Have all team members sign up individually. Make sure you remember your username and Password.

Step Two:
Click on the "Join A Team" button link

Step Three:
Search for your team name, put your mouse over your team and click 'Join' on the pop-up window that appears .

Want to leave a Team?

Step: One
Login to the OYOH site and click on the "Join A Team" link, search your team name and click Leave.

Step Two:
Search for your name and put your mouse over your team, and click 'Leave.' On the pop-up window that appears.

If you are not using a pedometer, just select your activities on the Count Activity option.

Individual Sign-ups
You can jump into the competition or you can go on your own. It's entirely up to you!

How to report Steps, Mileage

Teams and Individual Participants can report their totals via the Web site if using a pedometer or you can choose An Activity and log your totals as minutes that will be converted into miles. Participants can follow the steps below or they can email their progress to: oyohlouisiana@gmail.com.

Entering Team Totals If Using a Pedometer:

Step One: Login to the OYOH site.

Step Two: Enter the number steps in the Steps Counter on the welcome page and hit the ADD button.

Participating Without a Pedometer

Step One: Login to the OYOH Website

Step Two: Click on "Choose an Activity" option on the welcome page and choose an activity.

Step Three: Enter the number of Minutes it took to complete your activity.

Step Five: Click ADD Button

NOTE:
The Minutes you enter will be converted into Steps and Miles.

Sign Up for Weight Loss

If you have already registered, just click on "Profile" located on left navigation bar, and under the "Choose Your Challenge" drop down menu, choose your weight loss challenge. Click SAVE and Continue. You will then be taken to the main tracking page. If you are a new user, follow Team registration Steps one through five.

WHO COULD YOU BE TEAMMATES WITH?

Finding a team is easy. Do you have co-workers? Or are you a member of a club or church? Then you have several areas in which to recruit teammates. As a team captain you may already have a team put together, but here are a few ideas that may help you increase or recruit members.

ADULT TEAMS MAY INCLUDE:

- recruit co-workers at a school staff meeting
- make an announcement in the school's newsletter
- place reminders on the bulletin board in the teachers' lounge
- place sign-in sheets in each faculty member's mailbox
- Company teams at the jobsite

Team examples include:

- elementary, middle or high school teachers
- school librarians
- school nurses
- administrators
- "math" vs. "language arts" faculty/staff
- bus drivers
- school cooks
- school board members or booster clubs

OYOH TEAMS MAY INCLUDE:

Mothers and Fathers
Sisters and Brothers
Aunts and Uncles
Grand Parents
In-laws
Cousins
Nieces and Nephews

COMMUNITY TEAMS

- community boards and clubs can offer a challenge to one another – to walk the most miles, lose the most pounds, eat the most fruits and vegetables, etc.

Team examples include:

- board of supervisors, school board, city council, park and recreation departments, library board
- service clubs – Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Jaycees

Tips for success:
Communities could recognize these teams' successes in the local newspaper or during a community event. Improving healthy lifestyle habits could lead to better stress management and better decisions.

FAITH COMMUNITY TEAMS

- make an announcement at the beginning of the service or put information in the bulletin or newsletter

Team examples include:
Establish teams from groups in your faith community such as the board, deaconesses, missionary committee or adult fellowship groups, the "church staff" vs. the "church choir". You can even form friendly competition among other faith communities in your town.

Tips for success:
Does your building have a gym, large meeting hall or long hallways? These might offer a location for walking in inclement weather. Measure the length to determine distance walked. Walk to gather food for the local food bank, join together to help a local or national cause by walking in its event (i.e. Heart Walk).

WHO COULD YOU BE TEAMMATES WITH?

FAMILY TEAMS

- introduce the idea at a family event
- include household members as well as extended family

Tips for success:

Encourage family dinners that include fruits and vegetables. Include physical activity each day. Have the family join a fitness class together. Decide on some specific family prizes for each member or the entire team when you achieve your goals. Designate a place for a team bulletin board to chart success for family motivation.

OLDER ADULT TEAMS

- create competition between meal sites and/or senior centers in various communities
- write articles for newspapers or newsletters
- work with church-parish nurses

Team examples include:

- grandparent/grandchild teams
- teams at senior centers, meal sites or senior living apartment complexes
- teams from established groups, such as church groups, golden-age bank clubs, libraries, hospital 60+ groups and legion auxiliaries.

Tips for success:

Organize weekly meeting times at a gym, mall or building with long hallways. Measure the length to determine distances walked. Borrow a measuring wheel from a local athletic group and make maps available of various routes. List local resources for walking (i.e. walking paths, school tracks, malls, gymnasiums and around the inside of a large store). Having a support group to monitor and encourage progress in health goals is always beneficial. Set times and locations for seniors to meet, walk and socialize.

WORKSITE TEAMS

- post a sign-up sheet at the water fountain or on the bulletin board
- send email to employees
- form teams from various departments, work shifts or building floors and develop some friendly competition.
- established weight-loss support groups could become involved to add new interest and incentive to their current programs

Does your worksite have long hallways that might offer a location for walking in inclement weather? Measure the length to determine distances walked. Borrow a measuring wheel from a local athletic group and make maps available of various routes. List local resources for walking (i.e. walking paths, school tracks, malls, gymnasiums and around the inside of a large store). At the worksite, take 15 minutes during lunch to walk and use the stairs instead of the elevator.

SECRETS FOR A SUCCESSFUL
Own Your Own Health TEAM

NOTE: Don't get overwhelmed by your responsibilities. Successful team captains have noted they delegated various duties to their team members. They felt this encouraged ownership and fostered creativity among teammates. If you have your own secret of success, please email it to: oyoh@gmail.com

Tips Shared by Successful Teams:

- *Take measurements* - once a month, take selected measurements; many times measurements change before the scale does.

- *Focus on the process, not the outcome* - instead of focusing on losing a certain number of pounds, focus instead on getting out and walking five times a week.

- *Utilize a pedometer as a training partner* - 10k a day - strive to reach 10,000 steps a day (approximately 5 miles).

- *Set smaller goals and reward yourself when you reach them* - when you've reached a certain mileage, treat your feet to a massage, pedicure or even some new shoes.

- *Visit your local library and check out books on tape/CD* - when walking by yourself in a SAFE environment, this helps pass the time and can provide motivation to exercise if you only allow yourself to listen to the book if you're moving.

- If your place of employment has multiple floors, post a chart at the top floor to track number of flights walked (place children's artwork in the stairwell to add cheer).

- *Don't become disillusioned if you hit a plateau* - think of it this way, you didn't GAIN weight, you've stemmed the tide.

- *Get out of your comfort zone* - sign up for a class in something you've always wanted to do (i.e. tap dancing, yoga, swim lessons, etc.); have teammates join you.

- *Find a short box and place it in front of your TV* - now you can be stepping up and down while catching a favorite show.

SHARING THE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL
Own Your Own Health TEAMS
(cont'd)

Ideas that you can do together with your team:

- Tie-in a public service project to your team's weight loss. An example might be to collect one pound of food for each pound lost and donate it to a local food pantry or tally miles walked as you go from door-to-door collecting donated food pantry items.

- Schedule a group walk.

- Support local fitness events (even volunteering can add mileage).

- Select a GOAL for the week - examples might include...drink eight glasses of water a day, share a health article or healthy recipe with the group, take an extra five minutes every morning to stretch, etc.

- Propose a "challenge event" - challenge team members to reach a certain mileage for the month/week or strive for five servings of fruits and vegetables over a defined time frame.

- Track team mileage on a map and reward yourselves when you reach a certain location - for example, walk to New Orleans and hold a Mardi Gras party when you arrive.

- Build team unity with a monthly gathering of your teammates - hold a potluck and have team members bring low-calorie dishes along with the recipes or plan an activity-based event.

"USING A PEDOMETER WAS THE KEY TO MY SUCCESS!!"

Some say that by wearing a pedometer during their day, they were able to document ways in which to add more steps to their normal daily routine. Another participant shared, "My pedometer also served as a true workout partner in that it motivated me and wouldn't listen to any of my excuses for not moving that day."

It can improve your health

- Studies show that taking about 10,000 steps a day is the target for improving health and reducing risk of chronic disease.
- Experts recommend 12,000 to 15,000 steps daily to achieve substantial weight loss.
- Moving at an increased speed for 3,000 to 6,000 of your daily steps can improve heart health.

Measure your steps

During the first week of the Own Your Own Health program, don't make any changes in your normal routine. Use the pedometer to track the steps you take each day. Important: remember to reset your pedometer to 0 at the end of the day or in the morning before you clip it on.

DAY OF THE WEEK	# OF STEPS TAKEN
SUNDAY	
MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	

Goals

If you are below an average of 10,000 steps or if your goal is 12,000 to 15,000 steps for substantial weight loss, it is suggested that you work on increasing your steps in small, achievable increments. Most people find it manageable to increase their steps by 20 percent daily.

Divide the total steps you took last week by 7. Now multiple this number by 1.2. This is your new Own Your Own Health target for moving this week.

Track your steps with a pedometer and increase your steps by 20 percent each week until you reach your overall goal of 10,000 steps, or 12,000 to 15,000 steps for weight loss.

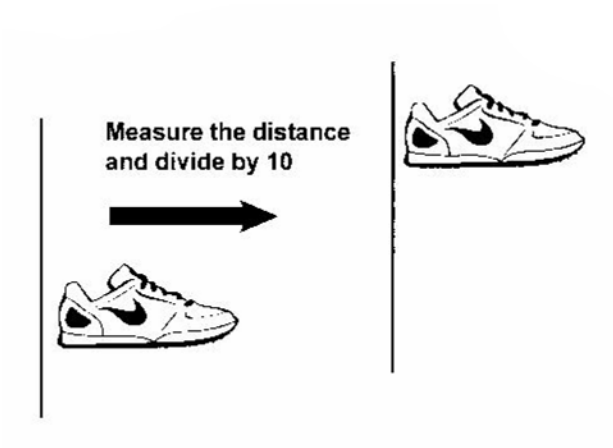
"USING A PEDOMETER WAS THE KEY TO MY SUCCESS!!"

(cont'd)

Measure your stride

Measure at least 10 steps. Do this by completing the following:

1. Mark a spot on the ground or on the floor.
2. Place the heel of one foot against the mark and take 10 steps. Place a second mark behind the heel of the foot that took the 10th step.
3. Measure the distance between the two marks in inches. Now divide by 10. This is your step length.



This Chart shows the number of steps it takes for various step lengths to walk a mile

STEPS LENGTH IN INCHES	NUMBER OF STEPS IN ONE MILE
15	4,224
16	3,960
17	3,727
18	3,520
19	3,335
20	3,168
21	3,017
22	2,880
23	2,755
24	2,640
25	2,534
26	2,437
27	2,347
28	2.263
29	2,185
30	2,112
31	2,044
32	1.980
33	1,920
34	1,864
35	1,810
36	1,760

How to increase your steps

- Park at the back of parking lots instead of at the front.
- Get up and walk during television commercials
- (1 hr. of television = 17 minutes of commercials).
- Take stairs instead of the elevators.
- Walk on your lunch break.

Report your distance

1. Total the number of steps taken in a month.
1. Find your step length and the number of steps in a mile on the chart above.
3. Divide the total number of steps you have taken by the number of steps in a mile for your step length.
4. Use the monthly log sheet to keep track of daily miles.
5. Report the final amount (number of miles) to your team captain.

Helpful Tips for the Own Your Own Health Initiative

1. Leadership/Support

Probably one of the most important components to launching and promoting a successful health promotion program is having the support of leaders in your organization or community. Since you already have signed on to the OYOH program, it's likely your leaders are already supportive, so why not get it in writing? For some people, it's vital to see that their leaders not only are "talking the talk" but are also walking it. OYOH offers an exceptional feature where leaders can post their stamp of approval! Before launching online program, speak with a known leader in your organization or community and ask them to submit a letter of support on the Testimonials page for future participants to view. Having community leaders, the mayor or a local celebrity athlete can do a lot in providing that extra motivation required for some to start taking action toward better health. Additionally, team captains can put their "champion" on the challenge map so everyone can view their progress to stay motivated. As well, these high profile people are often spotlighted in the local media or community news. So, in addition to a testimonial, why not ask them to promote your OYOH challenge at their next speaking engagement or in their next headline! Perhaps even ask them to assist in branding the event as well by wearing some event paraphernalia that shows off the program logo so that it becomes a well-known symbol in your community. It's usually best to get leaders involved well in advance to give them time to prepare testimonials, community newsletters, etc., so that those materials are publicized at least a couple weeks before the program launch date.

2. Community Involvement

Another important consideration to keep in mind when implementing your OYOH wellness program is to ensure that the people you are intending the program for be involved in the program design and planning process. These "participatory action-based" programs often yield better results because the people feel included in the process (not a "big-brother" approach) and they can provide better insight into what the wants and needs are of the target population. So, in the initial stage of your planning process find some champions in your community to form a committee and get them involved. Their involvement might include feedback on site content, communication materials e.g. posters, challenge design (type, duration and frequency) and prize ideas. In turn, offering them praise for their efforts, incentives and recognition amongst their peers can retain them for future wellness initiatives. Recognizing their efforts in the community newsletter or local newspaper and offering prize incentives for creating a team are great examples of how you can retain your champions for longer periods.

Be sure to maintain regular communication with your teams using the Message Centre. Keeping the teams informed can help them support one another which help produce better program outcomes. Team Captains can also communicate with their team via the message centre or by hovering over their team name on the dashboard and clicking on the "send message to members' link". It's also good idea if you have any members involved in program administration that you provide the necessary training required for them to utilize the software effectively. As a result, combining software training along with some leadership training might prove an effective way to recruit and retain these people on-going. OYOH offers additional software training for team captains, clerks and professionals.

Finally, it's important to remember that the best means of recruiting and retaining participants in the OYOH program is through word of mouth. These champions are your best promotion al tools and can spread the word quickly about the program through informal and formal means that you may not have access to or know about. Team Captains can also use the OYOH website to invite people to join their team by hovering over their team name on the dashboard and clicking on the "invite member" link. (if enabled).

3. Target Audience

It's important that you know your population and their health needs. If you have taken a "participatory action " based approach, you are well on your way in administering a successful program. In a workplace situation, before you get started you may want to consider offering your target population a needs assessment using the health assessment module (option available only with OYOH. By determining your population's health needs, you can customize your challenges to address those needs. For instance, if you discover that a significant portion of your population has unhealthy eating habits and/or are overweight, you may wish to administer a nutrition challenge using the health trackers option, a steps tracker challenge, a weight loss challenge or you may want to administer a wellness score challenge that incorporates all three components.

4. Motivation/Incentives

Although some of your target audience may be "intrinsically" motivated to participate in your wellness challenge, that is to say they do it just because it feels good, others may still require" extrinsic" motivation. OYOH offers a variety of motivational tools including milestones, testimonials, wellness score, health tips, message boards, buddies, events calendar, e-cards, the challenge total thermometer and bulk email. These helpful tools can be used to foster team spirit, inspire individuals to do their best, offer useful health information to assist participants in overcoming personal barriers and make the challenge more fun for everyone! In addition to these software components, promoting local walking trails by setting up public routes on the activity tracker page is a great way to motivate individuals in being more active in their local area and community. It might also be helpful to participants if you posted tips on how to start a walking program on the activity tracker page in a content box above your route map or on your internal welcome page.

a) Milestones

When creating milestones, you need to consider the length and duration of the challenge and whether or not the milestones can be achieved by most of the participants. Ideally, milestones should be based on the 10,000 steps a day standard for better health. For example, if you have an individual challenge for people that is 300,000 steps total over 30 days, setting milestones starting at 10,000 steps might be encouraging for most participants since it is likely that they will all hit 10,000 steps at some point during the challenge. As the challenge progresses, milestones may then be added every 50,000 steps to encourage people to be more active. This ensures that most participants will reach a milestone every week while allowing them one or two days of rest should they require it. Keep in mind that if you're creating a challenge according to your target population's activity levels e.g. sedentary, be sure to create milestones that are realistic for their activity level as well. Milestones can also be set up for weight loss and tracker challenges. When you create milestones for weight loss challenges, be sure to set milestones that are congruent with a healthy weight loss program (1-2 pounds or up to 1 kg per week). Weight loss milestones are set by adding the percentage of weight loss required to be achieved in the progress field. So, setting up a milestone for 20% weight loss might not be realistic (nor

healthy) for an 8 week weight loss challenge. In addition to providing milestones, it can be helpful for participants to set a goal weight on their profile page. This gives participants a “destination” for their weight loss challenge.

b) Testimonials/Message Boards

Having a prominent person in your community (e.g. Celebrity athlete, mayor or CEO) write up a letter of support for your program on your testimonials page can help motivate and inspire others to participate and do their best. People are more likely to get involved when they see champions in their community or leaders model the change that they are looking for in their own lives. It might also help to offer small draw prizes e.g. stainless steel water bottles to participants that share their success stories. Moreover, choose one of the stories that really stand out and highlight it in the company newsletter/community newspaper along with the participant’s photo to help inspire others.

Having participants post messages on the Message boards can be a really useful tool that encourages team camaraderie and individuals efforts. The challenge message boards also promotes healthy competition amongst teams and individuals that sometimes can provide that extra boost of motivation participants may require to stay on track!

c) Buddies

It’s a fact, people are more likely to engage in healthy activity if they have someone to do it with participants can invite a friend to join them on their wellness journey using the buddies feature on their dashboard. As a result, participants can see their buddies challenge progress and send motivational messages to each other on their own private talk board.

d) Wellness Score

Offering incentive points for engaging in your wellness program can be an effective way to keep participants motivated. The wellness score is a means to create a points program for your participants. In turn, participants can receive badges on their dashboard for achieving a specific number of points and they can use their wellness score points to purchase rewards (e.g. water bottles, back packs).

e) Health Tips

People often require information about how to make healthy choices in their lives. One of the largest barriers to making these changes is finding and having access to reliable health information. Fortunately, OYOH health tips are an option that provides users with helpful up to date information about various health topics including physical activity, nutrition and stress management. Providing relevant information to participants can give them the boost they may need to remain involved in challenges and events, and to integrate healthy choices into their lifestyle. To be sure that you are providing relevant information to your participants, it is helpful to know their health needs first. Setting up an online Health Risk Assessment before launching your challenge is a great way to understanding your audience’s health issues. OYOH captains may want to use survey monkey to get a snapshot of their participant’s health issues and lifestyle behaviors or by contacting a local health authority for some health statistics.

f) Events Calendar

An informed group of people is an involved group of people! captains might also consider using the events calendar feature as an option to promote opportunities for users to participate in upcoming health related workshops, courses, activities and events. These events may provide the catalyst to change for some participants to create more positive and healthy lifestyles. As well, these events become an excellent venue to promote upcoming challenges and to award past challenge winners!

g) E-cards

Complimenting other motivational tools, this feature allows OYOH users and team captains to send out memorable electronic cards with personal messages to inspire others. It can also be used by managers to keep people informed about any upcoming events, draw prize winners or health related information. As well, people appreciate when others take the time to acknowledge their efforts and by doing so the recipients are more likely to stay focused on their personal goals and give their best! As such, by utilizing this feature with all of the other motivational tools, captains will get much better results!

h) OYOH Total Thermometer

Setting a collective steps/points or weight loss goal for your challenge participants can be effective in keeping participants' interest levels high. The challenge total thermometer can be added to the dashboard so that your participants can watch their shared efforts accumulate and eventually reach that 100% goal marker. This is a great feature to use in conjunction with charitable giving too so that participants feel they are contributing to the "greater good". If you would like the challenge total thermometer added to your dashboard contact OYOH staff.

i) Bulk Email

An effective way to motivate users to participate in upcoming challenges is by sending out registration information, prize announcements and motivational messages using the bulk email system. This system allows captains to filter messages so that it reaches an intended audience. For instance, if you are trying to encourage past users who have not participated in a challenge for a number of months, you may wish set up a filter that sends a message out only to individuals that have not logged into the site for a certain number of days.

j) Prizes

Prizes can help boost program registration and encourage users to maintain activity levels throughout a challenge while decreasing attrition (drop-out) rates. First though, consider your budget and the number of prizes you are able to give away. Typically, frequent smaller prizes (or a combination of both) keep participants motivated rather than larger "grand" prizes offered only once. In addition, although regular weekly prizes may be effective in motivating your participants, it can also be beneficial to offer random prizes as participants may be more inclined to stay involved if they do not know when to expect a reward for their efforts.

You will also need to consider whether or not the prizes are practical. Are they shipped easily? Will the person/team be picking them up? Are they prizes that appeal to your entire population, e.g. men or women?

Next, you will need to determine the prize eligibility process. Will they be given out by random draw? Will the prizes be linked to the number of days a person tracked activity? Whatever you choose, be clear on how prizes

are determined. Most steps, most improved since start of challenge, first to the finish, etc. If you are looking to motivate more sedentary individuals, it might be best to base prizes on “Most improved” performance. You can find this information using the step participation by challenge report for step based challenges. For the active participant, you might want to set up additional optional challenges that have prizes based on total steps or first to reach the finish line. Although offering challenge prizes based on individual efforts might help maintain participant tracking throughout the challenge, prizes can also be given out for participation alone like frequency of login on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Basically, think about your audience when determining the prizes and consider the health and wellness message you are trying to convey. Offering t-shirts, stainless steel water bottles, activity passes, etc. might be good incentives for activity challenges while healthy cookbooks, fruit baskets and healthy cooking classes might be more ideal for nutrition challenges. Lastly, be sure to promote your prizes on your site’s home page and announce prize winners using the bulk email feature.

Another great source of free prizes can be your local recreation center. They may donate free swim passes, skate passes or fitness passes as a way to introduce people to being more active right in their own community. Often local sport businesses like golf courses, ski hills, bowling allies will also offer gift prizes for the whole family to try out the facilities. You can recognize them and give them some great exposure by adding their logo on the site. Captains can also use the milestones report for milestone tracking and selecting prize winners.

k) Goal Icons

Using the health tracker module, captains have the ability to change the goal icons as frequently as you could like. Instead of using a check mark all the time, try changing it up a bit. Perhaps, use a gold medal icon instead to provide a little extra motivation. If you have any questions about how to change the goal icon for your health tracker, email OYOH staff: oyoh.org.

5. Provide Options

One of the key elements of a successful wellness program is fun! One way to keep participants motivated throughout the challenge is to create interesting challenge routes and maps for your program. Creating maps for challenges doesn’t have to be mundane, think about some exotic destinations that people often envision visiting on holidays, and then select an interesting route to get there. Use the step scale feature to ensure that your challenge participants can reach these exciting destinations realistically by the end of the challenge. Along the route, mark some interesting points and include some historical facts, pictures or customs about the area. Alternatively, information points are also another way to provide useful health tips for your challenge participants. Program participants can also select or upload their own personal avatar (upon registration) to mark their progress along the challenge map making it more fun for everyone.

Another great way to incorporate fun into your challenges is to use an overall theme and incorporate it into every aspect of your challenge. For example, you may wish to run a Crime Mystery Challenge that uses milestones for clues, provides famous detective facts in the map info, points and celebrates the challenge success with a Crime Mystery party at the end. If you require assistance in creating a map for your challenge, contact OYOH technical support at oyoh.org.

Offering fun, interesting programs is definitely one way to boost participation levels. However, team captains must also consider multiple health issues, levels of fitness and the stage of readiness to change of the target population. As fun and interesting as a challenge may be to some, it can be discouraging for participants if the final destination isn't a realistic one for many of them to reach. When creating your routes, base the distance on the 10,000 steps a day recommendation for maintaining health and well-being. Even this can be too long for people starting out an activity program, so provide options for sedentary individuals along with one or two other routes geared for the moderately active and extreme athletes to help prevent attrition. Since some of the extremely active participants might finish a 10,000 steps a day route too early, try adding on an extra challenge at the end.

Another thing to consider is that participant interest can wane if the challenge created is too long in duration. As such, consider shorter step challenges (4-6 weeks) that require less commitment on the participant's behalf, with smaller prizes. For health tracker challenges (e.g. nutrition, hydration), consider changing it up every 3-4 weeks and cap the number of health behaviors that individuals track at 3 or 4 at most. It can be overwhelming (especially for their first challenge) for participants to keep a record of more than two health behaviors at once. Moreover, consider that with shorter challenges come more promotional opportunities for managers to communicate with participants and/or the public which may give your program the continued exposure it requires to maintain participation levels. In addition, consider running a longer challenge (with a grand prize) that is several months in duration concurrently along with these shorter challenges, e.g. a weight loss or wellness score challenge.

Another way to maintain participant interest that managers can also consider is using the handicaps option on the "create a team" page in order to equalize the playing field. For instance, giving a sedentary group a handicap of two doubles the team total steps for every step an individual enters. This can help motivate these individuals to "stay in the race" and keep up with other more active teams. As well, consider using the unit's multiplier when creating tracker icons for tracker challenges. This exponentially increases the number of points an individual can achieve if they are successful in reaching their daily goal. For example, if an individual requires checking off 6 units to reach their daily goal and the unit's multiplier is given a value of 10, that individual is given 60 points for that day's total which sounds much better than just 6 points if they were set to 1 point each! These extra points can provide the extra motivation that some individuals require to stay active. It can also be a great way to structure a prize incentives program, setting up point levels that individuals need to attain in order to be eligible for a draw prize. Again, the best way of determining prize eligibility is to use the milestones report in the report features of your OYOH package.

For multiple health issues, consider using multiple trackers (nutrition, stress management, hydration, etc...) and type of challenges (activity, weight loss, and tracker). Remember that it's always good to "change it up" and have different challenges at different times of the year. As well, consider that some people in your population might not be ready to be active just yet. These people may be contemplating still and require information that will help them get active. As such, promoting and using the health tips module option, providing links to online health resources in the content boxes, offering workshops and using the events calendar option and allowing individuals to join optional challenges may be the best way to gently nudge less active people towards taking action for better health. For OYOH users, utilizing the health risk assessment module option might also be a helpful tool in providing information to motivate the under active or sedentary part of your population and can bring awareness to those individuals that aren't aware they might have a health problem to begin with.

Finally, set your participants up for success! Offer website demonstrations to your target population on how to utilize the tracker software before the start of your challenge. This allows participants an opportunity to ask questions as well as provides you with another promotional venue. Additionally, provide lots of opportunities for participants to engage in healthy behaviors so that interest levels remain high throughout the challenge and healthy habits are encouraged. For instance, set up a walking group in your community or at your worksite to encourage participants in a physical activity challenge. Alternatively, organize a fruit basket program for employees in the staff lunch room that are participating in a nutrition challenge.

6. Communication

Although utilizing all of the OYOH motivational tools will help managers run successful wellness programs, the way in which the message is conveyed is equally important. Here are some things to consider as part of your communications strategy:

a) Know your Audience

Consider your population's demographics (e.g. age), level of comprehension and language. If your population is young or has low literacy levels, keep the message clear and simple. If you are dealing with multiple languages consider adding extra time built into your planning process for translation of materials. In future, if you require site configuration or support in another language, please contact OYOH support at oyoh.org or 1-866-562-9015 outside Baton Rouge or 225-342-4886.

b) Reinforce Program Objectives

The program that you are designing will need to be described. As such, emphasis should be placed on the key objectives of the program within all communication materials. When designing the program, remember to use the S.M.A.R.T. goal principles. Typically, emphasis should be placed more on participation, healthy behavior change and personal bests, rather than competition with other participants. (Unless it's a team challenge in which case promoting some healthy competition can be motivational!)

c) Share your Success

It's important to inform your challenge participants and leaders about OYOH successes regularly in order to increase participant awareness of their activity and reinforce the program's objectives. A great way to share this information effectively is to use the bulk email feature on the OYOH site.

d) Use Other Communication Alternatives

In addition to your OYOH motivational tools, look for alternative way of promoting your program or challenge to reach as many people within your target population as possible. Depending on your audience, consider company letters or bulletins, recreation program guides, community centers, employee meetings, audio-visual presentations, posters, pay stuffers, buttons, t-shirts, Church/Community meetings, schools, Facebook groups or advertisements, community newspapers (stories, registration),links from company or community websites, reader boards, etc. might also provide extra exposure for your program.

7. Evaluation

As every team captain should know, one of the key components to a successful wellness program is to evaluate its efficiency and effectiveness and to make program modifications based on these results. A good program evaluation looks at information to learn both how well the program is working (process measures) and whether or not it is achieving the expected results (outcome measures).

Before launching a wellness challenge, captains should consider establishing a baseline of participant health behaviors. Establishing a baseline is an excellent way to see whether or not an individual and the population as a whole have improved their health as a result of participating in the wellness program. In other words, having outcome measures alone isn't that effective if you don't know where you started! Generally, having participants track their normal health behaviors for approximately 3-7 days at the start of any challenge will help establish a reliable measure to determine whether or not the challenge itself improved participants' health behaviors. Establishing this baseline initially is also important because typically many people start "fast out of the gate" and are eager to make healthy changes but begin to wane a bit as life demands and motivation becomes an impediment to maintaining their momentum. As such, captains need to know how effective the program was in reaching its objectives. This can be done throughout the program or upon its completion.

For instance, the Step Participation by Challenge report shows the number of steps participants have entered, average steps per day, baseline average steps, as well as their improvement since baseline and the number of days steps were entered. The baseline can even be changed in the report to match what was decided initially when setting up the challenge. Another helpful report to use is the site statistics report. This report allows managers to view a summary of the overall site usage. Important information such as the number of participants, teams, number of logins, challenges created, challenge sizes, total challenge steps and steps by activity is available for managers to utilize in their evaluations. Probably one of the best ways to evaluate your program while it's still in progress, using OYOH, is to create milestones and draw upon the milestones report to track how many people have reached that goal. Regardless of how managers choose to structure their evaluation efforts though, it is essential that the evaluation methods link back directly to the program's goals and objectives.

Moreover, using reliable evidence based statistics is essential in creating successful wellness programs. OYOH offer a variety of reporting features that allow captains to determine how well a program is performing and whether or not the objectives are being achieved. For example, captains might want to know if the challenge promotion efforts were efficient. Did the registration campaign recruit people from the intended target group? If so, how many registered and are currently active? To find out, managers can draw upon a user profile report to determine if they reached their target group (e.g. sedentary individuals or a specific age group), as well as the number of participants from that target group. Fortunately, the Steps and Weight loss challenge statistics reports offer this type of information including estimated savings for active participants as well as absenteeism, presenteeism, short term disability and drug costs for inactive participants, and estimated annualized medical cost savings for BMI points lost.

As well, a generic survey is available (check show survey box when creating a challenge) to provide you with an understanding of whether or not your participants perceived health improvements during the challenge and if they would participate in future challenges (and what type). The aggregate survey results are available in the Steps, Points, Weight loss and Wellness Score challenge statistics report. You might also need to know what

participants thought of the challenge itself. Finding out about how participants viewed the registration process, communication methods, prizes, website content and ease of use can help improve program administration for future challenges. As such, you can have a customized pre or post challenge survey (up to six questions) added to the dashboard in order to collect all the necessary data you require to assess your program accordingly.

It's also equally important for managers to communicate any evaluation results to program participants so that they have an opportunity to see how well their dedication and efforts paid off, inspiring them to participate in future programs. The best way to inform participants of course is by using the bulk email feature or posting directly on the internal welcome page. The bulk email feature can also be used to send a message to past participants (using a "days since logged-in" filter) to encourage them to fill out a post-challenge survey in order to determine whether or not they sustained their healthy behaviors months beyond the end of the challenge.

Finally, the last ingredient to a successful wellness program is to ensure that the information utilized to plan and evaluate programs as well as any health related information is up-to-date and reliable. Using dependable information can help managers avoid issues in both the planning and implementation phases. As well, it is especially important when providing any health related information that it is accurate because misinformation may have serious consequences on an individual's well-being.