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## **GLOBAL WELLNESS SURVEY – COST MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES REVEALED**

**LONDON:** 5 November 2008 – Buck Consultants (Buck), an ACS company and one of the world's leading human resource and benefit consulting firms, announced the results of its second annual global survey on Workplace Wellness Strategies.

Buck's study, **'WORKING WELL: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies'** analysed responses from more than 600 organisations in 25 countries, representing more than 10 million employees – some 600,000 working in the UK. The research was conducted in association with vielife, a CIGNA company, as well as Wolf Kirsten International Health Consulting, and WorldatWork.

Workplace Wellness Strategies can be used as part of a cost management programme and are aimed at improving employee health, engagement and business efficiency. The survey shows that employers in the UK have a unique combination of top drivers that motivate them to introduce a Workplace Wellness Strategy. They are:

1. Reducing absence
2. Improving productivity
3. Improving employee engagement

In contrast, the top driver for US employers is to reduce healthcare costs.

**“This broad range of objectives is not surprising,” said Adrian Norris, Head of Buck's UK Health Consulting Practice. “It reflects how wellness initiatives can address a variety of employers' challenges around the world.”**

The survey also assessed how effectively today's Workplace Wellness Strategies are meeting employers' business objectives. Among UK respondents, 46 percent report a moderate to high reduction in employee absence attributable to their strategy. Improved workforce morale and engagement scores even higher, with 61 percent reporting a moderate to high impact in this area.

**“Even a small incremental reduction in employee absence can produce considerable savings for employers,” said Adrian Norris, “but equally significant is our finding that 41 percent of UK respondents indicate that they have not measured the impact of their**

**Workplace Wellness Strategies on absence rates. Worldwide, 40 to 60 percent of organisations are not measuring the impact of their Workplace Wellness Strategies and therefore don't know the extent of the benefits.”**

These findings indicate that UK Plc is recognising that, especially in tightening economic times, investing in the health and wellbeing of employees does bring improvements in attendance, engagement and, hence, productivity. **Adrian Norris continued: “In the current climate, we fully expect employers to increasingly recognise the impact that a Wellness Strategy can have on employee engagement and productivity, and that the tools to better measure return on investment will continue to evolve.”**

The fastest-growing components of global wellness initiatives in Europe/UK are on-line healthy lifestyle programmes. Other rapidly growing programme elements are: healthy food options, on-site healthy lifestyle classes, health risk appraisals and work/life balance support. According to Buck Consultants, use of these programme components is predicted to grow dramatically over the next three years – in some cases, by more than 100 percent.

Incentive rewards, designed to improve employee participation and engagement in wellness programme activities, are most popular in the USA, but are gaining some traction in all parts of the world. Rewards may be targeted on a variety of activities such as incentivising taking a health risk appraisal or biometric screening, or taking part in a workplace health challenge, such as walking or weight loss programmes.

Whilst Workplace Wellness Strategies are most prevalent in North America, they are rapidly growing in popularity in the UK and elsewhere. 40 percent of those surveyed now offer a Workplace Wellness Strategy – approximately twice the percentage from last year.

In fact, the argument over whether to have a Workplace Wellness Strategy seems to have been won within those companies surveyed, with only 3 percent having no plans to introduce such a strategy now or in the future.

The survey indicates that, in the UK, 16.4 percent of respondents have fully implemented a health promotion and Wellness Strategy, and 34.5 percent report that their strategy is partially implemented. 14.5 percent reported that, whilst having no strategy at present, they intend to develop one over the next two years. Only 3.6 percent reported that that they have no plans at present for a Wellness Strategy.

Additional wellness issues covered by Buck's global survey include programme ownership, global design components, employee feedback, and communications.

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**Notes to editors:**

**Buck Consultants**, an ACS company, is a leader in human resource and benefits consulting with more than 1,500 professionals worldwide. Founded in 1916, Buck is an innovator in the areas of retirement benefits, investment advice, health and welfare programmes, human resource management, compensation and employee communication. News and other information about Buck Consultants are available at [www.buckconsultants.co.uk](http://www.buckconsultants.co.uk). Buck is an independent subsidiary of Affiliated Computer Services, Inc (ACS).

**ACS**, a global FORTUNE 500 company with 62,000 people supporting client operations reaching more than 100 countries, provides business process outsourcing and information technology solutions to world-class commercial and government clients. The company's Class A common stock trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "ACS." ACS makes technology work. Visit ACS on the Internet at <http://www.acs-inc.com>.

**vielife** has been in operation since 1988 to help improve individual and organisational performance and health. vielife's mission is to be a global leader in the critical task of transforming the way individuals, employers, health plans and governments manage physical and emotional well-being. In 2005, vielife was awarded the Institute for Health & Productivity Management (IHPM) President's Award. For more information, please visit [www.vielife.com](http://www.vielife.com).

**Wolf Kirsten International Health Consulting** helps international corporations, organisations, and governments improve the quality of life of their respective population through innovative, culturally appropriate, and cost-effective health promotion programmes. International Health Consulting is based in Berlin, Germany, and calls upon a global network of health promotion experts. More information is available at [www.wolfkirsten.com](http://www.wolfkirsten.com).

**WorldatWork** ([www.worldatwork.org](http://www.worldatwork.org)) is a global human resources association focused on compensation, benefits, work-life and integrated total rewards to attract, motivate and retain a talented workforce. Founded in 1955, WorldatWork provides a network of more than 30,000 members and professionals in 75 countries with training, certification, research, conferences and community. It has offices in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Washington, D.C.

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The survey report, 'WORKING WELL: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies,' is available to the media by contacting Terri-Ann Humphreys on +44 (0) 20 7429 1278.