



One Size Fits **None**

How to develop an engaging wellness program
customized to your employees' needs

June 2020 • A report from IncentFit



Thinking like a marketer

Imagine you're scrolling through your social media feeds. Between pictures of friends and family, an ad pops up.

You hadn't intended on buying anything, but the content makes you pause. It's exactly the thing you'd been looking for! And the aesthetic feels almost...familiar. You can picture yourself in this ad. You can picture yourself with this thing.

So you click through and make a purchase.

This isn't random — that content and product was specifically designed to target you, and others like you. **That's marketing segmentation at work.**

At its core, marketing is about delivering the right message, product, and service to the right person at the right time. Segmentation helps make that happen.

Marketing segmentation is the practice of

creating groups of people to represent your different types of customers. They are united by some common characteristics, like demographics, behaviors, preferences, or needs.

Part of the job is to create and supply those groups with content, messages, and products *specifically made* for them.

And today, people expect that kind of personalized service — whether it's for pure entertainment or something as serious as their health.

So what if we applied this approach to wellness benefits? What if we created a wellness program that was targeted and personalized for your employees?

To create the best and most engaging wellness program, you need to think like a marketer and personalize your approach to suit your employee segments.

In this report, we'll help you start to think about wellness with customization in mind.

You'll have the tools to identify several employee segments, and understand how to develop an engaging wellness program customized to your employees' needs.

Interested in further reading? We've linked to several other reports within!

Not personalizing can cost you, both in lost investment and in lost trust.

A recent survey released by health care policy experts even showed that of all employees who choose not to participate in their company's wellness program, **one in three of them said it was because the program didn't feel relevant.**

The program didn't feel like it was made for them, so they didn't bother joining. Some probably stopped paying attention to HR's benefit communications entirely.

That compelling reaction you had earlier?
Probably just the opposite.

Marketing to “everybody” means you're missing out on chances to make a strong connection with the people you're really trying to reach. And everyone else? They'll start ignoring your irrelevant messages altogether.

Failing to personalize your wellness benefits means you're missing out on employee engagement *and* squandering their trust and attention.

"Not personalizing can cost you, both in lost investment and in lost trust."

To go back to the social media feed example, imagine how you'd feel if you got an ad that was clearly not made for you. An engagement ring company when you're already married, or an ad for back-to-school supplies when you're nowhere near that phase of life.

Creating your **custom** wellness program

As marketers have learned, you can't run one campaign to target everybody.

The "spray and pray" tactics of the past—advertising your business anywhere and everywhere, hoping that people will notice you—don't work, and only waste your resources and time.

Likewise, you can't run one wellness program to suit every employee. You need a tailored plan to suit both your business objectives and your employees' unique needs.

As an employer, you set the terms for what your goals are as a company—whether that's cost savings on healthcare, improved employee engagement and productivity, or attracting new talent.

Your employees have their *own* goals, needs, and health concerns. Effectively customizing your approach means you need to consider both your business needs and the needs of your people.

This process takes time, but we can break it into three major steps: **research, design and implementation, and iteration.**

Research and Segmentation

To properly segment and personalize your wellness program, you need to understand your employees' needs, goals, health concerns, preferences, and more.

When developing your program, or considering changes to an existing program, ask for their input directly via **employee surveys.**



Your surveys can include questions about their current health status and activity levels, as well as the types of benefits and wellness initiatives they would like to participate in.

During this research phase, also **review your healthcare claims data.**

People with chronic conditions (including diabetes, asthma, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, and depression) generally use more health care services, including doctor visits, hospitalizations, and prescriptions.

Is a significant portion of your employee population managing chronic illness? Which conditions are costing you the most? You can also run a **health risk assessment (HRA)** to help in this process.

From there, you should have enough data to start establishing segments.

Every company has **at least two employee segments**—but most likely you have more.

You can use the results of your survey and claims review to establish your first

two segments: those who need a disease management program and those who would benefit from a lifestyle wellness program.

Those two populations are distinct and unique, so they will need different program approaches, messaging, and incentives.

But you can break down your segments even further. *(See page 7 for a chart of this process.)*

Within your disease management program segment, identify the most prevalent conditions and the interventions needed to treat them.

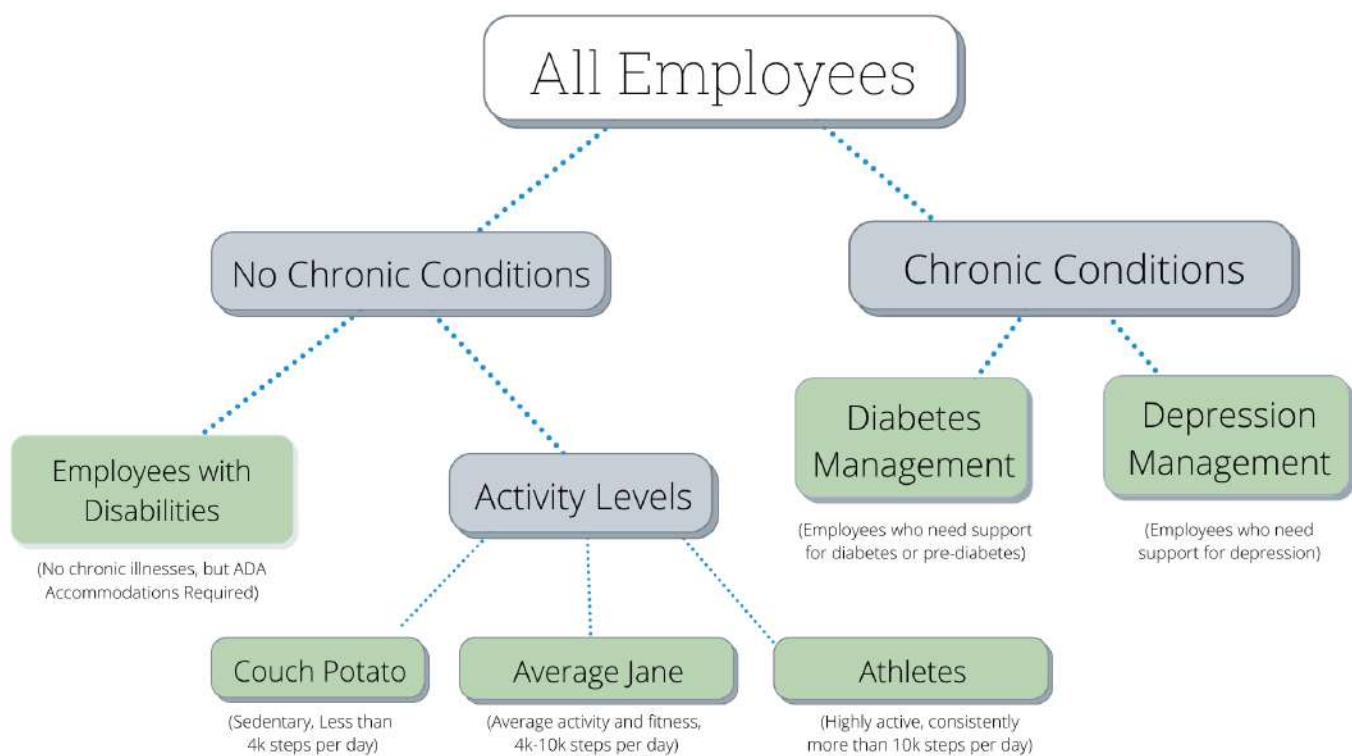
You wouldn't treat diabetes and depression in the same way, so therefore you easily can establish at least two segments based on those conditions.

Within your lifestyle wellness segment, you can establish other segments based on fitness/activity level.

Most often, you'll have three activity level segments: Couch Potatoes, Average Janes, and Athletes. (Pro tip: nicknaming your segments makes it easier to remember.)

This chart represents the segmentation process.

This example company has gone through the process to segment by chronic conditions, ADA requirements, and activity levels. The six final segments are represented in green.



Another segmentation example would be for employees who require ADA accommodations.

As a general rule, employers should structure their wellness plans to ensure that individuals with disabilities have **equal access** to the program's benefits; and are not required to complete additional requirements in order to obtain equal benefits. In practice, that could mean sharing information in an alternate format or adding an alternative activity requirement if your employees are unable to exercise traditionally.

This process might seem overwhelming, but you don't need to identify *all* of your segments before launch; just recognize that you have a few and that they may evolve. You can always add more segments later, as employees show you what they need.

Program Design

A program that feels tailored and meaningful will always increase engagement.

Essentially you need different programs for different people. Does that mean two programs, or various levels of intensity within the same program? Sometimes, the answer is both—especially if you have employees who need disease management support.

A disease management program specifically helps employees with high-risk health needs. By design, it only helps those who are eligible. So if your company invests in a disease management program, you will *also* need to have a lifestyle program engage the rest of your employees.



Interested in why you'd need both a disease management and a lifestyle wellness program? Check out "[*Taking A Two-Part Approach to Wellness*](#)," another IncentFit publication.

We'll cover the differences between the two approaches, and explore how companies can optimize their programs using the 80/20 principle.

Within a lifestyle wellness program, you're likely to have a variety of needs and fitness levels represented. Does it make sense to engage everyone on the same level? No.

Most likely, if you offer the same program and incentives to all of your employees regardless of activity level, you'll see people on either end of the spectrum drop off, and **engagement will suffer**.

From content to rewards, everything can and should be personalized for better engagement.

(See page 10 for a chart representing how different segments can receive custom communications, incentives, and more.)

Iteration and Growth

Finally, a crucial step in program success is iteration. Your program will not thrive if you don't continuously work to improve it.

Once you've launched your "campaign" you need to review, monitor, and adjust. Continue to survey your employees for regular feedback.

Also review engagement rates (both monthly and annually) for patterns, and intervene if program engagement falters.

Understand what your competitors are doing. Pay attention to trends in the market, and in health and wellness as a whole. And then adjust course, keeping your business needs and your employees' needs in mind.

And just like a marketer, ask: are your segments getting the right message? Did we build them the right product? Are your employee groups being served with the best wellness program for their needs?

If yes, keep going! If not, what can you improve?

In this chart, we've broken out four example segments.

Each group has unique needs, behaviors, and preferences. To meet those needs, this is how some of our clients customize their programs, communications, and incentives to increase engagement.

SEGMENTS	PROGRAM	COMMUNICATIONS	BENEFIT PLAN	INCENTIVES
Diabetics	Disease Management	Tips to stay active, improve nutrition, and avoid blood sugar spikes	Access to diabetes management services	\$100 per year reimbursement for nutrition classes
Employees who Self Identify with Depression/ Anxiety	Disease Management and Lifestyle Wellness	Content about the signs and symptoms of poor mental health; information about the benefits of exercise and stress relief	Rewards for exercise, gym visits, and online health courses	\$5 per gym visit; \$1 per mile walked/run; \$5 for completing online health surveys or courses
Sedentary Lifestyle	Lifestyle Wellness	How to incorporate simple activity and exercise into your everyday routine	Rewards for walking and gym visits	\$5 per gym visit; \$1 for taking 8,000 steps in a day
Athletes/Active Employees	Lifestyle Wellness	Invitation to wellness challenges with peers, ways to avoid sports injury, info on company-sponsored 5k race	Rewards for exercise and gym visits, access to wellness challenges	\$4 per gym visit (with a monthly cap); \$1 per mile walked, after 5 miles per day; \$1 per mile, running or cycling

How IncentFit handles customization

In our system, we approach everything with a flexible mindset.

Employers can customize everything from communication preferences to the structure of rewards, and which products are available to which people.

Different employee segments are called “user groups,” and each individual is in one user group. Admins work with our benefit experts to control which features are offered to each group.

Here are a few ways we typically see employers customize for different user groups:

HSA/HRA vs Payroll: employees are split into user groups based on how they receive their benefits, either as a contribution to a health reimbursement account or health savings

account, or as a cash reward via payroll.

Spouses vs Employees: employees’s spouses are included in the wellness program, but offered a different benefit package (for example, spouses can earn up to \$100 in rewards per year, versus \$250 for the employee)

ADA compliance: employees who need accommodations for a disability or health condition are grouped into a benefit plan that suits those needs, and complies with ADA.

Challenges: employees have a choice of different types of wellness challenges, based on activity level or challenge intensity. We'll even dynamically segment and group employees so that the same people don't win every challenge.

Rewards: rewards for fitness, nutrition, sleep, and other categories so that employees can



What Can IncentFit Customize?

- Invitation Emails
- Custom Login Screen/Landing Pages
- Communication Preferences
- User Groups
- Rewards - Eligible Activities
- Rewards - Incentive Amounts
- Rewards - Fulfillment Mechanisms
- Gym Check-In Requirements
- Types Of Challenges
- Challenge Communications
- Challenge Rewards
- Goals
- Reimbursement Criteria
- Reimbursement Amounts
- Types Of Surveys
- Survey Questions And Possible Answers
- Survey Communications
- Marketing Collateral
- Mobile Notifications
- SMS Messages
- Help Content
- Educational Content

These are just a few of the features we regularly update for clients. Our advice: don't start with a list of what you want customized. Start with the segmentation process, and then seek out a vendor who can customize to suit those needs.

choose which aspects of their personal wellness journey they'd like to focus on.

Goals: Users are grouped based on the goals they personally select in our system (for example, completing a certain amount of activities in a month).

There are plenty of other ways employers can segment and tailor to different groups, these are just some of the most common in our system.

Traditionally, this level of customized service was only available to Fortune 500 companies.

That's because most wellness companies lack the tech and personalization options necessary



When you're investing in your employees' health and wellbeing, how do you know if it's worth the money? What does a return on investment look like, and how do you calculate it? For further reading, download [*Measuring What Matters*](#), another free IncentFit publication.

to be effective, especially on a smaller scale or with a lower budget.

So how do we achieve it? We're a tech company first!

At **IncentFit**, we wanted to build a company that would grow with our clients, and would serve small- and medium-sized businesses with the same care as big corporations.

We found a way to deliver this for much smaller groups without the high cost—by bringing our technology in-house and giving our clients the tools to update the program themselves.

From our mobile app to our activity tracking system, we built this platform ourselves

specifically so we *could* offer this.

The result: clients who meet their employees unique wellness needs *and* get the highest monthly and annual engagement in the industry.

Every wellness program executes these tactics differently. But personalization in wellness is here to stay, and it's the key to getting **sustained and meaningful engagement in your program**.



IncentFit is a health and wellness benefits company. Founded in 2013 as part of New York's BluePrint Health accelerator and headquartered in Philadelphia, IncentFit supports hundreds of employers and health insurance providers across diverse industries—from Fortune 500 firms to manufacturing powerhouses, to public universities and nonprofits.

Visit [IncentFit.com](https://www.incentfit.com) to explore wellness options and speak with a benefits expert.

© IncentFit Corporation – June 2020 – By Allie Ilagan
All rights reserved, content may not be reproduced or republished without express permission.

[IncentFit.com](https://www.incentfit.com)
144 North 2nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106
1-844-246-2368