Dear Delegates,
Welcome to Surf City XII!

On behalf of the Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program, it is our pleasure and honor to welcome you to our twelfth annual advanced delegate conference, Surf City XII. The Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program is a nationally ranked organization with over thirty-five years of conference management experience, making us one of the more senior MUN programs on the west coast. At Surf City XII, all committees are chaired by delegates in their Junior or Senior year who have themselves competed at conferences across the nation. Our chairs also undergo a rigorous three month training program to ensure they’re experts in procedure and their topic. Topic Synopsis are thoroughly vetted by our Secretariat and Advisor Staff along with outside consultation to be sure they reflect only the finest of our program. Topics and committees are chosen with an eye for relevance and accessibility to delegates—we have never entertained any less-than-professional committees, and nothing other than constructive debate is ever entertained on a committee floor. All of our staff is readily accessible via email, and information is made available in a timely manner by email and our website, hbhsmun.webs.com. We hope you’re excited as we are for this conference.

We also wanted to take this time to remind of the importance of research and preparation for this conference. Surf City MUN has a reputation as a mecca for the most competitive and knowledgeable delegates on the west coast, and we highly encourage you to invest your time to ensure you can compete at that level. Position Papers are highly encouraged for each topic; you can find the Position Paper Guideline on our website. To be considered for Research Awards, papers must be submitted to your chairs by Friday, January 23rd. HBHSMUN complies with the UCLA Position Paper Format.

On behalf of all of us at HBHSMUN, we’d like to thank you for choosing to attend Surf City XII. We’re devoted to ensuring you have the best possible MUN experience you’ve had yet, and with your help we’re confident we can achieve that aim. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of us, we’re more than happy to help. See you in January!

Sincerely,

Varsha Midha
Secretary-General

Julianna Gilman
Under-Secretary-General

Julia Clark
Under-Secretary-General

Anna Sedykin
Under-Secretary-General
Welcome to the World Economic Forum at Surf City XII

All questions and position papers can be sent to weforum.surfcityxii@gmail.com by January 23\textsuperscript{rd} at 11:59 PM

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO DELEGATES: We have updated the questions to consider as of 1/9/2015 for both topics. We have done this to better focus your solutions on an international level. Any questions can be sent to the email listed above. Thank you!

Hi guys my name is Michael Eliot, I’m a senior, and I will be your head chair for the World Economic Forum. I’m also on the board for Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations as our website director and head of tech stuff, so if you see someone run in in a panic over someone’s computer, that is probably why. I’m very active on the HBHS campus and am on the board of our National Honor Society and California Scholarship Foundation. I also love the sciences and am a captain of the Science Math Academic Competition Team, have written and submitted my own scientific research paper, and am a peer tutor for AP Physics. In my spare time I’m an avid fencer and have been competing nationally all throughout this year. Can’t wait to see you all and talk about business!

Hello delegates! My name is Justin Wong and I will be your vice chair for this committee. I am currently a senior at Huntington Beach High School and MUN has been an extremely influential part of my life. I am currently a member of several clubs here on campus including Key Club, California Scholarship Foundation, Connections, and National Honors Society. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with friends, browsing the internet, playing the guitar, and practicing my archery skills. Surf City MUN will be my last opportunity to chair this year and I’m excited to see all of you in committee.

Hello My Name is Jared Ruiz and I am your legal and I am a junior at Huntington Beach high school. I have actively participated in the MUN program and have enjoyed myself greatly. This is my first time chairing and I know it will be an interesting time. I dabble with engineering in the schools engineering club and hope to pursue this subject into the future. Aside from school work, I spend time collecting stamps, coins, and all manner of odds and ends. I cannot wait to see all of you in committee, it is sure to be an enjoyable experience.
**Topic 1: Emerging Technologies**

**Background**

Technology has become the basis for modern society, globalization would simply not be possible without the forms of communication, transportation and power we rely upon today. New technologies are appearing every year, and advances in power, computation, medication and transportation stand to revolutionize society. Such advances will greatly improve how diseases are tackled, reducing emissions while improving power output, and improving people’s lives; however such gains are not without their problems. Many technologies grow faster than contemporary government regulatory systems can enforce, bringing their legality into question. This is especially true of Drones and UAVs. Furthermore, many new technologies are poorly understood and questions as to their safety and ethics have arisen. Such is the case with stem cell research and GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). Finally many beneficial technologies simply do not progress due to inadequate funding.

Notable examples of recently emerging technologies include drones and 3-D Printing. While the idea of an unguided aerial vehicle has existed for decades, recent advances make both constructing and funding such an endeavor cheap and easy to accomplish. In addition, advances have made drones equipped with laser guided weapons a common, but legally questionable, weapon in the international war on terror. Furthermore, the relative ease in which UAVs are obtained in the private sector has raised questions regarding privacy, and safety. While the benefits to using UAVs in the commercial sector abound, questions posed by the public and international community remain.

Secondly, the rapid development and commercialization of the revolutionary 3-D printing process. The concept, once limited to research and development programs, and costly inefficient manufacturing in specialized fields, has now become relatively cheap and more prevalent in the commercial sector. While various methods exist in the process, it essentially transfers models from computers to physical objects. The possibilities inherent in 3D printing are limitless, leading to advancements in prosthetic limbs, manufacturing, and art. While 3D printers have become more common, questions, such as the legality of 3D printed Firearms, and copyright protection exist. 3D printing remains a technology that is growing faster than can be contained by modern legislation.

Despite the benefits to many emerging technologies, there remain issues that prevent widespread use, lack of funds for substantial development, societal objection, and insufficient research. Many third world countries do not have the resources to pursue development of emerging technologies, as well as being unable to afford technologies developed by other nations. Another problem faced by emerging technologies, specifically in the biological field, is societal acceptance. Many technologies such as stem
cell research have faced opposition due to objections based on ethics and conflicts with various religious ideologies\textsuperscript{iv}. Many emerging technologies must pass regional acceptance to ever be utilized. Finally, in many cases there is insufficient collaboration between nations to develop internationally beneficial technologies. Emerging technologies, with their pros and cons, have the ability to change the world.

**UN involvement**

The United Nations has taken a proactive stance on emerging technologies. During the 2005 World summit, the UN recognized Emerging technologies as a necessary factor in achieving the millennium development goals\textsuperscript{i}. The UN continues to provide for these goals through various organizations. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is one such organization. The CSTD provides advice on science and technology to the subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) providing valuable information to the organization and development of beneficial emerging technologies internationally\textsuperscript{vi}. In addition, further work is carried out by the United Nations Group on the Information Society (UNGIS\textsuperscript{vii}). While originally not involved with the topic of Emerging technologies, recognition of its importance led to expansion of its objectives through General Assembly Resolution A/RES 62/208\textsuperscript{viii}. While the benefits to emerging technologies and the need for cooperation are fully endorsed by the UN\textsuperscript{ix}, the dangers inherent in many emerging technologies have not been ignored. Recently the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, in its 61st session, acknowledged the dangerous implications of emerging technologies\textsuperscript{x}. The UN continues to remain an active participant in the field of emerging technologies.

With the impact emerging technologies can have on the world today, many organizations, including the World Economic Forum, have dedicated much time and effort into pursuing promising innovations. One such body is itself a division of the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council is an annual meeting made up of those in the forefront of their respected fields. In collaboration with industrial leaders the top ten emerging technologies to focus on are presented and discussed. These emerging technologies are further analyzed through the Network of Global Agenda Councils, a collection of more than 1,500 experts in the fields of medicine, energy, and transportation. Another respected organization in the field of emerging technologies is the Forum Academy. Its sponsorship of the Global Technology Leadership Course, the Forum Academy hopes to fulfill the goals of the World Economic Forum by educating those in the commercial sector, putting emphasis on organization and cooperation\textsuperscript{xi}. Further innovation is carried out through the Meta-Council on emerging Technologies, whose dedicated objective is to advise business leaders and government in developing technologies through 2014 - 2016\textsuperscript{xii}. While the international response has been commendable, many emerging technologies with substantial benefits to society remain neglected. While the effectiveness of the international response is questionable, true utilization of emerging technologies still relies upon the commercial sector on a national level.
Case Study  
**Body-Adapted Wearable Electronics (“Wearables”)**

The World Economic Forum lists body-adapted wearable electronics as one of the top 10 emerging technologies in their global agenda report of 2014 (Ashwin 2014)\(^{xiii}\). Often simply referred to as “wearables” or “wearable tech,” they are devices that are intended to be worn and can be used for a wide variety of purposes, and are most commonly considered for health and fitness. They include such popular products as the FitBit, FuelBand, Google Glasses, JawBone, and others. In the health and fitness niche, wearables are used to monitor exercise, track heart rates, monitor sleep patterns, and otherwise aid in people gauging and adjusting their health and fitness regimen.

According to recent statistics, currently just one in 10 American adults owns a wearable fitness tracker, but the next decade is forecasted to produce an explosion of new wearable devices and wearables pervasiveness will become widespread in the United States and begin to gain traction around the world (Olsen 2014)\(^{xiv}\). Employers are looking at wearables as a means to keep down their healthcare insurance costs with their employees, and healthcare insurance companies are pursuing tapping into wearables to better manage the costs of providing healthcare.

One concern underlying wearables is the potential for privacy issues. Not only would healthcare companies be able to tap into personal habits based on the data collected by the wearables, they could use the data to potentially determine private behavioral preferences and habits. A survey by PriceWaterhouseCoopers found that 82% of consumers reported that they were worried that wearable technology will invade their privacy (Welsh 2014)\(^{xv}\). Concerns include that organizations will peek into private matters and that governments will potentially intrude upon the populace and become a 1984 “Big Brother” by having the most intimate of details about what people do, where they go, etc.

Most wearables are currently considered “standalone” devices, but will eventually be plugged into the “Internet of Things” and become part of a widespread interoperable ecosystem (Basulto 2014)\(^{xvi}\). Doing so will mean that a person’s wearable device might communicate with a myriad of other devices around them, including smart devices in the home, and even in places like the traditional shopping mall where a store might communicate directly with a wearable device. These interconnections also raise the specter of security issues, including that hackers could gain access to private wearable data via unsecure networks, and perhaps, even worse, gain control of the wearable devices and potentially harm the wearer (Bonnington 2013)\(^{xvii}\).

Despite some of these potential concerns and drawbacks, companies across all industries are looking closely at wearables and considering ways in which it will either impact their core products and services, or trying to find ways to create new products and services incorporating wearables into their existing and future wares (Ranck 2012)\(^{xviii}\). Beyond just fitness and health, wearables can be used for aiding workers in factories and
manufacturing plants, they can be used by workers in the transportation industry, etc.
Entertainment companies see ways in which wearables can augment existing entertainment options, and can add gaming and other exciting supplements to
conventional video. Wearables will potentially enhance disabled bodies by providing wearable skin sensors and body devices for the blind, the deaf, and for those that are paralyzed.

The wearables market is currently pegged at $9.2 billion globally, and forecasted
to rise to $30.2 billion by 2018 (Clare 2014)xix. The advent of body-borne wearable
devices will transform traditional markets, enabling new kinds of applications that will encompass smart clothing, augmented reality, smart watches, smart glasses, and offer hands-free interfaces that will use voice, movement, and even telepathy to control these devices. Somewhat dwarfed by the $240 billion smartphone market, predictions indicate that smartphones will gradually incorporate wearable capabilities, and wearables will have smartphone capabilities, causing a blurring of distinction among such devices.

According to the World Economic Forum, success factors for wearable products includes the technological advances that will render the devices smaller, faster, less invasive, and that can help improve user behavior (Mishra 2014)xix. As the technology moves toward crossing the boundary between humans and technology, companies need to be on top of where this technology is headed, be prepared for the impact of workers and consumers that are using wearables, and be alert to opportunities to incorporate wearables into the products and services that they provide to the global marketplace.

Questions to Consider

1. What emerging technologies are most likely to be transformative to your industry and potentially impact how your company designs, builds, and fields your products to the marketplace? What technologies should other companies be focusing on, and which ones should they not be wasting time on?

2. Are there emerging technologies that could significantly disrupt your company by changing the nature of the products or services in your market, or alter the delivery and distribution of those products or services, and thus cause your company to lose market share or be cut out by new entrants?

3. In what ways is your company keeping aware of emerging technologies and performing appropriate research to anticipate how those emerging technologies can make your firm more efficient and effective? How much awareness should other companies have?

4. What are your competitors doing in terms of adopting emerging technologies and how will your company contend with your competitors as a result?

5. Some companies prefer to be a first-mover when adopting emerging technologies, but there are risks associated with being the first adopter, including picking the wrong
technology or investing heavily but with little payoff – is your firm a first-mover, and if so, why, and if not then why not?

6. What are some of the newly emerging tech markets around the globe? How can your company utilize these emerging markets?

7. Should regulations be enacted to deal with the privacy issues of wearable technology? If so, what kinds of regulations would be best to enact?

8. Should it be legal to use 3D printers to create firearms and other weapons? If so, what limits, if any, should be imposed on the makers of such firearms/weapons.

9. Should drones be able to be used freely by companies in whatever way they choose to do so? If you believe there should be constraints on the use of drones, state those constraints.

10. Should companies be allowed to undertake stem cell research without government intervention? If not, state what government intervention you believe to be acceptable.

11. Brain-computer interfaces are increasingly being advanced so that computers can be controlled directly by human thought alone. Should companies be allowed to force their employees to use such systems? If not, why should companies be prevented from doing so.

12. Advances in batteries are allowing them to get denser and hold more charge in a smaller space, but there are safety issues that such batteries can readily overheat, swell, and potentially inflame. Should regulations be enacted to control the selling and use of such batteries? If so, what limits should be imposed?
Topic 2: Workplace Wellness and Labor Rights

Background

The term “workplace wellness” is defined as any workplace health promotion activity or organizational policy designed to encourage healthy behavior in the workspace. The World Health Organization considers the work environment as priority setting for health promotion because it “directly influences the physical, mental, economic, and social well-being of workers.” Thus the concept of workplace wellness within the globalized economy and private companies has been of growing concern within the last forty years. The strong correlation between workplace wellness and a strong workforce has encouraged private companies to implement programs supporting the mental and physical health of their workers in order to increase workplace efficiency. However, the initiative to establish the workplace as an environment for health campaigns is not an internationally accepted belief. In one nation, there were ill-advised cuts in occupational health services to support AIDS prevention work, due to lack of knowledge that the workplace is a vital arena to spread information regarding AIDS prevention. Skepticism on the effects of increasing workplace health conditions have arisen as a result of studies, such as those done by the Kaiser Family Foundation, finding that they rarely work as advertised. However, wellness programs such as the 2003 PepsiCo Healthy Living Program which addressed stress management, smoking cessation, and disease management components (targeting participants with asthma, diabetes, low back pain, or other forms of work related diseases) have demonstrated that such programs can achieve long term savings. Other companies such as Caterpillar, FedEx, Dow Chemical, and Perdue Farms have reported positive yields from their health programs. The concept of a healthy promoting working place (HPW) is growing and popular among the international community and has become increasingly relevant among private and public institutions. A HPW can be essential in maintaining a stable balance between the demands of the consumers and the health and capabilities of the workers. For many nations, a HPW is conducive in furthering productive work environments and may stand as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

In nations such as the United States, old age and the rising rates of obesity have become alarming because of their link to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers, driving up the costs for employers in healthcare spending. In 2005, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey revealed that roughly 28 percent of Texan adult engaged in no form of physical activity during the preceding month. Department of State Health Service statistics also revealed that more than 61 percent of adults and 35 percent of school-age children in Texas were overweight or obese as a result of a sedentary lifestyle and improper eating decisions. These circumstances have encouraged employers to turn to workplace wellness programs as a more cost effective alternative to health care spending, a means to improve work stamina.
and reduce absenteeism. Wellness programs including health screenings, immunizations, health risk appraisals, behavioral coaching, and education via posters, pamphlets, and education software are being implemented in small and large companies in order to mitigate the costs of health claims filed by a small minority of workers. Various opportunities that make healthier lifestyles more accessible may include health fairs, wellness letters, healthier food options in vending machines, on site exercise facilities, and reimbursements for health club memberships and are also being offered in other companies as well. Private companies have also implemented financial incentives for monitoring blood and pressure levels such as discounts on health insurance for employees who complete health-risk assessments. Other companies have implemented punishments for poor health such as charging people more for smoking or having a high body mass index. The Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union provides a guideline explaining that workplace health promotion (WHP) can be achieved through improved organization, active workers’ participation, and organization encouraged personal development. Different from Occupational Health and Safety, which promotes protective measures for workers from work related accidents, the WHPs seek to improve the well-being of employees at work. It explains that workplace health promotion demands integration in workplace decisions, active participation by staff, risk reduction strategies, and problem solving cycles. The Total Worker Health program funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health offers a list of resources to organizations, employers, and employees seeking to institute employee health programs or technologies such as custom-built computer workstations and research relating lower back pain to sleep deprivation. Although physical health programs have fallen under the attention of many companies, psychological health is a concern largely dismissed. There is currently no formal definition for the term workplace bullying, yet its occurrence on matters such as gender, race, marital status, education, age, or occupation may lead to decline in employee morale and affect organizational culture.

In addition to providing increasing health standards in the work environment, the World Economic Forum concerns itself on matters pertaining to working standards and workers’ rights. In the globalized economy, the scramble to generate the most profit has encouraged private companies to use cheap labor in Southeast Asia, where European or American labor laws do not apply. Although the issue of workers’ rights is not predominantly as problematic in developed nations, workers in developing nations are exploited for cheap labor and extensive hours. Famous brands have been exposed for utilizing child labor or hiring paramilitary groups in order to intimidate or kill union leaders in the Southeast Asian region. In the Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces of China, China Labor Watch reported that factory employees were subject to 74 hours of work a week, with a monthly overtime of 52 to 136 hours. In the Chengdu plant, workers were forced to operate for a span of 24 hours and were exposed to dangerous toxins in the factories. In addition, the factories’ extremely low wages made working at 40 hours a week unsustainable for the employees who were subject to terrible working environments and verbal abuse. Foxconn’s IPhone factories were forced to construct suicide nets outside of its factories following 18 attempted suicides within the span of two years.

Within the World Economic Forum, delegates are highly encouraged to research their
respective company policies regarding workplace wellness and opportunities granted to workers domestically and internationally. Furthermore, the delegates are encouraged to propose efficient guidelines for workplace welfare and suggest technologies or policy reforms which can protect the physical and mental health of employees. In certain countries, workers are exploited and subject to extraneous working hours; therefore, delegates should establish measures to alleviate the strain on workers and enforce international labor laws.

United Nations Involvement

The United Nations has recognized work environments as priority settings for health promotion into the 21st century and areas subjects to potential employee abuse. The Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion has defined health promotion bringing momentum to the cause: “political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioral, and biological factors can all favor health or harmful to good health.” Health advocacy aims at making these conditions favorable through advocacy for health.” The World Health Organization has concerned itself with coordinating efforts between NGOs and companies in order to develop effective health work programs focusing on primary prevention. The United Nations high-level meeting on non-communicable disease prevention and control in 2011 called upon the private sector to implement reforms protecting the health of workers, including tobacco-free workplaces, workplace wellness programs, and health insurance plans. WHO has also drafted Healthy Workplaces: a model for action which identifies typical physical, biological, ergonomic, mechanical, energy, and mobile hazards. The model for action also proposes many potential options to reduce those specific hazards including machine guards, less toxic chemicals like toluene, reallocated work, the removal of supervisors, fitness facilities, healthy food choices, and flexibility to allow workers to deal with work-life conflict situations. A recent report (A/68/353) from the United Nations Secretary-General noted that the United Nations Secretariat has worked with third-party health insurance administrators to expand access to disease management and wellness programs of field personnel. The report argues that preventative measures are a more effective and cost-effective means which can promote increased worker participation and attendance. The World Economic Forum reports, The Workplace Wellness Alliance: Delivering on Health and Productivity, revealed that workplace wellness councils in Mexico were largely emerging as leaders in reducing healthcare costs.

The United Nations has also taken various measures to improve the working conditions of laborers in developing nations and condemn irresponsible or immoral company policies. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has made significant contributions in creating and promoting international labor standards. The organization has adopted 184 conventions and targeted issues including child labor, pensions, right to organize, discrimination in the workplace, unemployment benefits, rights of rural workers, and workers compensation. ILO Conventions 138 and 182 have established the minimum age for employment at 15 and has prohibited the “worst forms” of child labor, requiring nations to take actions preventing child labor abuse. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted in 1998, giving member
states the responsibility to promote core values and rights in four different categories: freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, elimination of forced labor, abolition of child labor, and efforts to eliminate workplace discrimination and disrespect\textsuperscript{xlv}. The ILO Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a United Nations Multilateral Treaty aimed at securing equality for migrant workers regardless of “sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, economic position, property, marital status, birth, or other status.”\textsuperscript{xlix}

Case Study

Wellness Initiatives and Workers’ Rights in India

Worker health and wellness, along with workers’ rights, are major issues in mega cities within India, and have become some of the most critical issues facing the poverty stricken people of India (Shirva 2014)\textsuperscript{xlxi}. Growing birth rates, social hierarchy systems, and social customs have all lead to spikes in population, causing highly dense areas within cities, and leading to a glut of workers that are taken advantage of by businesses. Workers in India confront deplorable working conditions, suffer a lack of employee rights, are daily facing workplace safety hazards, and often do not have the time to focus on their own health and wellness due to the pressures of getting a job and keeping it. Between 2014 and 2050, India is expected to add 404 million people to urban areas alone, most of this in low socioeconomic groups within high density areas of major urban environments (Pappachan 2011)\textsuperscript{xlix}. A large proportion of this low income population have to survive on less than $2 a day and lack access to critical necessities such as running water and power (Gupta 2010)\textsuperscript{xlv}. Additionally, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, these areas are plagued by severe lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and obesity (Butsch 2012)\textsuperscript{xlv}.

Much of this increase in poverty and health related issues have had a direct impact on the economics of India. Critical indicators, such as life expectancy within urban areas of India where the critical Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled services (ITeS) industries thrive, have indicated that communicable diseases account for more than 42% of the total disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in India, and stated succinctly that “India’s urban population is facing a rapid transformation of health determinants – deteriorating environmental conditions, continuing social fragmentation, and overburdened urban infrastructure – to name just a few” (Goswami 2013)\textsuperscript{xlv}. Focusing first specifically on wellness, one of the greatest challenges facing businesses and government agencies in India is the specific epidemic of chronic diseases. According to the PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007)\textsuperscript{xlvii} report prepared for the World Economic Forum’s Working Toward Wellness initiative, chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, and has been predicted to be the cause of 66% of all deaths in India by the year 2020. The purpose of a Wellness initiative is to determine an organized set of activities that would help change behavior to reduce and mitigate the health risks that underlie chronic diseases. In both developed and developing countries, chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and
diabetes are continuing to grow seemingly unabated. Obesity is an even more silent chronic disease that does not evoke as much serious concern per se in the minds of the populace, but that is a deadly instrumental contributor to death and disability worldwide.

Governments such as the major governmental agencies of India are now turning toward focusing on dealing with the highest risk factors that pertain to chronic diseases, namely, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and tobacco use. As the world’s second large consumer of tobacco, India is struggling to turn around the perception of smoking as something desirable to instead be undesirable. By attempts at shifting cultural awareness, the government hopes to discourage existing smokers from continuing to smoke, and stop young adopters of smoking before they get hooked on tobacco. Public funding toward decreasing smoking is helping to start the turnaround, but limits to governmental budgets prevent further expansions of such programs. Likewise, government programs are being designed to get the populace to be more active, and to reduce consumption of fatty foods, but budget constraints inhibit their widespread effectiveness.

Companies in India also have a big stake in overcoming the unhealthful eating habits, the lack of physical activity, and the rampant smoking of their workers. Costs to companies for ill workers, higher healthcare costs, and lost productivity drive up the overall cost of doing business and prevent companies from working efficiently and effectively to produce and sell their products and services. A growing number of companies in India and multinational companies with presence in India are putting in place extensive wellness schemes. Such schemes make use of education, informing workers about how to lead healthier lives, and include involvement incentives to get employees underway by providing bonuses or advancement for active participation. Smart employers realize that it is not just the employee that needs to change, but they also need to involve the families of the employees, so that the entire environment surrounding the employee is aiming to improve their health. And, only by having such programs be led from the top of the company can it become “sticky” in that it provides a long lasting impact, rather than being seen as just a quick fad.

A notable example of a company in India doing an especially exemplary effort for an enterprise wellness initiative is Infosys Technologies. One of the leading Information Technology (IT) providers in India, the company executive team realized that they needed to be bold and active in dealing with the wellness aspects of their employees. First, the company has included as a core principle that they will provide a collaborative Care and Wellness management program throughout the firm. This top-down commitment ensures that all employees know that the top management is serious and committed to the wellness initiative. Second, Infosys has shaped their wellness initiative into a comprehensive program, known as their Health Assessment Lifestyle Enrichment (HALE), providing a documented and robust structure that is tangible and easily understood by the employees. Besides providing an online portal for access to the HALE program, Infosys has even setup a special hotline that allows employees to readily contact HALE related counselors that can provide them with personal guidance and advice. Third, and equally crucial, the program is being tracked by the Human Resources (HR) department to see how effective the program has been, and then there are adjustments made to ensure that the program remains of value to the employees. This kind of model
for a wellness initiative serves as a guiding approach for other firms that are also serious about undertaking a high quality wellness initiative.

Wellness initiatives are not being done just due to overall altruistic motives, but rather importantly have a demonstrative positive impact on the bottom-line of the company. Dramatic improvements in work performance and productivity are seen, along with significant reductions in absenteeism and work place losses. Workers find that the workplace is more attractive as a place to work, they are more eager and enthusiastic in their work, they are thankful of the company and have renewed loyalty toward the firm for improving their health, and it ultimately shows that the company has stepped up to its social responsibilities. Companies that establish a wellness initiative are seen as standout brands and therefore attract top notch workers.

Workers’ rights go hand-in-hand with the topic of health and wellness of workers. Companies in India that have respect for workers’ rights are more likely to offer wellness programs. Likewise, companies that have concern and care for the wellness of workers are far more prone to caring about workers’ rights (Sanwa 2011). Workers are gradually being provided with revamped safety training and precautions, along with improved working conditions, all of which ultimately enhance employer-employee relations. These improvements in employer-employee relations in turn lead to increased productivity, and lessen downtime during work. Progressive firms such as Infosys Technologies publish workers’ right guidelines, and affirm the words by having solid commitment and applicable action by upper management.

Questions to Consider

1. Has your company taken any notable action to start a health and wellness initiative, and if so, what is the nature of that initiative? Similarly, what actions has your firm taken towards articulating workers’ rights and improving working conditions? How should other firms be doing the same?

2. Some companies pay lip service to health and wellness initiatives and to workers’ rights by claiming that they care about such matters, but they do little to actually support such programs – how committed is your company and what has your company done if anything to show that they are serious about these matters? Indicate how other companies are lacking in commitment.

3. Companies are finding new and clever ways to enhance their health and wellness initiatives, such as by encouraging their workers to use their smart phones for aiding the initiative, or even using some of the latest technologies such as wearables, and are respecting workers’ rights by having workers use social media within the firm to share issues and concerns – what is your company doing to be innovative about health and wellness, and/or be innovative in terms of workers’ rights?
4. Without top commitment, most health and wellness initiatives fizzle, workers’ rights get downplayed, and so to overcome these maladies there is a need for overt commitment both within the company and outside the company by top management of a firm – indicate what your top executives have been doing or said publicly that shows they believe in such initiatives. Indicate what you advocate that other company top executives should be doing.

5. Good workers will aim toward companies that offer top health and wellness initiatives, and that have a reputation for the respect of workers’ rights. Look at your competitors, and determine where they are along the lines of adopting such initiatives, and try to discern whether your firm is ahead of or behind their progress.

6. How do wellness initiatives and the rights of workers differ between differing levels of labor (i.e. skilled labor versus menial labor)? How does your company approach each different level?

7. AIDS prevention programs at work wrongly pry into employees private lives – agree or disagree?

8. Spending on workplace wellness programs is a waste of company funds – do you agree or disagree?

9. Whether employees are smokers or not is not something that businesses should be getting involved in -- agree or disagree?

10. Being overweight is a personal decision and businesses have no obligation whatsoever to improve employee dietary choices – agree or disagree?

11. Small businesses should be exempt from providing wellness programs since they do not have the resources to do so – agree or disagree?

12. Cheap labor and long hours is the only way that companies in developing countries can compete in the world market – agree or disagree?

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