



Spotlight on ACCO Brands

How to build a long-term wellness strategy

ACCO Brands, one of the world's largest suppliers of branded office supplies, is well into the 7th program year with Vitality. With a population of blue- and white-collar workers dispersed throughout the entire United States, ACCO Brands needed a program with flexibility that appealed to a diverse audience.

Vitality spoke with Jessica Krull, Senior Benefits Analyst, about ACCO Brands's Vitality experience and what advice she'd have for future Vitality clients.

What does Vitality do really well?
What made you pick Vitality over other vendors?

The program is well-developed, so you're not just getting only fitness, or only one or two pieces, it touches on all components of a wellness program from wellness to incentives. Some vendors are just starting, so their programs aren't as holistic. It's also very nice to have integrations between vendors, providing information back and forth, which is really helpful. A lot of competitors don't necessarily offer that or offer it at the level of sophistication Vitality does.

Also, the people are awesome. It's nice to have a sense of partnership with people who are

willing to step in and throw out ideas on the administrative side. I'm sure there are many organizations that have both manufacturing and office environments, and we know a program that works in one environment may not work in another, so their input helps with that.

And the challenges platform has completely blown the program up! In the last two years, since the introduction of the challenges platform, we've had so much more engagement and this has been our best year yet. The innovations are the things that really make the Vitality program work as well as it does.

How has your experience with client relations and customer service been so far?

No complaints - really great. Again, I feel there's a comfort level and a partnership there where we can interact and look at our program. Our Account Manager comes to me with suggestions and ways to think about timing on things and what we're doing so we can have an impact on employees and keep them engaged throughout the entire year. With all the changing regulations, we're also able to keep in sync and are up-to-date on the implications of



Since January 1, 2016, ACCO Brands members have taken 1,082,429,534 steps and walked approximately 541,215 miles.

In other words, they have walked to the Moon 2.3 times! (or circled the Earth 21.8 times)



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One of the things with ACCO Brands - we don't mind a lot of communication. You need to tell us how it is, be a straight shooter, tell us what's possible and don't be too salesy. Just give us the "straight deal" and we're happy to work things out. We don't get the run around from Vitality. Vitality listens to what our issues are, our concerns, and tries to come up with solutions for us, along with hearing some of our recommendations on improvements that could be made.

Issue resolution – Are you happy with the outcome, timeframe, etc.? Is there anything that could be improved?

The only issue we've had is when a file protocol changed. Overall, outside of that one thing, we get pretty quick resolution. I feel that if I do have a question the Account Manager can't answer immediately, she goes back and does research to see what's going on. And our issues have been resolved relatively quickly. We've had a couple weird few and far between issues, but we've never had constant problems.

What are you most proud of in regard to the outcomes of your program?

I'd say I'm happy that over the years, in terms of overall impact of the program, it's very nice to see that people who do work the program really do see results - I think that speaks really well for the program. It's also nice to see we are

making improvements in employee health and see impact. We do have correlations between increased participation/year-over-year participation in the program and lower costs to our health insurance. That's a great story to tell.

The employees are also happy with the program. We have folks that have questions sometimes, but when we explain how the program works to them, they get it and get really excited about it.

I also think it's a good recruiting tool for us - having a wellness program. Especially with millennials who are looking at not just their compensation, but at how their job will impact their quality of life. So having this is certainly a good selling point.

How do you incentivize your employees and is this handled well by Vitality?

It does well. I think it offers something for everybody. Between us having reduced premiums and having the Vitality Mall, it's nice to say to the employees that we are paying you to be healthy in so many different ways. It's a good way to incentivize people.

I think when we switched from having the big Vitality Mall with all the different products in it, to having mainly Amazon gift cards, there was a little bit of a transition time for employees, but it was over very quickly because people realized they could buy whatever they want with the Amazon gift cards. I have not heard a



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single complaint about that in a while. And the hotel vouchers - we have people using those regularly. And of course we always nudge them with “Why aren’t you doing this, for crying out loud?” because we have the premium discount, as well. It’s like a double whammy!

What do you think is the most unique feature about Vitality?

From my own selfish perspective, I really like that challenges platform. Really like it. I think that it is such a great thing and I wish we used it more, but it’s only me and it’s sometimes hard when it’s just me. I think that inherent to American society is the sense of competition, and we all have that feeling of excitement in our chest when we can compete. And by having the challenge platform, especially when we’re a national organization with people in some really far-off and random places instead of centralized offices, it’s nice to have that platform. Because it is a way to engage people and appeal to that inherent need to compete. Some of them are so competitive it’s ridiculous! I feel like we are getting more of a community around all of ACCO Brands, especially with us having a culture being made up of mergers, it can be hard to get that sense of community. It’s a good way to get people interacting and hopefully have a positive experience.

From an administrative standpoint, it’s really easy, no problems. I love that I can get reports and that I can assign user access to other people to pull reports. I can just grant people access and they can get what they need.

What are some engagement challenges that are unique to your population and how does Vitality help you overcome them?

Looking at logistically getting engagement, for our white-collar population it’s fairly easy. They have internet access, they have email access, and can get on to the site easily. For folks in the manufacturing environment, or in the field, they don’t have internet access or they are doing things like driving and visiting with customers, so they can’t constantly check in. Having the Vitality Today app is really helpful with that and one thing I could do better is to encourage people to use that app. It can be very hard for people to remember to log in every single night and type in what they’ve done, but through having devices, smartphone apps and the link to MapMyFitness - it’s really helpful for those not sitting at a desk.

We do have some folks in the field who are very much engaged - and spouses. There’s been a recent change where there’s more of an emphasis for spouses to get involved in things, like through the challenges platform. The great part is we’re paying for the healthcare - we want the spouse to be engaged as much as possible, too. I’ve seen increases in focus over the past few years with Vitality and I think it’s heading in a good direction.



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Any last thoughts?

For people who are considering this program, it works if you work it. Employers do have to be engaged and you have to have things like the Vitality Champ programs. It's not going to happen by magic, there does have to be support within the organization, so it's good for people to know that going into ANY wellness program. You're not going to get ROI if you just throw the program out there and hope it sticks.

