

Continuous dialogue: the key to healthy behaviour.

Engaging in sincere dialogue with employees on a regular basis is tremendously important for employee vitality. Managers who direct genuine attention to their employees – and continue to do so – will have employees who perform better. When the topic of health is included in the discussion, the employee will be stimulated in a positive way, both mentally and physically. How do you initiate such dialogue? These five tips provide you with concrete tools as a manager to approach the topic of health with your employees – and to maintain focus on this topic.

1. Dare to take the initiative

Purposeful dialogue starts with the right attitude. For the manager, that means: How can I help my employees with their vitality? In other words, take the initiative to enter into dialogue, but leave the ball in the employee's court. Your role in the dialogue is to listen, ask open and in-depth questions and summarize. This lets you show genuine interest and a desire to truly help your employees.

2. Challenge your employees

Encouraging healthy behaviour in a playful way makes lifestyle changes more fun. If a competitive element is added to the desired behaviour, employees may be more motivated and enthusiastic about starting to make changes. Launch a 'Step counter challenge', for example, and post the interim rankings in a visible place in the workplace, thereby stimulating your employees to go for a walk. Did anyone eat two pieces of fruit that day? They earn a point! The possibility to win a prize gives employees extra motivation to do their best.

3. Set goals

Make vitality a permanent part of performance reviews. Vitality goals provide a challenge and including this topic in assessments motivates employees to continue working on their health. After all, goals achieved are rewarded!

4. Keep the dialogue going

Keeping the dialogue about employee vitality alive keeps vitality goals top of mind among your employees, along with the corresponding behaviour. Having a hard time coming up with the right moment to address this or appropriate topics? Use national initiatives as opportunities to devote attention to specific health-related topics, such as Work Stress Week or Stoptober. Keeping the dialogue going also ensures that employees are always in the right place within the organization, where they can tap into their strengths, as well as feel sufficiently challenged.

5. Make it social

As manager, you do not always have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with your employees. So, create opportunities for employees to talk to each other about vitality and help each other achieve their goals. Assign everyone a buddy, for instance, to give employees the possibility to express themselves, organize a group walk or play sports together after work.