Blue Zones: Healthy Tips for Individuals, Communities and Employers

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Summary of Today’s Talk

1. What regions of the world have the healthiest & longest living populations? “The Blue Zones”.

2. What can we learn from the lifestyle, diet and community activities of these regions.

3. How can these lifestyle practices be adopted by people, employers and cities across the US?
Blue Zones® Areas

In Blue Zones® areas, people share a common lifestyle, diet, and outlook that leads to better **quantity** and **quality** of life.
Sardinia’s Secrets to Longevity (1)

- Eat a lean plant based diet
- Put your family first
- Goat’s milk is the preferred dairy
- Celebrate your elders
- Take a walk daily
- Drink one or two glasses of red wine daily
- Laugh with friends frequently


Secrets of longevity (1)

- Embrace ikigai – purpose
- Rely on plant-based diet
- Grow a garden
- Eat more soy
- Maintain a moai (social network)
- Enjoy the sunshine
- Stay Active
- Plant a medicinal garden
- Have an attitude


Reference: Blue Zone Photo Galleries,
http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/happiest-places/blue-zones-okinawa-photos
Nicoya, Costa Rica

Secrets to Longevity (1)

- Have a plan de vida
- Drink hard water
- Keep a focus on family
- Eat a light dinner
- Maintain social networks
- Keep hard at work
- Get sensible sun shine
- Embrace a common history


Blue Zone Photo Galleries,
http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/happiest-places/blue-zones-nicoya-photos

Photograph by Gianluca Colla
Adventists Community in Loma Linda, CA

- Find a sanctuary in time
- Maintain healthy body mass index (BMI)
- Regular moderate exercise
- Spend time with like-minded friends
- Snack on nuts
- Give something back
- Eat an early light dinner
- Drink plenty of water (5-6 glasses per day)
- Eat meat in moderation/ more plant based diet

Photo by David McLain, Aurora, Blue Zone Photo Galleries

http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/happiest-places/blue-zones-california-photos
Adventist Health Study-1

- Vegetarians live 9.5 years longer for men and 6.1 years longer for women
- Vegetarians had 2x lower risk of heart disease compared to non-vegetarian Adventists
- Eating nuts 5 days per week decreased risk of heart disease by 50%
- Tomatoes in diet 3-4x/week decreased ovarian cancer in women by 70% and lowered prostate cancer in men
- Those who ate meat had 2x risk of bladder cancer and women had 65% higher risk of ovarian cancer
- 5-6 glasses of water daily lowered risk of fatal heart attack by 60-70%

Dan Buettner, The Blue Zones, 2008, pages 121-125
Study of dietary habits of 34,000 Adventists in California – started in 1974
What Does This Mean for:

- You
- Communities or Cities
- Employers

Go to www.BlueZones.com and take your Vitality Compass and True Happiness Test
Blue Zones Power 9®

Move Naturally
1. Make daily physical activity an unavoidable part of your environment

Right Outlook
2. Know your purpose
3. Downshift: work less, slow down, take vacations

Eat Wisely
4. Eat until 80% full
5. More veggies, less meat & processed food
6. Drink a glass of red wine each day*

Belong
7. Create a healthy social network
8. Connect/reconnect with religion
9. Prioritize family

* Power 9® is a registered trademark of Blue Zones, LLC. All rights reserved.
“The built environment in the U.S. was designed in a way that is fundamentally unhealthy.

The environment is now making it difficult for people to achieve well-being. It’s getting so bad that this generation growing up may be the first in American history that has a shorter life span than their parents.

Communities have to be redesigned to make us all healthier – young or old.”

Dr. Richard Jackson  
Professor & Chair of Environment Health Sciences, UCLA

http://dirt.asla.org/2012/03/08/the-built-environment-is-broken/
Blue Zones Project™ is a community well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes in environment, policy, and social networks.

By helping people live longer, better through behavior change — communities can:

Lower Healthcare Costs + Improve Productivity = Great Place to Live, Work & Play (boosts community’s recognition)
Albert Lea, MN
“This 18,000 resident community kicked off the AARP/Blue Zones Vitality Project”

*Article by: Dan Buettner, from AARP The Magazine, Jan./Feb. 2010
Community Success after 3 years

- Life expectancy increased an average of 3.1 years
- Participants lost a collective 12,000 pounds (average loss of 2 lb/participant)
- An average 21% drop in absenteeism by key employers
- City employees showed a 40% decrease in health care costs
- Community-wide engagement of 60% of local restaurants, 51% of largest employers, 100% of the schools and 27% of all citizens

The Blue Zones Project™ partnership brings together the expertise of Healthways—to maximize well-being and Blue Zones—to change environments.

Together, this partnership ensures that an employer maximizes their investment in their greatest asset, their employees, by ensuring that the work environment supports healthy choices.
Blue Zones Employer Framework

Improved Well-Being Drives Improved Performance

- Physical Well-Being
- Emotional Well-Being
- Social Well-Being

Core Investments to Improve Well-Being

- Develop Well-Being Leaders
- Define Purpose
- Optimize Habitat/Physical Environment
- Optimize Engagement & Social Networks
- Optimize HR Policies & Benefits
- Optimize Solutions for Well-Being
Well-Being Value Proposition

**Improve Well-Being**
- Adopt or maintain healthy behaviors
- Reduce health-related risks
- Optimize care for health conditions and disease

**Reduce Total Medical Cost**
- Hospitalizations
- Event Rates
- Disease Rates
- Lifestyle Risks

**Increase Performance**
- Productivity
- Engagement
- Absence
- Work Impairment

**Increase Total Economic Value**
- States
- Communities
- Sponsors
- Individuals

**Economic Drivers**
- Prevent or delay next new case of disease or condition
- Prevent or reduce impact of the next new episode of care
- Enhance one’s ability to actively manage their well-being

*Blue Zones Project by Healthways*
Employer Framework

**Engagement/Creation of Social Networks** – Do you have a clearly defined engagement strategy that uses an effective mix of communications, incentives, and social events to help promote well-being improvement?

**Policies & Benefits** – Are your HR policies and benefits designed to encourage well-being?

**Well-Being Solutions** – Are there engaging solutions to support employee efforts to improve and sustain well-being?
• **Worksite Assessment and Blueprint:** Evaluates how closely the work environment, current practices, and policies improve well-being and align with the Power 9, and offers a multi-year Blueprint of recommendations for improvement.

• **Well-Being Consultant:** Guides and implements recommendations and Blue Zones Project engagement activities.

• **Leadership Well-Being Training:** Offers guidance and training to help leaders create and sustain a culture of well-being.

• **Communications Library:** Provides printable marketing communications that promote positive lifestyle changes and build excitement and awareness for the Blue Zones Project.

• **Organizational Well-Being Report:** Provides a comprehensive view of a population’s well-being, including the factors that most frequently drive employee engagement, productivity, and company performance.
Make Healthy Choices Easier through Permanent Change

1. Engage Communities
   - Citizens
   - Employers
   - Restaurants

2. Change where people live, work, and play
   - Community
   - Social Network
   - Habitat
   - Inner Self

3. Make healthy choices easy
   - Wine @ Five
   - Down Shift
   - Know Your Purpose
   - Family First
   - Move Naturally
   - Plant Slant
   - Belong
   - 80% Rule
   - Right Tribe

Blue Zones Project by Healthways
QUESTIONS?

The Woven Brain – Diffusion Spectrum Imaging of Brain

Science Journal, March 30, 2012, Massachusetts General Hospital