

2.3 Physical Activity Success Stories



Company Walking Trails

the people

Hussey Seating Company, located in North Berwick and founded in 1835, is one of America's oldest family companies still doing business today. Hussey is the global leader in spectator seating solutions for schools and universities, theaters, arenas, and the world's great stadiums. Hussey employs approximately 300 people in a variety of positions, including manufacturing, engineering and design, and administration. The company has identified employee health as a key strategy to improve company performance.

the need

As an effort to promote wellness and cardiovascular health in the workplace, Hussey Seating Company wanted to provide employees with a walking area that was more relaxing than walking through the main street and traffic. Studies show that increasing physical activity by walking greatly improves overall health. Hussey Seating Company is committed to supporting employees in getting regular physical activity during the workday.

the idea

The company owns a large amount of wooded property adjacent to its manufacturing and administrative offices. A walking path was planned to give employees a convenient and accessible place to be active during the day.

the idea at work

Several employees informed the Company's Vice President of Human Resources and Occupational Health Nurse that employees enjoy walking during lunchtime but did not like to walk through town and traffic. At about the same time, Hussey Seating Company was chosen to participate in the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program's pilot project, with the goal to change the environment to promote health in the workplace. With that knowledge and some grant money, Hussey had an idea for on-site wooded walking paths.

The HR Department knew they would need a lot of help and called a meeting with the Facilities Coordinator and Environmental Technician to ask for help creating the paths. Within a couple of weeks a second meeting was held and

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Company Walking Trails (continued)

the Environmental Technician was prepared with a topographical map of the company grounds, which showed three existing old logging roads in the vicinity of the desired path location. The key was to create connecting paths to the existing logging roads, making way for a complete nature walk.

Because a chain-link fence surrounds the wooded lot, a local fence company was needed to cut through the metal fence and attach swinging doors in two separate locations. Once access was gained, the area was walked and the paths were marked out. The team of volunteers wanted to keep the trails as natural as possible while also providing a safe walking base. With this in mind, volunteers cleared branches and overgrown brush while keeping as much of the natural forest look as possible. Though some stone dust was purchased and spread in low, wet areas, much of the area was kept natural. Many employees donated their time and equipment in developing the paths. The Occupational Health Nurse, Pat Paquin, was moved by the volunteer effort.

“I am amazed at what was accomplished with a little grant money, many enthusiastic volunteers, brush clippers, chain saws, a bush hog, and a bobcat.”

Before the trails were completed, a company-wide naming contest was held and a local sign maker was hired to make trail and distance markers. An official ribbon-cutting ceremony, with the Worksite Health Coordinator from the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program as a special guest and speaker, kicked off the opening of the trails. The entire trail system is called the Hussey Walkabout, with individual paths named “Foxtail Trail,” “Pleasure Pines Pathway,” and the “Hussey Escape.”





The Facilities Coordinator produced a collage of pictures of volunteers working and walking on the trails. The collage was posted in a visible area to promote use of the Walkabout to other employees. The company put out a press release to announce the project and local newspapers published articles about the new walking paths.

the costs

The total cost of the Walkabout trails was \$6,200. This money was used to purchase new fence and gates, trail and distance markers, stone dust, and labor for several jobs. In addition, employees completed over 100 hours of volunteer work. Hussey expects to spend \$1,000 next spring to maintain the trail.

the results

Among employees, the reaction to the paths has been excellent, and they have become quite popular. According to Bill Allen, an Environmental Technician who worked on the project, “I’m trying to increase my activity level and lose a few pounds, but I just don’t like walking on the roads with traffic. The Walkabout trails give me a quiet place to walk and get away from my job for a few minutes.”

Rich Hussey, Vice President of Human Resources for the family-owned company, fully supports the project. “The Hussey Walkabout is a key part of our employee wellness program. We believe the paths, in conjunction with other wellness components, will translate into improved health and lower healthcare costs for both the company and its employees.”

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