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PROGRAMMING AND IT'S IMPORTANCE TO
SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript briefly describes This wide variety of employee services provided by U. S. companies resulting from divergent objectives and philosophy. The author at length describes the primary objective of the Xerox Recreation and Physical Fitness program, including a brief history, type of facilities and activities and concludes with a summary of the latest major function, the Xerox Health Management Program.

PROGRAMMING AND IT'S IMPORTANCE TO
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Employee services in industry are highly diversified and varied in nature. Company objectives/philosophy are critical in determining direction and success of overall services provided. Rigorous exercise programs, collecting semiprecious rocks, studying the great books, rafting through white water, a travel tour to a resort area, providing employee discounts, various types of instructional classes, or assisting with the companies' blood drive are only a few of the kinds of activities that an industrial program may provide.

If we were to single out one major objective of the Xerox Recreation and Physical Fitness Program, it would certainly be to promote the physical and emotional health of our employees and their families. There is not any room for a varsity team in the recreation and fitness program of Xerox Corporation. Yet, in softball alone, there are some 80 intramural teams composed of more than 1,400 active men and women participants in Rochester, New York. These two facts sum up the entire point of our program. Unlike some industrial organizations, we see nothing to be gained in paying out substantial sums of money so a handful of people can spend company time playing ball in fancy uniforms. Xerox feels it can accomplish a great deal more by setting a lot of people involved in off-hours physical exercise--and in other forms of recreation activities.

Like any other company, Xerox is people. Its future rests with them. It has a substantial investment in them and simply can not afford the risk of key people at any level falling prey to disabling illness or worse. Any change of pace, even non-athletic, that can be injected into an employee's routine, contributes in our opinion, to resilience, freshness, general fitness--in short, to health and his job performance. Xerox also has important secondary goals. A good, well-rounded recreation and fitness program builds morale and strengthens personal ties to the company. It serves as a mixer, bringing together people from widely-varying activities, even widely-varying levels of compensation and responsibility. The result is to develop a comraderie or an esprit de corps that pays off in smooth interpersonal relationships, leadership training and highly effective teamwork on

The program is administered within the framework of the Xerox Recreation Association Inc. and Recreation and Fitness Services of Xerox's General Services Division. There are currently fourteen full-time Xerox people devoting their efforts in providing services plus on an annual basis, 300 part-time XRA employees and 300-500 volunteers. The current program is based largely on a pair of surveys originally conducted in 1965 and a third survey in 1977. One covered all home-area Xerox employees and was designed to find out what kinds of activities interested them. Among the results was the establishment of intramural leagues for volleyball, soccer, softball, basketball, golf and bowling. The survey also led to the formation of clubs, serving such interests as shooting, and archery, skiing, bridge, chess and automobiles. Another survey payoff was the creation of a long-range development plan. This plan also drew on the second survey, which was actually a physical inventory of the greater Rochester area to determine what recreation facilities were already available. This avoided the danger of building costly duplication into the master plan for the company.

The first fruit of the plan was a general-purpose recreation building. It occupies 4,000 square feet at the Joseph C. Wilson Center for Technology, site of the company's manufacturing, research and engineering in the Rochester area Village of Webster, New York. The one-story building is of redwood frame construction. Its area is taken up by a 40 x 50 foot room that is used as a fitness laboratory with the latest treadmills and other physical fitness equipment. Its unobstructed floor space is made possible by laminated wood beams that support the roof over it without the aid of columns. Locker rooms, showers and office space fill out the building. In May of 1980, a 24,000 square foot double gymnasium racquetball courts, club rooms, administrative offices and additional locker and shower rooms were integrated with the original 4,000 square foot structure.

Every day the recreation and fitness complex houses physical fitness for a weekly total of some 1,500 men and women employees. In order to assure the greatest possible value for each participant, fitness programs are prescribed on an individual basis.

The program is so popular that a sizeable waiting list has been compiled. Each evening the recreation building is the meeting place for a club activity or a class in a special-interest subject such as ballroom dancing, radio club, or model building. During the softball season, more than 3,000 different employees use the building each week.

Adjacent to the recreation and fitness building, which has its own blacktopped parking lot, are four regulation lighted softball diamonds. Two other features of special importance are a one-mile path, three feet wide, of bituminous asphalt that was built through a wooded area of the recreation and fitness site of two lighted tennis courts, which are heavily used during the outdoor season. In addition, volleyball courts, and archery ranges are available for lunch hour and after-work use.

There are also recreation and fitness facilities located at Xerox Square and Jefferson Road in Henrietta. At Xerox Square there is an extensive fitness program, movies, and special events in the auditorium and an artificial skating rink. At the Henrietta location outdoor basketball and an archery target area are available. Much of the recreation activity is -- or comes close to being -- self supporting. This is the key to the high level of attendance that is enjoyed among program enrollees. With few exceptions, the activities require participants to pay a registration fee. When a few dollars are invested in a program, it is likely one would think twice before skipping a session.

The latest and perhaps most exciting addition to the recreation and fitness services function was the creation in 1979 of the Xerox Health Management Program. This service was created to serve, in addition to Monroe County, all U. S. Xerox people with educational and motivational information in the areas of physical and emotional fitness, nutrition, stress management, smoking cessation and alcohol and drug abuse. The emphasis of this new service is the wholistic approach to "self health help care."

Just how successful has Xerox been in attracting broad participation? Today almost three-quarters of the Rochester-area people are actively involved in some phase of the recreation and fitness program, and over one-half of the Xerox people outside of the Rochester area.

COMMENTS

There is no more important position in the organization than those that directly interface with the customers or employees. These individuals must be people who are service oriented and must know their products, programs, and facilities thoroughly.

In service, the product is people. When an employee or a customer becomes dissatisfied with service, he avoids future contacts, unless the service is essential to his needs.