

Incentive Design That Drives Real Engagement

Company Overview

A mid-sized employer with approximately 170 employees was experiencing steadily rising healthcare costs while struggling to generate meaningful engagement in its existing wellness program.

Key Challenges

The company offered a traditional incentive of up to \$500 paid at year-end; however, participation remained below 30%, preventive care utilization was inconsistent, and there was little evidence that the program was influencing employee behavior or improving outcomes.

MBA Solution Presented

To address these challenges, our team presented the company with a redesigned incentive strategy rooted in behavioral principles rather than simply increasing financial rewards. The new approach shifted away from delayed year-end payouts and introduced smaller, immediate incentives tied to specific actions. At the same time, we suggested they simplify the program to focus on four high-value activities: completing an annual physical, participating in a biometric screening, finishing a health assessment, and engaging with a primary care provider. To further reinforce participation, the company added a modest premium differential, aligning financial accountability with program engagement while remaining reasonable and accessible for employees.

Measurable Results

The company implemented our suggestions and within the first 12 months, the impact was both measurable and meaningful. Participation rates increased from 28% to 68%, while preventive care visits rose by more than 40%. Biometric screening completion exceeded 75%, providing the employer with better visibility into population health risks and enabling earlier intervention. Early indicators also suggested a reduction in non-emergency room utilization, signaling a shift toward more appropriate and cost-effective care patterns. Importantly, these improvements were achieved without increasing the overall incentive budget, and the program delivered a positive return on investment within the first year.