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Gail Perry • Feb. 07, 2014



Just like at the Kentucky Derby, the gates have sprung open and accountants are in the sprint for busy season. Alas, our busy time lasts much longer than two minutes. We've got a quarter of a year to wear ourselves out before we hit the finish line. *CPA Practice Advisor* checked in with some of your brethren to see how they're planning on maintaining productivity, wellness and office morale during the long, dark months ahead.

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prior to the “traditional” busy season, Freed Maxick's HR Department begins to send out regular memos about busy season expectations regarding hours, attire, security, and so on. The constant reinforcement ensures that employees are prepared to meet the company's expectations and also provides them with ample opportunity to ask questions or suggest ideas for improvement.

Working extra hours is a given so the firm provides a variety of healthy snacks (fruit, yogurt, breakfast bars) as well as special busy season lunches and Wednesday night dinners catered by local caterers.

In addition, the firm's Employee Assistance Program (EPA) is available as an employee resource. This service provides free, confidential support for any issues pertaining to work/life balance/wellness – as well as additional counseling benefits.

Physical Activity and Remote Working

Robinson, IL-based Kemper CPA Group directs a lot of attention to employee wellness during busy season. The firm encourages short, group walking breaks, stretching, fitness events, and other exercises not just during busy season but year-round. In the spring, staff members keep the juices flowing by taking turns bringing in dishes for group lunches, and the firm provides breakfasts on Saturdays.

Tonya Dale, director of communications at Kemper CPA Group said the firm supports videoconferencing for meetings, rather than travel, which allow time for efficiency gains and helps prevent the need to make up travel time. Also workers are allowed to work remotely.

Nurturing, Fitness, and Date Nights

Letting the staff know the firm cares is important at Gross, Mendelsohn & Associates in Baltimore, MD. Linda Pietras, director of human resources, said the firm makes a

point of scheduling semi-annual performance reviews in January. Each staff person

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challenge which encourages everyone to stay active by walking and eating right. Pedometers are provided and teams challenge each other for the most steps. Also the firm has an agreement with Brick Bodies fitness centers which offer discounted club rates to staff members.

Morale stays high with an in-house happy hour on the first Friday of each month, and professional staff members receive Fandango gift certificates and are encouraged to schedule date nights with spouses and significant others to make up for some of the long hours. Everyone celebrates at an end of tax season party.

Firm Management

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