Cognizant Hosts Sixth Edition of ‘Cognizant Health Challenge’ Amid Work-from-Home

Over 18,000 employees and their families take part in the fully virtual eight-week challenge focused on ‘Wellness at Home’

Cognizant recently hosted the 2020 edition of the Cognizant Health Challenge, the company’s annual fitness initiative for its employees and their families. As the company’s employees continue to work from home, the eight-week challenge organized in partnership with HealthifyMe, India’s largest wellness app, was entirely virtual this year. More than 18,000 employees and 1,000 employee families across India participated in the challenge focused on “How to keep fit while being at home.”

As part of the challenge, 30 live webinars, including six on nutrition, eight exercise and workout sessions, and 11 mental health sessions were organized. Six 'Fun Friday' sessions saw celebrity guests such as tennis stars Somdev Devvarman, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Purav Raja, as well as comedians Praveen Kumar and Jagan Krishnan, speak about physical and mental health and their own fitness regimens.

In view of the pandemic, the focus was on innovative indoor exercises such as yoga and indoor aerobics that can be done with minimal or no equipment. Employees collectively logged in over 170,000 surya namaskar sessions, over 30,000 high-knee marching sessions, and about 10,000 skipping sessions. Disruptions to routines and social engagements caused by the pandemic have led to increased stress and anxiety. The health challenge therefore laid special emphasis on mental health and wellbeing. The challenge also included special workshops focused on parenting and emotional wellness for expectant mothers.

Participants clocked in more than 880 million steps covering over 675,000 kilometers and burning a total of 84.3 million calories, resulting in a cumulative weight loss of over 4,500 kilograms. Employees used the HealthifyMe app to maintain an online food diary. Nearly 1.5 million food logs were recorded, and over 1.1 million glasses of water were consumed by participants. Over 600 prizes including Apple Watches, Fitbits, BTWIN bicycles, and Nutribullets were awarded to challenge winners and weekly lucky draw winners.

“The wellbeing of our employees, which is our top priority even during normal times, has become a lot more critical as we navigate the challenges brought on by the pandemic,” said **Rajesh Nambiar, Chairman and Managing Director for India at Cognizant**. “By continuing the tradition of Cognizant Health Challenge despite the changed circumstances, we have been able to not only help our employees and their families stay healthy, but also create vital moments of togetherness and camaraderie during these times of remote working and social distancing.”

The Cognizant Health Challenge is part of a whole host of employee engagement and wellness initiatives at Cognizant that span physical, mental and emotional wellness and allied topics such as financial management, parenting, relationship counselling and much more. With work from home becoming the norm, Cognizant was quick to adapt to a virtual model that includes self-paced courses, a dedicated Employee Assistance Program, and webinars to offer continued support for employees and their families as they get through the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

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