

A GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL WELLNESS CHALLENGE

How Keller Williams used a **66-Day Challenge**
to instill healthy habits in its employees

APPROACHING THE STARTING LINE

So, you want to launch a wellness initiative for your company, your team, or maybe just for you. Here at Keller Williams Realty International, we did too. We made plenty of mistakes but we also learned a lot. So there's no need to reinvent the wheel; when we finished our program, we created this guide to pave the way for those who want to follow in our footsteps.

Our health challenge came about after every member of our staff was gifted a Fitbit at our company's annual convention. The convention could also be considered a marathon for the number of miles our staff walk over the course of the event, and the Fitbits allowed everyone to actually keep track of the distance they covered. Between the gifted activity trackers and the growing trend for wearable electronic sports trackers, the time was right to design a challenge around what people were already trying to do— increase and track their daily activity level.

And the challenge clearly resonated with our staff. It had the largest participation rate ever. And it stuck. Not only did 61 percent finish the challenge, but 79 percent are still living it by being more active than they were before the challenge began. We consider that to be a huge feat and hope you can learn from what we've done from the following pages so that you too can have your own success.

5 BENEFITS FOR HAVING A WELLNESS CHALLENGE AT YOUR COMPANY

1. Encourages greater overall health awareness
2. Enhances company image by establishing a culture of being active
3. Increases retention because active, involved employees are happier employees
4. Establishes camaraderie between employees
5. Improves individual employee performance and productivity, decreasing absenteeism and improving morale

Keller Williams Realty International
Wellness Manager

THE ORIGIN OF THE 66-DAY CHALLENGE

While researching habit formation during the writing of *The ONE Thing*, we discovered that it takes, on average, 66 days of repetitious behavior to make actions habitual. Note, tough habits can take longer (think: quitting smoking) but 66 was the average.

As a result of this research, our writers developed the 66-Day Challenge to give readers the tools to hold themselves accountable to form core habits in their lives. To help people stick with their own personal 66-Day Challenge, we've created a [66-Day Calendar](#), shown below, so that they can track their own habit-building successes by marking an "X" each day that they work on building the habit.

MY 66-DAY CHALLENGE

"Accountability is the breakfast of champions."
— Gary Keller

In which area of your life:
(Circle one)

Spiritual Life

Physical Health

Personal Life

Key Relationships

Jobs

Business

Financial Life

HABIT is _____

★ START DATE: _____

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48
49	50	51	52	53	54
55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66 YOU DID IT!

Achieve Extraordinary Results! www.The1Thing.com

[Click the image to download your own 66-Day Calendar](#)

HOW TO RUN A 66-DAY CHALLENGE

STEP

1

Pick a starting date.

STEP

2

Advertise challenge details and get commitment on participation.

STEP

3

Establish a Baseline Week for at least one week prior to the challenge.

STEP

4

Set up groups for accountability and friendly competition.

STEP

5

Collect participation data from participants on a weekly basis.

STEP

6

Share results of top individual and group performers with all challenge participants.

STEP

7

Provide incentives with accolades and/or prizes.

THE KELLER WILLIAMS 10,000 STEP CHALLENGE

"Lock in one habit so it becomes part of your life, and you can effectively ride the routine with less wear and tear on yourself. The hard stuff becomes habit, and habit makes the hard stuff easy."

Gary Keller, The ONE Thing

While 66-Day Challenges are not limited to exercise routines, for this experiment we asked participants to commit to building a habit of taking 10,000 steps daily. Most people have room for improvement when it comes to their physical health, and we felt a 10,000 step goal was an easy-to-track and beneficial habit to develop.¹

The importance of the 10,000 steps target is simply to get people moving.² Healthy adults take approximately 6,000–7,000 steps each day with their typical daily activity (not counting exercise or sports participation). Anything under 5,000 steps a day is considered to be a sedentary lifestyle.³ It isn't until you reach 10,000 steps a day that you're considered to be "active."^{4, 5}

THE INITIAL SETUP:

1. When preparing for the challenge, we avoided choosing a start date that could inadvertently derail a large number of participants, such as during the summer months which could conflict with a large number of vacations. Each week of our challenge spanned from Wednesday through Tuesday. We did not kick the challenge off on a Monday because we feared that too many people would forget to wear their tracker right after a weekend, and we didn't want to risk negatively impacting participation.
2. Participants were recruited to the challenge through a companywide announcement, through word of mouth, and through a limited display of signage.
 - a. We met with each department to discuss the purpose of the challenge in a small group setting. Follow-up information about the challenge was sent to departments and individuals who expressed an interest in participating. This information included a reminder about the start dates, how to sign up, and simple ways to increase activity levels as part of a daily routine, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator—along with estimated step counts for each option.
 - b. 8 ½ x 11" fliers were hung around the office.
 - c. The internal company e-newsletter reminded people to sign up.

¹"The Magic of 10,000 Steps." Fitbit Blog. June 22, 2010. blog.fitbit.com/the-magic-of-10000-steps/

²"Pedometers motivate people to exercise, reports the Harvard Health Letter." Harvard Health Letter. September 2009. www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/pedometers-motivate-people-to-exercise

³Tudor-Locke, Catrine and Bassett, David R. Jr. "How Many Steps/Day Are Enough?" Sports Med 2004:34.

⁴Tudor-Locke, Catrine; Craig, Cora L; et al. "How Many Steps/Day Are Enough? For Adults." International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity. 2011. 8:79.

⁵Steps to Miles Conversion Chart. Shape up America.

3. We identified the full week prior to the start date as a “Baseline Week.” The purpose of identifying a Baseline Week was to give participants a chance to gain familiarity with the core behaviors they would need to develop prior to setting the goal of 10,000 steps: (1) charging the step tracker’s battery, (2) wearing the step tracker, and (3) taking note of their activity level.

THE CHALLENGE:

1. During Baseline Week, participants were divided into groups with the intention of increasing accountability, fostering healthy competition and team spirit, and encouraging continued participation. These groups were established by separating department members and dividing males and females equally into various groups. Due to the number of initial participants, we created 17 groups of 7 to 8 people.
 - a. Each team behaved differently. 55 percent of respondents found that a clear leader emerged on their team, whereas 15 percent noted that they experienced no team interaction. The perceived benefits of the team formation was mixed. 49 percent of participants believed that the team provided social support, whereas 51 percent didn’t believe they received support or pressure from their team.
 - b. We provided the option to participate as an “individual,” where people could opt out of the team participation, when we found that some participants were feeling uncomfortable in their assigned groups. We had 5 people opt for this type of participation up front. However, no one in the “individual” option ultimately finished the challenge, leading us to conclude that the group format did provide additional accountability even if it went unrecognized by participants.
2. We found that participants are more likely to commit to the entirety of the 66-Day Challenge when:
 - a. A community is formed among participants.
 - b. Their statistics are tracked.
 - c. They are held accountable for their achievement.
3. Each participant received an Excel document used to track their individual daily step count. We compiled all participant data into a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet so that we could track individual steps per day and average steps each week, as well as average steps per group, average number of participants per group, and total participants over the entire length of the challenge.
4. At the beginning of each new week of the challenge, participants were required to send their activity information for the week prior and answer a short survey about their participation the previous week on SurveyMonkey.

5. The activity information was used to calculate weekly highlights showcasing the best performers. Public accolades were then given in the internal company e-newsletter, which was received by all staff each week for:
 - a. Top ten performing individual participants based on their weekly averages
 - b. Top-performing group based on a weekly group averages
 - c. Combined average steps of all participants
6. The same survey questions were posed to participants each week:
 - a. What was your goal for the previous seven days?
 - b. Of the past seven days, how many days did you accomplish your goal?
 - c. What is your goal for the next seven days?
 - d. What activities will you do to accomplish your goal over the next seven days?
7. At the end of the challenge, both the individual who had the highest total average number of steps and the team that had the highest total average number of steps were recognized and rewarded.
8. Although the participants had the freedom to track and submit their steps individually or as a team, we found that the groups that chose to set up a Google document for tracking their team's step count generally had the most ongoing participation and submitted their results in a more timely fashion. Of the nine teams that set up Google documents, seven finished the challenge with four or more team members participating—or at least half their team. We expect that the Google document became an accountability mechanism of its own as all team members could clearly see who had and had not met the deadline for submitting the information each week.
9. Initially, we recruited 109 employees to participate in the challenge. As with any program, we didn't expect everyone to complete the full ten weeks, therefore, our goal was to end the challenge with at least 50 participants. Upon completion, we had 67 active participants (see figure 1).
10. We experienced a dropout rate of 38 percent. The biggest decreases in participation occurred during week 1, with 26 dropouts and week 4, where we lost 12 participants. These high dropout amounts are likely people who signed up without a strong commitment to changing their lifestyles.

Figure 1: Number of participants per week

BASE WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
83	109	109	104	92	88	78	80	73	71	67

THE FIVE THINGS WE LEARNED

1. THE HARDEST HABIT TO BUILD IS THE ONE THAT YOU DON'T THINK ABOUT.

When zeroing in on a new habit, it is beneficial to recognize that there are often smaller, essential behaviors that must be adapted first in order to be successful in building the new primary habit. With the 10,000 Step Challenge, the first domino for participants was to remember to charge and wear their activity tracker. Without a useable tracker, people could not monitor their activity level and make improvements, and ended up dropping out of the challenge as a result. In fact, one in six people who were polled about their participation indicated they didn't finish the challenge because they could not remember to recharge their Fitbit.

"It was tougher than I imagined.
The first habit is to wear the band and keep it charged."
Challenge Participant

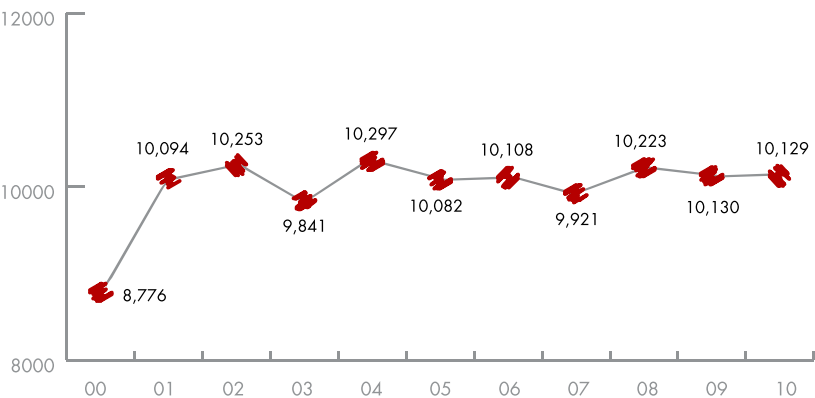
So, before your challenge, ask the question: What are the exact steps to succeeding at this challenge? Think it through and address each step. You'll be glad you did.

2. AWARENESS IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR.

"I didn't move even close to as much as I thought I did until it was actually tracked."
Challenge Participant

Participants often believed that they moved more than they truly did—and the challenge opened their eyes to their own inactivity. During Baseline Week, the week participants acclimated to wearing a step tracker, participants took an average of 8,776 steps, which was 12 percent under the goal. Once the challenge got under way, the average number of weekly steps for the duration of the challenge was higher than the baseline figure, showing that the 66-Day Challenge positively impacted the overall activity level of participants. Further, participants averaged more than 10,000 steps per week for 80 percent of the challenge (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Average steps per week



Participants averaged more than 10,000 steps per week for 8 of the 10 challenge weeks.

Even once the challenge was completed, a greater awareness of activity levels remained among participants. In fact, in a post-challenge follow-up three months later, every survey respondent told us they were more aware of the activities they had to do to reach their activity goal than before the challenge took place. Further, more than three-quarters (79%) of participants believed they were more active than they were before taking part in the 10,000 Step Challenge, nearly half of respondents (47%) noted they were still taking more than 9,000 steps each day, and almost one-third (29%) were still taking more than 10,000 steps per day (see figures 3 and 4). These statistics show that participating in the 66-Day Challenge had an ongoing positive impact on activity levels that lasted after the challenge was completed.

So, utilizing a scoreboard and sharing the results is a great way to increase awareness and encourage participation.

"I wasn't as active as I thought."

Challenge Participant

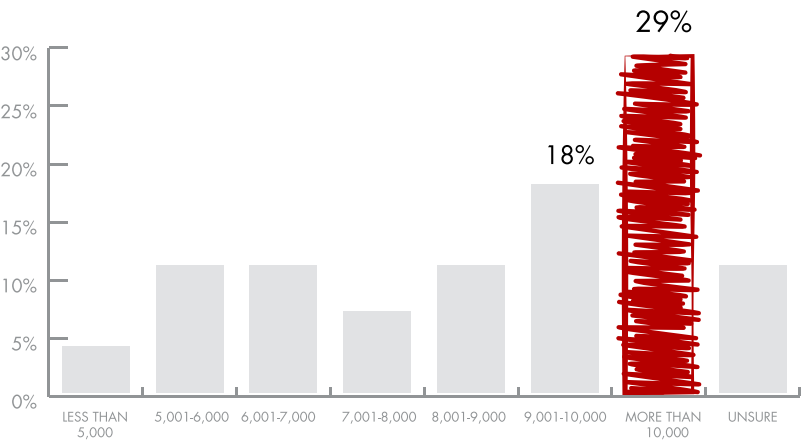
"10,000 steps is a lot harder than I thought. More than taking the steps was carving out the time for it."

Challenge Participant

Figure 3: Are you more active than before the 10,000 Step Challenge?



Figure 4: About how many steps do you currently get each day?



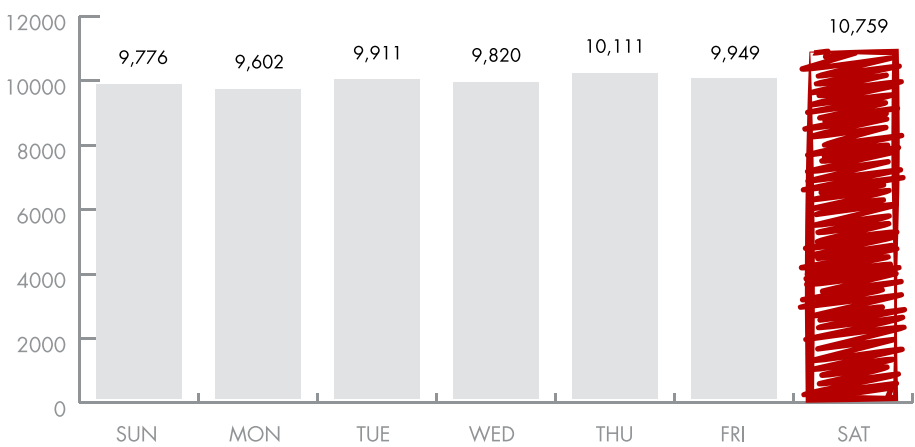
When participants were resurveyed three months after the completion of the challenge, 47% were still reasonably active and averaging more than 9,000 steps a day.

3. MONDAY, NOT SUNDAY, IS YOUR DAY OF REST.

Activity level varies depending upon the days of the week. On average, people were more enthusiastic about the challenge on Saturdays, which was the most active day of the week. Because it is the first day of the weekend, people were most likely to be out and about, taking an average of 10,759 steps. The least active day was Monday, likely because people are back at work in an office environment, which can promote sedentary behavior. People took an average of 11 percent fewer steps than the most active day on Mondays, with an average of 9,602 steps (see figure 5).

So, during the challenge, ask the question: What can we plan to do on Mondays to get people moving?

Figure 5: Average steps per weekday



4. IT'S HARDER THAN IT LOOKS.

"I continue to try and get away from my desk more often during the day and get on track to walk the dogs each evening."

Challenge Participant

"To accomplish my goal over the next seven days, I plan to do daily workouts, take the stairs instead of the elevator, park far away from my destination, and take extra dog walks."

Challenge Participant

We found that for most of the participants in the challenge, reaching the 10,000 steps marker was more difficult than expected. A typical worker who sits at his or her desk most of the day will not come close to achieving the goal if they don't purposefully increase their activity level. The lifestyle changes didn't have to be intense, but they did have to be consistent and goal oriented. Our participants most commonly found themselves changing their daily routine by replacing the elevator with stairs, getting up and moving around the office more, and adding neighborhood walks to their day. Our family pets benefited from the challenge too, as 45 percent of our participants noted they were walking their dogs more in order to reach their step goals.

So, provide your participants with simple ways to increase their daily steps such as easy-to-achieve long routes to the office restrooms or the number of steps they'd get from parking in the furthest parking spot.

5. ALWAYS HAVE A BACKUP PLAN.

One of the most frustrating ways that participation in the challenge came to an abrupt end for some participants was when their tracking device stopped working. In fact, 33 percent of people who did not complete the challenge dropped out because their Fitbit broke. When it comes down to it, not getting credit for steps they know they've taken is really deflating for a participant. We offered standard pedometers as backup tools, but more often found that the unexpected demise of the tracker was enough to cause a participant to drop out entirely. Planning for this device failure and getting participants to plan for it is key to keeping them from giving up when they hit this type of roadblock.

So, future challenges may benefit by addressing this possibility head-on at the start of the challenge by making people think about and answer the question up front: What's your plan for continuing to participate in the challenge when your device fails?

"My Fitbit quit working over the weekend—Fitbit is sending me a new one. Do you have one I can borrow in the meantime?"

Challenge Participant

"I didn't have a tracker this week, so there isn't any participation from me to report."

Challenge Participant

REACHING THE FINISH LINE

The best way to introduce a wellness challenge to a group is to create one around an activity where there is already some interest. For our office, given the recent gifting of the Fitbit activity trackers, the 10,000 Step Challenge was the answer. It got the attention of our entire company, garnered the largest participation rate we've seen on any wellness challenge to date, and kept a large number of people engaged for the duration of the challenge and beyond. While it was more difficult to achieve the step goal than many—including the challenge leaders themselves—expected, the ongoing interest in increasing activity levels and personal awareness among participating staff members prove that the challenge was a success.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

We hope that you have found this guide insightful and valuable. Now you are ready to organize a Wellness Challenge for your company, your team, or perhaps just for you and we would love to hear all about it!



Follow us on Twitter **@the1thingbook** and tweet at us using the below sample or a tweet of your choosing. Make sure to include the hashtag **#66DayChallenge**

Sample Tweet:

"We had a wellness challenge at [insert company name] and [share your results or comments here] **#66DayChallenge**"

We look forward to learning about your Wellness Challenge!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Read The **ONE** Thing and refer to the resources at www.the1thing.com to develop the insights, skills, and habits that will help you take each step of your journey with power and passion. Find up-to-date information on seminars and coaching programs, as well as exclusive **ONE** Thing tools that will keep you on the journey you want to be on. It matters. It's your life.



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