

Unilever goes lean, saves £300k in two years

Kala Vijayraghavan
MUMBAI

CONSUMER products major Unilever is introducing nutritional food labelling across its subsidiaries the world over as part of a project to encourage employees to eat healthy and lose weight.

Food available at the canteen will be labelled for calories, sugar, fat and salt. The move is the result of a year-long health pi-

lot in the UK which resulted in clear benefits to employees and the business.

Unilever saved £300,000 over the past two years as a result of the health and well-being programme, termed The Lamplighter Project, which was designed to improve nutrition and fitness of employees.

While the project was originally tailored for senior leaders, it now reaches out to 35,000 employees in 30 countries,

including those in Unilever's plantations and factories.

The group found the programme reducing short-term sickness absence and improving productivity and overall performance.

"As part of this pilot, not only did we see impressive improvements to the health and energy levels of our people, but the business also benefited from a financial return on investment of £3.73:1.

So for every £1 Unilever invested in its employees, it got back almost £4 through reduced healthcare costs and increased productivity. Rollouts since this pilot have produced similar findings," says Dean Patterson, Unilever's global health and productivity manager.

HUL already implements a health innovation plan, the Vitality Index, which measures every employee's personal vitality. The company has set certain pa-

rameters that are meticulously measured, and a score is given to each employee on a vitality index score card based on four parameters — blood pressure, blood cholesterol, the body mass index and blood sugar. The group coaches employees on their exercise, nutrition and mental resilience and monitors their progress through an initial check-up and six-monthly follow-ups.

