

# Outside the Bar

## Armstrong Teasdale Launches Wellness Initiative

When Rick Campbell blew out a knee while ski racing professionally, he took to cycling for rehabilitation. “They say that it only takes about 20 days to form a habit. I guess I took it a little farther,” says Campbell. He’s been cycling for almost 30 years.

While Campbell has always been active, that’s not always the case for attorneys who live their lives billing hours in an often high-stress, fast-paced business world. Incidents of obesity, cardiac disease and diabetes are on the rise. “As a firm, we decided to be proactive in order to keep Armstrong Teasdale healthy,” continued Campbell, Reno-based Managing Lawyer of Armstrong Teasdale’s Nevada practice.

Armstrong Teasdale launched a firm-wide wellness initiative in April 2011 as part of the national movement aimed at keeping workers healthy. The firm was the first outside client of St. Louis-based Centene Corp.’s onsite medical clinic that offers a variety of services and treatments to the employees of its St. Louis office at no cost. Plans are in the works for a similar arrangement for the firm’s Las Vegas and Reno offices.

A year later, in April 2012, a full-blown wellness initiative was launched in all of the firm’s six offices. With the goals of decreasing health care claims, increasing productivity and reducing sick time, the management of Armstrong Teasdale wanted to be on the front line of the firm’s organizational health.

“The firm also saw the program as a good recruitment tool and a chance to increase morale and employee loyalty,” said Campbell.

A logo was created and the program

was introduced via a music video featuring employees participating in their healthy activities.

The employee-wide comprehensive program provides health screenings and wellness seminars. A wellness Intranet site was created to include a blog with wellness tips, resources, facts and recipes. Through monthly newsletters and quarterly educational sessions that promote health and well-being, Armstrong Teasdale is building a support system for employees to achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Other possible perks being considered include low-cost, on-site chair massages and a fitness coach to demonstrate exercises to do while at work. The firm may also add an element of competition with weight-loss or maintenance contests like “The Biggest Loser.”

Armstrong Teasdale worked with a third-party vendor to provide confidential biometrics screenings and to administer a health assessment. Since the launch, 180 Armstrong Teasdale’s employees have participated in the biometric screenings.

While advances in technology have dramatically improved the way we live and work, they have affected our physical and mental health. There’s no longer a need to walk up to the next floor to discuss a matter when you can just e-mail or text instead. Our increasingly sedentary lifestyles have reduced our overall workplace health. Only regular physical fitness can lead to improvements.

Lance Maiss leads by example. A business and litigation attorney in Reno, he is often juggling a full plate of client matters. To provide balance, Lance stays



*Bruce Leslie is a partner at Armstrong Teasdale, practicing in the Las Vegas Office. His practice is geared to business solutions for entrepreneurs and small companies.*

active in endurance sports. He began with sprint triathlons and has completed 10 iron man competitions throughout the world.

"I enjoy the challenge of a triathlon's three different disciplines," said Maiss. "The longer the distance, the more important even the smallest details are."

The wellness initiative has also had an impact on Reno attorneys Lou Bubala and Jann Chubb. Bubala now makes an effort to take the stairs while Chubb works out five or six times a week with Pilates, yoga, stair climbing or brisk walking.

"When an organization implements and encourages a wellness program, positive change is inevitable," says Chubb. "Quality of life improves at work and at home leading to much happier employees."

Lawyers aren't the only ones who feel the stress of working in a law firm. Staff members often experience long workdays and high-pressure situations. Legal secretaries Barbara Salinas and Cheryl Byrne often walked together years ago while at another firm. When they both ended up at Armstrong Teasdale, they again made it a priority.

"We walked together for years, but we spend a lot of time working. We

finally forced ourselves to take a lunch and walk like we used to," said Salinas. "The wellness program eliminates a lot of excuses not to stay active. We mapped out a three-mile course around the office. It takes about 45 minutes, but it always makes us feel better and less stressed."

"While we don't always have the time to get out during lunch, I'm excited when we do," says Byrne. "I never realized what I was missing by not getting out during the day and appreciating the nice weather. When I get back to my desk, I feel like it is almost a new day and I am refreshed to start again. Even enduring rain, wind gusts of 30 MPH and cold temperatures, after walking I have more energy and feel more alert. Plus, Barb and I have developed a great friendship."

Zabett Buzzone, a legal secretary with the firm for more than five years, is a licensed Zumba® fitness instructor and an AFAA certified group fitness instructor. She is currently training for a half marathon scheduled for August.

Growing up in Santa Cruz, the epicenter of health and fitness doctrine, Buzzone enthusiastically embraces the firm's initiative to assist employees in their health and fitness endeavors. "Having the support of Armstrong Teasdale is an



*Legal secretaries Barbara Salinas and Cheryl Byrne brought their walking habit to Armstrong Teasdale when they joined the firm. Now, it fits right into the firm's new initiative.*

important component for employees to achieve health and fitness success," she says, "Good habits they can maintain throughout their lives."

*The Writ is launching this new section of the magazine to focus on interesting stories, news and initiatives that are happening in our Northern Nevada law offices, courts, and law-related services. If you or your office have a story of interest, please contact Writ Managing Editor Christine Cendagorta at 775.786.4494 or [chris@wcbarr.org](mailto:chris@wcbarr.org). Photos are welcome and encouraged.*



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