

Health Work & Wellness Conference 'takes care of business'

by Chris Freimond

There was never much doubt among the nearly 400 delegates, exhibitors, guests and partners who attended the 13th annual Health Work & Wellness Conference in Gatineau, Quebec, this October that "taking care of business" would be their primary focus in 2010.

"That's why we chose 'Taking Care of Business' as the theme for Conference 2009," says Health Work & Wellness Conference President Deborah Connors.

"We knew that the global economic meltdown had concentrated the minds of business leaders everywhere and that they would be looking for the best solutions to the health and productivity challenges their organizations are facing this year."

Conference 2009 brought together some of the leading thinkers in organizational health to share what they

see as the most pressing issues facing businesses as they recover from the recession and refocus on the future.


"For example, our opening keynote speaker, Ian Percy, talked about why organizations cannot transform when driven by fear, which is a state that many organizations find themselves in at present. He challenged us to bring our subconscious beliefs into alignment with our conscious goals, and helped us understand how to do this," says Connors.

"Ian's message to the executives who attended the Senior Executive Forum following his keynote was that leadership is about aligning energy toward the highest possible goals, and that leaders who spend 30% of their time 'just thinking' are the ones who will transform the way they operate."

With a day each of pre-conference and post-conference workshops and two full days of conference sessions, delegates had the opportunity to immerse themselves in one or more of the five conference streams related to taking care of business.

Feedback from delegates indicated that some of the valuable lessons learned included a better understanding of the link between a healthy organization, improved recruitment and retention and return on investment.

Some also said they felt more prepared to manage change and to ensure that changes in their organizations meet business objectives, keep people engaged and foster a positive business environment.

"We were also determined to show delegates that while tough times often cause business owners to cut back on the very things that set their companies apart—things like leadership initiatives, employee celebrations, culture change, staff retreats and recognition programs—taking care of the psychosocial environment in the workplace and the psychological and emotional well-being of your people is not an option in weathering tough times, it's an imperative," says Ms. Connors. 



Ed Buffett, president & CEO, Buffett & Company Worksite Wellness Inc. receives the 2009 Canadian Workplace Wellness Pioneer Award from Kendy Bentley, award committee chair and president, Kendrith Bentley & Associates Ltd.