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# Encouraging employees use of fitness clubs in Employee Wellness Programs

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# Overview

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- Introduction to Employee Wellness Programmes (EWP) and the business benefits
- Do EWPs always increase well-being...or
- ...do EWPs create negativity?
- ...does this negativity then prevent participation?
- Presentation of my research findings
- Discussion of the implications for organisations seeking to implement EWPs

# Business benefits of a healthy workforce

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- Bevan (2010) The Work Foundation
  - Improved brand
  - Improved retention
  - Improved resilience
  - Higher commitment
  - Higher productivity
  - Fewer accidents
  - Reduced sickness
- Naydeck et al (2008) American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
  - Direct link between expenditure on EWPs and reduced health care costs and positive ROI

# Employee Wellness Programmes (EWP's)

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- On or off-site services sponsored by organisations which attempt to promote good health
- Off-site- offering of corporate fitness club memberships
- Why the need for EWP's?...

# But are fitness clubs places of well-being?

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- Can be places of anxiety and stress (Intel, 2009)
- Interview study (n=24) with various fitness club members
  - Examination and inclusion of affective variables and their effect on attendance

# Affective variables

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People can often become...

- Anxious
- Alienated
- Averse



# Anxious

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- State social anxiety (SSA) (Gammage et al 2004, Martin & Fox, 2001)
- A form of social anxiety induced by a certain situation or environment
- E.g. a fitness club
- Feeling anxious about how we look, how capable we are and how fit we are
- Triggered by either other members or staff

# Alienated

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- Social identification (Leach et al, 2008)
- Feeling like you have something in common with other fitness club members (Self- stereotyping)
- Feeling like your fitness club members are distinct from other clubs' members (homogeneity)



# Averse

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- Self-determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)
- External motivation- pressure
- Motivation is external rather than internal
- Pressure to attend a fitness club

# Method

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- Questionnaire was distributed to 716 members
- 68% response rate after an initial 'face-to-face' asking for consent to send questionnaire
- Reduced sample based on attendance levels

# Measuring attendance

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- Intention to attend
- Controlled for planned absences i.e. any with planned absence removed from sample
- Recoded into 'low' and 'high'
- 'low attendees' 2-6 times per month (n=46)
- 'high attendees' 11+ times per month (n=278)

# 'High' attendees of fitness clubs?

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- Advised to be at least twice a week (11+ times per month, 'high attendees')
- Attending a fitness club is a form of exercise- a 'planned physical activity'
- Different guidelines for exercise as opposed to physical activity e.g. 5 x 30 minutes per week

# Analysis

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- Item level of analysis
- Identifying predictive items first then generating predictive factors
- Pragmatic approach- to develop an efficient questionnaire
- Logistic regression models where outcome variable is dichotomous i.e. retain vs. cancel, insufficient vs. sufficient attendance

# Final model

	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
I have a lot in <b>common</b> with the average member of my fitness club	0.29	0.12	5.47	0.02	1.34
I worry about how <b>weak or unfit</b> I look in front of other <b>members</b>	-0.20	0.10	3.73	0.05	0.82
I feel under <b>pressure</b> from my family/friends/partner to go to a fitness club	-0.29	0.14	4.38	0.04	0.75



# Limitations

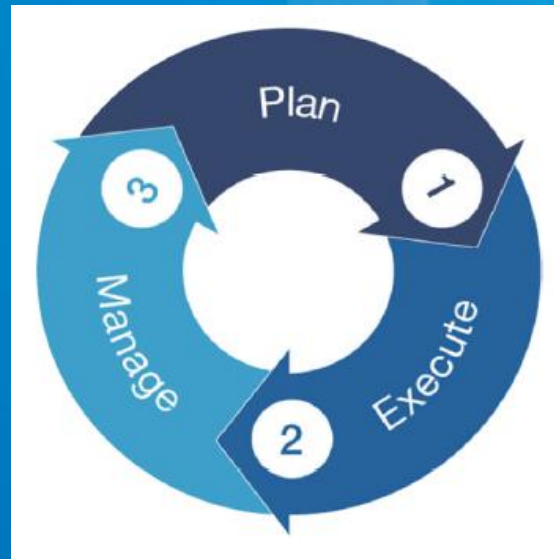
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- Intention to attend not actual attendance
- Hard to capture those who don't go
- Longitudinal analysis has been conducted in order to validate predictive factors in relation to both attendance and fitness club cancellation

# Implications for EWPs?

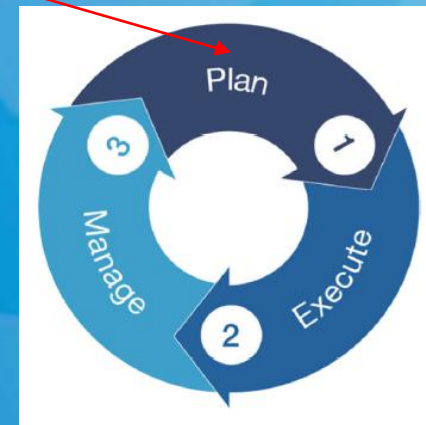
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- PricewaterhouseCoopers (2008) Department of Work and Pensions
- Three stages of implementation



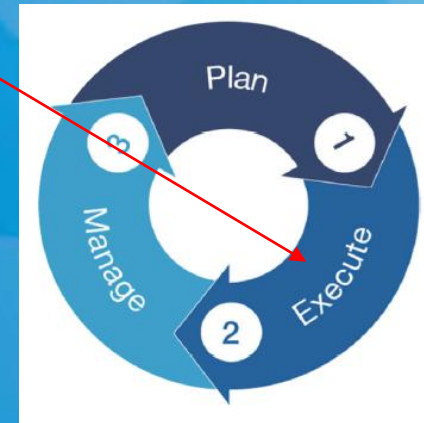
# Reduce alienation

- Planning phase- selecting the right Wellness Option by matching EWP partner clientele to workforce



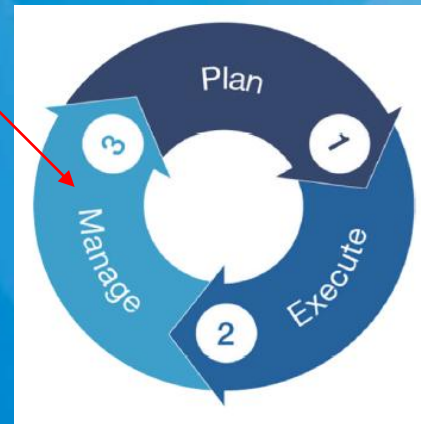
# Reduce anxiety

- Execution phase- offering personal counselling or personal training to begin with, away from other a shared environment with other members.



# Reduce apathy

- Management phase- work on intrinsic motivation through social marketing efforts and development of a wellness brand as opposed to just financial incentives or direct pressure to go.
- ‘Engage’ rather than ‘monitor and remind’





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Thanks- any questions?  
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