

Case Study

Workplace Health Initiatives at QLT Inc.
British Columbia

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

I. Company Background 2

II. Measures of Performance 3

III. QLT’s Business Strategy 4

IV. Impetus for QLT Inc.’s Wellness Initiatives 4

V. Health and Wellness Initiatives 6

VI. Organization and Management of Wellness Activities 10

VII. Leadership 11

VIII. Employee Views on Wellness Initiatives 12

IX. Future Prospects 14

Introduction

This case study is one of a series of twelve such studies conducted by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (CLBC) during 2001-2002.

Issues of workplace health and wellness are an ongoing priority for the Centre, which is a joint organization founded on strong membership from the main workplace parties – business and labour. We believe that approaches which promote workplace health and wellness are in the best interests of both employers and workers – a clear ‘win-win’. In particular, in a period of anticipated growing skill shortages, those employers who pay attention to workplace health issues will have a competitive advantage over others in recruiting and retaining workers with much-needed skills.

The following case study reflects the Centre’s main objective in undertaking this work, namely:

- To identify the key features of the wellness initiatives in each workplace;
- To document the role of both management and unions/workers in managing these initiatives;
- To assess the relationship between the initiatives and the organization’s business strategy and ‘culture’; and
- To document the ways in which the workplace monitors the impacts of its health/wellness activities.

In short, the case studies are as much about the *process* of workplace wellness as about the *content* and *impacts* of individual workplaces’ initiatives.

Taken as a group, the full set of cases has been deliberately assembled to reflect, as widely as possible, a broad diversity of workplaces in terms of geography, sector, size, and union/non-union status. As a group, the cases are intended to tap the experience and practice of a variety of workplaces, in order to maximize the benefit from the case study work. Readers will note, as a result, that no two cases are alike, and that the lessons to be learned from each case vary considerably.

The full set of case studies will be available on the Centre’s website at www.clbc.ca, where they will be published individually. The Centre is also preparing a summary commentary on the cases, which will identify key common features – and important differences – among them. Finally, the Centre is developing a series of regional seminars at which some of the workplaces featured in these case studies will share their experiences. As they are scheduled, the seminars will also be listed on the CLBC website.

The Canadian Labour and Business Centre welcomes readers’ comments and questions, which may be communicated to the Centre at (613) 234-0505, or to info@clbc.ca

Workplace Wellness at QLT Inc. – Inspired Leadership

- *QLT Inc., a Vancouver-based biopharmaceutical company, is a world leader in photodynamic therapy, in which light-activated drugs treat disease.*
- *Since 1999, employment at the company's Vancouver headquarters has jumped from 150 to 300.*
- *The firm's philosophy, reinforced by the realities of recruiting and retaining a skilled work force, has produced a strong interest in supporting employee wellness. In 2000, the firm introduced a fitness centre and exercise facility, which have been the focus of its wellness activities.*
- *At work, teams provide a sense of control over work which helps to reduce stress.*
- *The company places great importance on communications with employees, through its full-coverage e-mail and Intranet systems.*
- *The firm does not intensively measure the impacts of its wellness initiatives on either employees or workplace performance, but is aware of their impacts on its employee retention rates.*
- *Management and employees alike link the firm's record in community service and local volunteering to the morale and sense of pride within the firm.*
- *QLT management is addressing the challenge of sustaining this environment in the context of a growing, global business.*

I. Company Background

QLT Inc. is a Vancouver-based biopharmaceutical company involved in the discovery, development and commercialization of therapies to treat cancer, eye diseases, and immune disorders. The company was established in 1981 by a group of UBC professors including Dr. Julia Levy, who was the company's CEO until early 2002. It became a public company in 1986.

QLT Inc. is a world leader in photodynamic therapy, a field of medicine which uses light-activated drugs to treat disease. In 2000, the company launched Visudyne® therapy, which is used to treat 'wet' age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the leading cause of blindness in people over 50. In this venture, QLT Inc. has partnered with Novartis Ophthalmics, the eye health unit of Novartis AG. QLT manufactures Visudyne, while Novartis markets the product world-wide. Since 2000, Visudyne has been approved in over 60 countries for treatment of AMD. As the firm's 2001 Annual report notes,

“In the ocular field, Visudyne is a new product in a new market for which there is no other approved medical therapy and no apparent near-term pharmaceutical competition.”¹

¹ QLT Inc. 2001 Annual Report, page 6.

When launched in 2000, Visudyne was the largest ophthalmology product ever launched, and one of the fastest-growing biopharmaceutical products in history. Its sales were over \$US 148 million in its first twelve months.

The company is also developing a number of other therapies for the treatment of cancer, eye diseases and immune disorders. A number of these are in various stages of development ranging from preclinical development through clinical trials to submission for approvals. Conducting the necessary scientific and product-related research, managing the product development and clinical trials, and securing approval for the use of new company products, are among the main roles played by the firm's Vancouver employees.

Paralleling the dramatic increase in sales of its major product, QLT Inc. has experienced extremely rapid employment growth. Since 1999, employment at the company's Vancouver headquarters has jumped from 150 to about 300. Most of these employees are professionals in the fields of science, research, business and technology.

The average age of the firm's workforce is about 35 years, and it is evenly divided between men and women. Reflecting the nature of its business and its highly educated work force, the firm is marked by an informal, 'first-name-basis' culture, a 'flat' structure, and a team-based work organization. The company is not unionized.

II. Measures of Performance

In 2001, the company recorded a net profit of \$122.0 million (CDN), a significant increase from its 2000 net profit of \$9.5 million (CDN). At the same time, company sales increased from \$148 million (CDN) in 2000, to \$346 million (CDN) in 2001, and are projected at \$435-\$475 million (CDN) in 2002.

To put these figures into perspective, of the 490 publicly traded biotech companies around the world, only 14, including QLT Inc., are profitable. In biotechnology, profitability by itself is a significant gauge of success.

Beyond profitability, however, the company has recorded other noteworthy measures of success, as follows:

- In December 2001, for example, the Report on Business Magazine ranked QLT Inc. among the 2002 *50 Best Companies to Work for in Canada*, and the company has been advised that it has also made the 2003 list.
- In January 2002, the firm was ranked by BC Business Magazine as the 6th best company to work for in British Columbia.

III. QLT's Business Strategy

QLT's vision is:

“to become a fully integrated, global biopharmaceutical company. The company's strategy is straightforward: maximize the potential of Visudyne; build a stronger pipeline through early-stage development, clinical trials, in-licensing and other expansion opportunities; and manage the business for continuous growth”²

Complementing the business terminology of this vision, the company also points out that:

“We are committed to the people who bring the intellectual capital necessary to make our company successful. Over the long term, our employees impact the success and value of QLT more than any other single component or aspect of the business. That's why we have built a culture that respects and rewards people, enthusiastically promotes life-long learning and recognizes the value of challenge, teamwork, and fun.”³

This link between the company's Business Vision and its 'people values' provides the basis for its Wellness Philosophy.

IV. Impetus for QLT Inc.'s Wellness Initiatives

The major impetus for the firm's wellness initiatives reflect a combination of:

- the firm's philosophy;
- the practical realities of its industry; and
- the opportunity created by the Visudyne revenues.

These are discussed in turn.

1. QLT Inc.'s Wellness Philosophy

In the view of both managers and employees interviewed during the research, the company's fundamental approach to employee health and wellness is rooted in the personal philosophy and practices of Dr. Julia Levy, co-founder of the firm and CEO until 2002. Both sets of interviewees commented on Dr. Levy's humanism, compassion, and desire to make the world a better place. They noted that this approach applied not only to those treated with the firm's products, but also to the firm's employees and the community in which the firm is located. They also commented that these values are shared by the firm's executive team, including the current President and CEO, Mr. Paul Hastings.

² QLT Inc. 2001 Annual Report, page 29.

³ QLT website, www.qltinc.com/Qtinc/main/mainpages.cfm?Internet

2. Industry Realities

The highly specialized nature of the firm's industry and products require corresponding specialized skills within its workforce, including researchers/scientists, or biotech company managers capable of steering products through a complicated process of development-to-market. The firm faces the very practical reality of having to recruit such workers in national and international labour markets. Having attracted them to QLT Inc., the firm must then retain them. During the firm's very rapid employment growth since 1999, these strategic considerations have been particularly important.

A further challenge is that QLT Inc.'s work environment can be highly stressful at various points in product development cycles. This occurs as products are developed and clinically tested, and applications made, nation by nation, for approval. Intensive periods of long hours and long weeks can characterize the work of many employees at certain points in these cycles.

In management's view, failure to recognize and address the above realities will reduce the attractiveness of the firm as a place to work, and hinder its capacity to find and keep the people on which its success will depend. It therefore has become important for the firm to promote a work culture in which work-life balance is encouraged and, as a result, the firm is more able to recruit and retain the skilled employees it needs. Its management philosophy and its practical realities have become mutually reinforcing.

3. The Opportunity

Prior to 2000, the firm demonstrated a growing interest in health and wellness through such measures as selected lifestyle programming, health initiatives (immunization programs), as well as stress management and safety activities.

In 2000, the firm moved into its own premises following a series of relocations brought about by its rapid growth. Its building was designed to include a fitness centre and exercise facility. This was financed in large part by the revenues generated by the commercial success of Visudyne, the firm's major commercial therapy. Although health and wellness had been on the firm's agenda before 2000, the move to the new location, and the accessibility of the on-site fitness centre, appeared to spark a broad increase in interest in wellness and fitness among employees, and provided a strong impetus to the development of subsequent wellness initiatives.

To summarize the factors behind the firm's current health and wellness initiatives:

- (i) Practical realities made it important to emphasize wellness;
- (ii) Management philosophy disposed the firm to address wellness issues;
- (iii) The fitness centre and associated facilities provided a practical focus for the firm's wellness activity.

The central role of the fitness centre in the company's approach to wellness is described in more detail in the next section.

V. Health and Wellness Initiatives

Reflecting the philosophy and realities described above, the company reports that it consistently seeks to demonstrate its interest in 'the whole person.' This interest includes not only specific wellness programs and initiatives, but also a highly supportive approach to workers dealing with stress. These two areas of employer activity are described in turn below.

1. Safety/Wellness Programs and Initiatives

The company offers a broad range of initiatives in the safety, health and wellness area. Grouped thematically, these are as follows:

a. Safety

Workstation flexibility and ergonomic soundness are priorities for the company, which has invested significantly in workstations that meet these criteria. Employees also receive mandatory ergonomics training in how to avoid injuries associated with workstation use. Supplementary training includes Injury Recognition, Work Station Setup, and the deliberate use of 'microbreaks' to interrupt the work routine and provide a mental 'break'.

A number of employees are also trained in First Aid. In instances in which an employee sustains repetitive strain injuries, a First Aid attendant investigates, and following his/her advice, the employee may be assigned different tasks until the injuries have been successfully treated.

Employee safety outside the firm's premises is also considered. The firm runs a shuttle bus from the nearest Sky Train stop, recognizing the firm's somewhat isolated location and the distance to the station, as well as the fact that employees may be arriving or returning home after dark or at irregular hours. The firm also has secure parking, security guards on site, and internal emergency processes and phone numbers.

b. Fitness Activities

(i) The on-site fitness centre

The central feature of the company's fitness activity is the on-site fitness facility, which is available to employees at no charge. The facility features an on-site personal trainer who is also a trained nurse, who will develop a personal fitness plan for any individual who wants one. Often the trainer will extend the personal plan past fitness and into a broader lifestyle and wellness regime which may address issues of weight or diet.

Employees using the facility for the first time must take instruction in the use of the exercise machines, to ensure that they receive maximum benefit from the equipment and do not injure themselves using it. The personal trainer also monitors users of the equipment and corrects misuse when she sees it.

The fitness centre is also the site for a variety of other specialized fitness activities, including stretching programs and a yoga class which is given by a qualified QLT employee.

Approximately 150 employees use the fitness centre on a regular basis. A further 50 participate in the yoga or stretching activities. This means that about 50% of the firm's employees are involved with the fitness centre on an ongoing basis. In interviews, employees noted that the fitness centre is used not only by those who would probably undertake fitness activities in any case, but also by others who were attracted to become more active through the convenience of the facility.

(ii) *Encouragement/support of fitness*

The company encourages fitness beyond the use of the fitness centre facilities, through initiatives such as the following:

- Employees are encouraged to bicycle to work, and have a secure room – not just a bicycle rack – where they can leave their bicycles during the day. They also have access to the fitness centre showers following their ride to work, and are the only group of employees allowed to have overnight lockers. Twenty-two employees use this service.
- The company sponsors a wide variety of sports teams including soccer, volleyball, running, and a highly popular dragon boat team. These teams complement the runs and related events which the company sponsors. Typically, an employee or group of employees takes the lead in organizing a team or group, and seeks financial support from the company.
- The company supports these teams at \$500 per team. These funds come from the Social Committee budget.

c. Stress management activities

Specific initiatives aimed at stress management include:

- Seminars on stress management;
- An Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP);
- Shiatsu massages on Fridays, which are very popular.

d. Lifestyle activities:

The company operates a cafeteria in which it offers healthy choices. Employee volunteers also conduct Weight Watchers classes. The two come together when the cafeteria regularly provides a Weight Watchers menu.

Perhaps its most innovative – and appreciated – initiative, however, is its Family Room. This is a supervised facility to which employees can bring their children as a last resort if their own child care arrangements have failed on a particular day. Not a permanent care

facility, the Family Room is to be used in situations of child care emergencies only. Without it, the parent would likely have to stay at home with the child and miss a day of work.

e. Employee Health:

About 120 employees per year attend the firm's immunization clinics for flu and Hepatitis B, which constitute the central feature of its direct interventions in employee health.

2. Support to dealing with stress

As noted above, QLT Inc.'s work environment can be highly stressful at various points as drugs are developed and clinically tested, and applications made, nation by nation, for approval. Periods of long hours and high stress can characterize the work of many employees, as deadlines and milestone dates have to be met.

That said, the company has the advantage that the nature of its business means that there is room for employees to depart from a regular 'nine-to-five' work schedule. The company therefore seeks to offer working hours and arrangements which are as flexible as possible. Parents delayed by dropping off children at school or child care, therefore, feel no additional stress from arriving at work later than planned. The office closes at 1:30 p.m. on Friday afternoons during the summer.

The length of the company's Christmas break is influenced by the achievement of milestones during the year. In 2002, the Christmas break will be 12 days, a longer time than usual, reflecting the success with which it met its milestones during the year.

Management also recognizes that the firm depends on the creativity of its employees, and that this creativity is often not exercised well at a desk. In management's view, employees must have the opportunity to distance themselves from the day-to-day aspects of their jobs to re-energize their creativity. The firm's flexibility therefore applies not only in daily work schedules, but in other, broader, leave arrangements. For example, employees can arrange unpaid leaves of absence of up to 3 months for purposes of their own. In addition, employees who have been with the firm for two years can apply to take sabbaticals for up to a year to study, write, travel, etc. While these sabbaticals are usually unpaid, they can be partly paid if the employee prepares a paper for a conference, etc.

In a number of cases, the firm will go to considerable lengths to support employees dealing with particularly stressful situations. In one case, during a product development period which placed great demands on certain key employees, the son of one of these employees started to fail mathematics at school. Because of deadlines and long days, the employee was unable to stay home in the evening to arrange assistance for her son. The firm hired an evening math tutor for the boy in an office near his mother's.

The company also relies on a strong team-based approach to its work. Research teams and development teams work on common goals, and depend on consultation and collaboration

for their strength. They often operate independently, depending on the resources and contributions of their members.

Team members therefore have influence over what they do, and how they do it. This sense of control over their work contributes to reducing stress and building commitment.

3. Communications

The company places significant importance on communications with employees, to keep them abreast of business developments and specific issues, and give them an opportunity to put questions to senior management. The main in-person vehicles for this communication are Employee Forums, which are quarterly meetings of all employees at which senior management reports on business developments and solicits response and questions from employees.

The firm also holds an annual Company Day, attended by all employees. Half the day is spent in an update on the firm's business situation and strategic issues, and the other half in team-building activities. The business-related portion of the day brings all employees up-to-date on business issues, while the team-building activities provide an opportunity for employees to get to know their co-workers in non-work situations. At the 2002 Company Day, for example, co-workers formed teams and, provided with camcorders, made short videos (musical, documentary, or theatrical) related to the firm. These were viewed at the end of the day by all participants.

In its communications activity taken more broadly, the firm is able to benefit from the fact that virtually 100% of the employees have computers and can access e-mail and the firm's Intranet system. This system makes communicating with employees straightforward and efficient.

Electronic means are used to conduct employee surveys on various workplace-related issues, including surveys seeking feedback on specific events and company-wide meetings, including the Employee Forums mentioned above. Other surveys are conducted on particular issues. Some have assessed employees' attitudes to potential benefits packages; others have sought feedback on the level of service from the firm's service departments (library, information technology services, etc.) Once survey responses have been analyzed and assessed, they are shared back with the employees.

As part of its data gathering process, the 'Best Companies in Canada' and 'Best Companies in B.C.' competitions conducted an on-line employee survey to assess employee engagement. Company results, in summary form, were fed back to the firm.

Through its 'Water Cooler' initiative, the company encourages employees to post questions electronically to managers, who are required to answer them in the same way. In similar fashion, the company uses the company's Intranet to post stories on items of topical interest to employees (e.g. new IT programs or other expected changes) and solicits employee feedback on these. The firm is also able to distribute voice mail messages widely to employees.

This dependence on electronic communications would appear to depend for its success not only on the computer orientation of its employees, but also on employees' ongoing strong sense of involvement with the firm and all its activities. Such involvement and feedback, in fact, is encouraged by the firm. As long as such direct input is valued and seen to have an impact, more formal committees or management structures may not be required. However, the comment may be raised that if this strong employee interest were to ebb as the firm grows, more formal mechanisms might have to assume a greater role.

VI. Organization and Management of Wellness Activities

While its approach to identifying employee wellness needs is comprehensive and deliberate, the firm has a highly informal approach to managing the wellness activities themselves. This policy is equally deliberate; in the firm's view, paying close attention to employee health and wellness is simply 'the right thing to do'. These aspects are discussed in turn.

1. Wellness Needs Identification

Relying on the firm's electronic communications capacities, the Human Resources and Health and Safety Departments conduct e-mail surveys of all employees on a variety of topics. These have included wellness/benefits surveys, surveys regarding the cafeteria, and surveys regarding the EFAP program. On some occasions, employee focus groups have also been used to explore particular needs and issues.

The most visible example of this survey approach involved the choice of equipment to be purchased for the new fitness centre/fitness centre. In the period leading up to the move into the new premises, an extensive employee survey was conducted. The equipment preferred by the majority of employees was researched in terms of price and quality, and appropriate purchases were made. Employees were informed of the decisions and the reasons for them.

In the view of both the management and employee representatives interviewed, employees are not reticent about suggesting specific health/wellness needs. As noted earlier, this consistent level of employee interest would appear to be essential to the success of the firm's relatively informal needs identification process.

2. Instituting Wellness Initiatives

Once new needs are identified, it is left to the Human Resources or Health and Safety staff to research the optional ways of meeting these needs, the costs, and determine if departmental budgets will accommodate these requests. These needs are not reviewed through a formal committee structure, although they may on occasion be reviewed by the legally required Health and Safety Committee. If it is decided not to pursue an initiative or purchase a piece of equipment, employees are electronically informed of this decision and the reasons for it.

The firm's Social Committee is responsible for co-ordinating the organization of sports teams. Other ad hoc committees are established for specific purposes, including the

employees' Christmas party, the children's Christmas party, or the summer picnic. As noted above, it is usually left to an interested employee or group of employees to spearhead the development of specific teams, or other initiatives. The company supports these financially, but employees lead them.

3. Wellness Budgets, Organization, and Resources

The firm's approach to planning and managing its wellness initiatives is quite informal. Wellness initiatives are planned a year in advance, often following an electronic survey of employees to determine which potential initiatives have the greatest support. The Human Resources Department researches the potential options for equipment purchase, etc., and, based on its Wellness Budget, makes its spending decisions based on support and cost. Employees are informed of these decisions.

While there is not a formal Wellness Committee, electronic communications ensure that employees have input into the decisions that are made and are kept well informed of the decisions themselves. That said, the Safety Committee assumes responsibility for a number of important aspects of the wellness initiatives. It is responsible, for example, for the security of the firm's premises, and for ensuring that the wellness programs, events, and facilities are safe.

Similarly, the amount of staff resources devoted to managing and organizing these activities is likely less than might be seen in other workplaces of similar size. A single employee within the Human Resources department is responsible for the wellness initiatives and equipment purchases. In part this reflects the 'leanness' of management, the absence of committees whose meetings must be organized, attended and recorded, and the reliance on electronic communications. This stress on communications is significant, however; two employees are occupied full time in managing and maintaining the company's internal communications system.

Finally, the firm does not closely monitor participation in its various wellness initiatives. Rather, it tends to rely on more informal or anecdotal evidence on whether or not these are well-used. The pro-active employee culture and the firm's effective communications are relied on to indicate where participation is falling short of desired levels.

VII. Leadership

Leadership is critical to the firm's health and wellness activities. In the view of the senior manager interviewed, the concern for health and wellness is a core value rather than a peripheral activity—an attitude which reflects Dr. Julia Levy's compassion and concern for the whole person, and which is shared broadly across the management team.

This leadership is demonstrated in a number of ways, as follows.

First, it includes actively participating in the health and wellness initiatives themselves. Senior managers can be seen in the gym, on sports or dragon boat teams, or on fun runs. (While she was CEO, Dr. Levy regularly used a fitness centre treadmill.)

Second, it includes making available the resources and time that individuals need to pursue healthy lifestyles, work out in the gym at hours which best suit them, participate (often on company time) in volunteer activities, or take personal leaves of absence. Leadership support for these approaches demonstrates throughout the organization that they are acceptable uses of time and resources.

VIII. Employee Views on Wellness Initiatives

The employees interviewed were highly supportive, not only of the specific wellness programs and facilities, but also of the firm's overall attitude towards its employees.

The on-site fitness facility is extremely popular with employees in terms of its availability and convenience, which allows employees to work exercise into their day in a way that suits them. They also find that the personal trainer motivates employees who would otherwise be intimidated by such a facility and require additional encouragement to undertake an exercise program.

Some employees noted that a lunchtime workout made them more alert and productive in the afternoon; others valued the time away from their desk as an opportunity to reset their priorities, allowing them to function in a more organized way when back at their work station.

The company sports teams, it was noted, provide an opportunity to get to know new employees in the rapidly expanding company work force. This adds to the social cohesion of the employees and the overall sense of belonging.

The company does not maintain detailed records of participation in its wellness programs, although it does use sign-up sheets and attendance sheets to monitor use of the fitness facility. Generally, however, it relies on anecdotal evidence of participation, interest, and support.

This is a deliberate policy; the firm feels it is small enough to be able to monitor employee participation and interest through communicating with employees (verbally or electronically) rather than through formal scientific surveys, or simply through observing the number of employees involved with particular initiatives. Notwithstanding this absence of formal information, the firm is confident that attendance is high, and that its initiatives are popular.

1. Measurement of Impacts of Workplace Health Initiatives

The Human Resources Department is accountable to senior management for the expenditures on health, safety and wellness, and for defending the continuation and expansion of expenditures in this area.

Given the prevailing 'culture' within the organization, it was clear that the firm engages in its workplace health practices in large measure because, as noted earlier, 'it's the right thing to do.' As a result, the firm does not expend large amounts of energy on meticulously

measuring the impacts of its initiatives on either employees or workplace performance. It also notes that the cause and effect relationships between initiatives and specific indicators are difficult to prove with any certainty.

Nevertheless, managers involved in the wellness activities are able to cite evidence which they believe is supportive of their initiatives. This includes the following:

- A critical indicator of the effectiveness of the firm's measures rests with the firm's ability to recruit and retain employees. The firm's voluntary employee turnover rates are minimal, as the Vice-President, Human Resources noted. Clearly, in a competitive labour market focusing on specialized skills, this is an important impact of the firm's initiatives.
- The fitness regimes set up by the personal trainer have helped employees return to work relatively quickly following injuries. According to calculations by management, the reductions in the duration of absences due to injury, and employees' speedier return to productive work, easily outweigh the cost of the trainer's salary.
- The firm encounters very few repetitive strain soft tissue injuries from the operation of computers, due to the ergonomics awareness of employees.
- The number of WCB claims from the firm is minimal. There have been no Lost Time Injury claims in 2002.
- In a year, the firm estimates that 250 of its 300 employees take advantage of one or more of its wellness initiatives or programs.

2. Community Service as a Measure of Workplace Morale and Pride

Management and employees alike drew attention to the firm's record in community service and local volunteering. Both sets of interviewees linked this activity directly to the morale within the firm and the sense of pride that employees have in working for the firm and representing it in the community at large. This, in the view of many interviewees, is another dimension of the state of 'wellness' within the firm. As one employee stated, "If you're happy at QLT, you'll be more likely to donate time to do something in the community."

The mechanism through which the employees become involved in local volunteering reflects the high level of electronic communication within the firm. An employee with a proposal for community action will communicate it electronically throughout the firm, and interested individuals will respond. Often, the activities are carried out on company time, which indicates the value the company places on such 'social' wellness pursuits.

Recent community activities generated in this way include:

- Gardening and landscaping for a local Neighborhood House;
- Painting a local community centre.

3. Unexpected Impacts

QLT management have been surprised by how interested employees are in lifestyle support, and in balancing work and family. As a result, employees have embraced the facilities and opportunities available at the new premises to an extent that has also been a surprise. The culture of workplace health has developed from this.

Management reports that the healthy lifestyle has developed a life and momentum of its own.

IX. Future Prospects

The firm has grown very quickly. In a number of respects, its systems and controls retain similarities with those of a much smaller firm, in that they are much less formal than those of other firms this size. In one view, the control mechanisms have not yet caught up with the firm's size. In another, such controls may not be necessary as long as the firm's informal but highly involved 'culture' persists, and employees' energies are dedicated more directly to business objectives.

Nevertheless, the company is actively aware of the challenges of maintaining its various initiatives (not just in the area of workplace health) on a sustainable basis as it grows in a highly volatile product development climate. It retains a primary interest in remaining 'leading edge.' As it goes forward, the need for business systems and controls may increase, bringing a potential clash with the less formal approaches that have characterized the earlier days of 'a little firm that grew.'

QLT management recognizes the unique work environment which has been generated over the last decade, and is candid about asking whether this environment is consistent and sustainable with a global business. At the same time, it is concerned about its social obligations and its links to the community, as it becomes a larger organization.

The answer will bear watching.