

20in10:

how Touchmark's wellness tips campaign expanded awareness

This multifaceted, yearlong campaign encouraged individuals to consider all the things they could do to enhance wellness—and implement them



This is the first article in a series profiling the recipients of the 2010 ICAA Innovators Awards. Launched by the International Council on Active Aging® in 2003, these awards recognize creativity and excellence in active aging, honoring innovations that are leading the way, setting new standards and making a difference in the lives of older adults. These offerings target any or all of the seven dimensions of wellness—namely, physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, vocational and environmental wellness. ICAA supports professionals who develop wellness facilities, programs and services for adults ages 50 and over.

“To enrich people’s lives” is the mission of Touchmark, a provider of lifestyle options for adults ages 55 and over. Established in 1980 by Werner G. Nistler, Jr., the privately held company based in Beaver-

ton, Oregon, develops, owns and operates active adult retirement communities in North America. It also provides healthcare and home health services, as well as fitness services through health and fitness clubs. Nistler, who serves as CEO, explains that through Touchmark, he wants “to improve people’s quality of life, offer an active living environment, and provide life enrichment opportunities that enable this period to be their happiest.” One avenue through which the company supports these aspirations is the Touchmark Full Life Wellness & Life Enrichment Program® (also known as the Life Enrichment/Wellness program).

Developed in 2003 by Vice President of Wellness and Programs Marge Coalman, EdD, Touchmark’s Life Enrichment/Well-

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Touchmark's wellness cards found their way into brain fitness sessions and led to a new Lifestyles class, with many benefits for participants

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Touchmark residents accumulated 20in10 cards by participating in wellness activities, and a lively trade developed over time among those intent on collecting the whole set

ness program focuses on the strengths, needs and interests of each person. Coalman adds that the program's premise holds that opportunities for enhanced wellness and new interests are not limited to the first 50 years of life. There is a continuum of opportunity over one's life span.

Within the Life Enrichment/Wellness program "are eight specific categories of focus that encompass the six dimensions of whole-person wellness," continues Coalman. The company is also "adding supports" for a seventh dimension, she says—environmental. All 11 Touchmark communities feature Life Enrichment/Wellness programming, with additional offerings available in the three communities with full-service health and fitness clubs. "Annual goals and themes are set

companywide," she adds, "and programs are audited for implementation, participation and resident satisfaction."

In 2009, with Touchmark about to enter its 30th year, the company decided on a 2010 goal of expanding wellness awareness and emphasizing all the dimensions of wellness. A key way to increase understanding "was to seek people's input about how they could 'experience wellness in less than 10 minutes' several times a day," Coalman says. So Touchmark created a campaign, called 20in10: 20 Tips to Wellness You Can Do in 10 Minutes. To learn more, the *Journal on Active Aging*[®] recently asked Coalman, a longtime contributor and a member of the ICAA Advisory Board, what was involved in this multifaceted, yearlong campaign.

JAA: *How did Touchmark launch the 20in10 campaign and roll it out in various communities over the year?*

MC: We launched the campaign by distributing a set of 24 wellness cards—slightly larger than playing cards—to each of our health and fitness club directors in December 2009. Twenty cards included prewritten tips; two were blank so that people could write their own tips and two were informational. To pique curiosity and awareness, the colorful cards were used to decorate Christmas trees and holiday bulletin boards in the clubs without further explanations.

In January, we introduced the campaign across the company as follows:

- We sent an email to all executive directors, life enrichment/wellness directors, and other managers announcing the yearlong campaign and soliciting their involvement.
- We publicized the campaign in all newsletters and featured a sample of tips suggested by residents and team members.
- All members joining the clubs in January received a free deck of cards.

- Residents and club members received a card from the deck for every wellness-related activity/class/event they participated in. This way, they could collect an entire set.
- Managers displayed the cards on their office doors; sales staff distributed decks of cards to prospective residents and family members; various bulletin boards throughout the buildings featured the cards; and participants "traded cards," as they attempted to acquire a full set.

Participants contributed their own wellness tips and became local "wellness experts." Tips were included in brain aerobics classes, as well as in crossword puzzles, contests and competitions. We also introduced the seventh wellness dimension—environmental—in our August newsletters and emphasized the importance of that element as the campaign moved forward.

During Active Aging Week in late September, several Touchmark communities incorporated the cards into their events, including one community that featured 20in10 charades. And in the final weeks of the year, undistributed decks of cards were given as prizes and gifts to a number of individuals and groups, including new residents, new club members and some community partners.

JAA: *What were Touchmark's objectives for the 20in10 campaign, and why?*

MC: There were three primary objectives for the 20in10 campaign:

- *Gain total staff involvement and awareness.* To have the maximum effect on resident participation, it was important to have the campaign involve more than the wellness staff. Department managers were recruited to participate and to promote the campaign to their staff. The principles of the program applied to everyone, including all team members.

- *Expand the concept of what wellness involves.* There is a widespread belief that wellness includes only physical exercise and dietary recommendations. By focusing on all six dimensions of wellness, we sought to help people understand that there is more to wellness than “30 minutes of exercise most days of the week” and good nutritional practices.
- *Fulfill the mission statement.* Emphasizing socialization, spiritual well-being, civic engagement, community outreach, and lifelong learning helped people expand their thinking on Touchmark’s mission statement, “To enrich people’s lives.” The effect and influence expanded as the program grew and incorporated recommendations from team members and residents.

JAA: *Please describe the campaign’s key elements.*

MC: There were several key elements related to planning and implementation that contributed to the campaign’s success. These elements were:

- enthusiasm on the part of the program director, who initiated the campaign
- the campaign’s tie to the year 2010, which made it fun and timely
- the actual product—decks of wellness cards

Also key was the fact that the majority of the actual “work”—design, distribution and suggestions for use—was done for the recipients. Thus, the campaign did not require users to spend a lot of time in their already busy days trying to create and manufacture the cards, or initially think of how to use these tools in their setting.

JAA: *What resources were required for 20in10? And how did Touchmark fund the initiative?*

MC: The primary resource requirement was short, catchy wellness tips that were

inclusive and comprehensive of all six dimensions of wellness. To actualize the cards and support the efforts company-wide, the Central Office absorbed the cost of manufacturing and distributing the cards. The Marketing and Public Relations staff were key in developing the actual cards.

JAA: *How did Touchmark encourage the participation of residents in the campaign, and how did they respond?*

MC: Initially, Touchmark team members encouraged residents to participate by displaying and using the cards in a variety of settings and interactive activities. As the campaign proceeded, residents, family members and friends encouraged each other. Participation actually became fairly competitive in many communities.

JAA: *Touchmark used the 20in10 wellness cards as a sales tool with potential residents. What were your goals in sharing these cards with this audience?*

MC: The wellness cards were a tangible way to increase awareness among prospective residents and health professionals of the importance wellness plays in Touchmark programs and services. We decided to give the cards as a gift, so people would be reminded of Touchmark as they used the cards throughout the year.

JAA: *What challenges did Touchmark encounter in delivering the 20in10 campaign? And how did you address them?*

MC: The biggest challenge was having the campaign run as long as it did (13 months). Team members lost “front-of-mind” awareness of the need to promote the campaign and look for fresh ideas to use it. They also forgot to reorder decks of cards and have them readily available. If we were to do it over, we think it would be adequate to use the campaign in the first quarter and reference it in a variety of ways after that time. We also would provide a universal way to use the cards

Touchmark’s 20in10 campaign: five keys

1. Agreement on the importance of the program’s emphasis. Other key people in the company contributed their ideas and recommendations.
2. The project was inclusive, non-ageist, and had universal appeal.
3. The campaign was intended to be fun, and it was.
4. The focus was to invite participation from all stakeholders—team members, residents, their family members and others.
5. The campaign was designed with ease of access and use in mind.

during Active Aging Week celebrations. Finally, we could have strengthened the use in Sales by providing more specific training for the retirement counselors.

JAA: *Were there any unexpected opportunities that Touchmark recognized and capitalized on during the campaign?*

MC: Incorporating the cards into brain fitness classes was an unexpected use and provided many benefits to residents. In addition, several new wellness offerings grew out of the campaign. Communities also noted how useful the cards were as décor when it came to holding conversations during tours. Some executive directors recognized individual contributors to the cards, which was spontaneous and fun for the team. All of these opportunities were shared with the other communities.

JAA: *What were the key contributors to the success of the 20in10 campaign in your view?*

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In keeping with one 20in10 wellness tip, participants in a Touchmark program danced 'like nobody's watching'

MC: The key contributors to success were:

- **Timeliness.** People have a renewed interest in healthy living at the beginning of a year. The challenge is how to maintain that interest. As members returned to the health and fitness clubs in January, the cards were on display and available. Members were intrigued with the new tools that encouraged and promoted personal goals for wellness. The campaign's link to the calendar year—20in10—also was timely.
- **Novelty.** Interest grew quickly from the “buzz” from club members, publicity in the newsletters, displays on bulletin boards, announcements at resident council meetings, and talk among staff, residents and team members. A spirit of competition and desire for recognition also developed as people accepted the challenge of contributing entries.
- **Accessibility.** Everyone in all Touchmark communities could participate easily. Individuals submitted their tips to vari-

ous contests and delighted in requests from others for more information about their ideas. People truly enjoyed sharing their wellness preferences and practices. All levels of care (including memory care) participated in the campaign, all entries were accepted, and participants received recognition for their contributions.


- **Application.** Several new wellness offerings grew out of this campaign, and this was an unanticipated and excellent outcome. For example, a Lifestyle class emerged for club members and employees incorporating 20in10 recommendations. Resident-led discussion groups grew and new ones formed. Yoga, tai chi, qigong and other mind-body-spirit offerings came back to the forefront as “fitness offerings.” Brain fitness activities not only incorporated participant contributions, but also expanded the classes and activities to focus on all dimensions of wellness.
- **Promotion.** Each monthly newsletter published a list of new suggested tips.

And the cards were very visible—from hanging on office doors, to posting on bulletin boards, to exchanging hands in classes. The constant communications maintained interest in the campaign and provided people with ongoing recognition.

JAA: *What were the most important outcomes/benefits of the 20in10 initiative?*

MC: Without a doubt, the most important benefit was having residents, team members and others *think* about all of the things they could do in their lives to enhance their wellness experience and support well-being—and *implement* them! Additional benefits were having all team members aware of the importance of wellness to Touchmark and to its core mission of enriching people's lives. The campaign also offered a new way to differentiate the company as a premier provider of programs and services that focus on whole-person wellness for all residents.

JAA: *How will Touchmark build on the impact of the campaign in promoting wellness in 2011?*

MC: There was a major effort to reinvigorate the campaign at the end of the calendar year. One community saved some decks of cards to use when it opens a new fitness area in 2011. Also, interest in the classes spurred by the focus on wellness continues. Finally, we expect to maintain the references about whole-person wellness—in small and larger than 10-minute increments—throughout the year by highlighting them in articles, presentations and outreach efforts. 

The Journal on Active Aging thanks Marge Coalman, EdD, of Touchmark for her help with this article. For more information about the company, visit www.touchmark.com.

Images courtesy of Touchmark