

## **Botniarenas, Finland**

### **Background**

Based in the Vaasa region of Finland, the Botniarenas sports complex is the combination of two major indoor sports facilities - an ice sports centre with three ice rinks (Vaasa Arena), and the largest indoor hall in Finland used for athletics and ball games (Botnia Hall). Botniarenas has been engaged in the European Healthy Stadia Network since 2007, and has used the Healthy Stadia concept to both improve the overall usage of the complex, and to raise levels of workplace wellness within local communities.

Although Botniarenas is used by many professional sports teams from the region, the complex goes through quieter periods during the day. As a means to improve the overall usage of the facility, Botniarenas began to promote the use of exercise and fitness facilities to local businesses within the region, with the specific purpose of improving the levels of physical activity and mental well-being amongst employees.

To encourage uptake of this workplace wellness initiative, Botniarenas created a specific brand - "TerveFrisk" (Healthy) - to transmit a softer, health-enhancing image of the sports and fitness facilities offered by the complex, emphasising their availability to companies and the general public. In addition, regional and national media sources were engaged to report on the launch and progress of this novel approach to improving the health of employees.

### **Highlights**

To kick start this project, personnel working at the Botniarenas itself were encouraged to take part in organised sports and fitness programmes based at the complex's health and fitness centre, including individual testing of endurance, strength tests, mobility and posture. Not only has this raised levels of physical activity amongst employees, but such initiatives have promoted a positive workplace environment, and on a commercial level, a better understanding of the services available to other companies interested in using the complex to improve workplace wellness. This approach has also culminated in Botniarenas employees forming their own ice hockey team.

Services and facilities now on offer to companies include:

- Targeted wellness at work and testing services for companies
- Expert lectures on fitness and nutrition
- Group ball games, gymnastics and running schools
- Games to improve mental health, well-being and team spirit
- Physically impaired sports and exercise opportunities

### **Results**

Since developing its workplace wellness initiative in 2007, Botniarenas has engaged nearly 100 local companies in improving the health and well-being of their employees. The programme has not only provided extra revenue streams for the venue, but has proved so successful that in August 2009, Botniarenas was able to recruit a full-time physiotherapist to take care of their workplace training and testing services.

In terms of lifestyle changes, the programme has been able to significantly increase levels of physical activity amongst participants, whilst nutritional information and healthy food options at the complex's cafeteria have also stimulated better diet. Services offered can also be linked to better mood, team building and enthusiasm for work.

For further information please consult: [http://www.botniarenas.fi/index\\_en.php](http://www.botniarenas.fi/index_en.php), or mail to: [info@botniarenas.fi](mailto:info@botniarenas.fi)