



MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Weight Wins, pioneer of diet rewards

Overview

Based in London, UK, Weight Wins has pioneered the concept of personal financial incentive plans for weight loss. Its programmes reward individuals with cash and shopping vouchers as they achieve their weight loss goals. Incentive plans are available directly to the public and via organisations such as employers and insurance companies interested in their members' health. In addition to rewards, Weight Wins members are motivated by email and telephone support, online tracking tools and resources, and competitions. Weight Wins has been recognised by the National Obesity Forum and the NHS.

The Weight Wins programme launched in December 2011 following three years of extensive development work and rigorous trials, including trials by the NHS, resulting in a programme that supports members through encouragement, financial incentives, healthy advice and ease of participation.

In its pilot programme, active Weight Wins members lost an average 26 lbs (nearly two stone), or 12 per cent of initial body weight at the one year mark, outstanding results for a behaviour change programme.

One third of Weight Wins members are men, who are attracted by both the personal challenge and the programme's privacy.

The obesity problem

In the UK, obesity continues to rise, with 31 million adults (63 per cent) now overweight, including 12 million (24 per cent) obese, according to the official statistics.

Being overweight increases the risk of chronic diseases (including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer) and costs the NHS over £4bn a year, and the UK economy £16bn. The personal costs to individuals in quality of life are significant.

Conventional weight loss methods – whether diets, slimming clubs, low-calorie foods, meal replacement, diet pills, and exercise equipment and routines - have not been proven to work over the long term.

Weight Wins believes that the vital missing ingredient is personal motivation to stick with a chosen routine – coupled with a long-term incentive plan.

Diet rewards

Weight Wins is part of a growing trend incentivising individuals to maintain good health and wellness, particularly 'diet rewards'.

Many employers offer their employees financial incentives for improving their health, including weight loss. In the UK, PruHealth's Vitality program rewards members rewards points for healthy activity. In the US, team competitions for weight loss in the workplace are common, and are often arranged by specialist companies like Virgin Health Miles, Tangerine Wellness, Incentahealth, and HealthyWage.

Unlike these companies, Weight Wins allows individuals to join privately and benefit from a structured weight loss plan of up to 24 months tailored to their personal requirements – and enjoy large cash rewards for success.

Several academic studies have concluded that financial incentives are effective for producing weight loss, including:

["A pilot study testing the effect of different levels of financial incentives on weight loss among overweight employees"](#) (Finkelstein, E.A., Linnan, L.A., Tate, D.F., & Birken, B.E., Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, September 2007)

["Financial Incentive Based Approaches for Weight Loss: A Randomized Trial"](#) (Volpp, K.G., John, L.K., Troxel, A.B. et al. Journal of the American Medical Association, December 2008)

["The 'Pounds for Pounds' weight loss financial incentive scheme: an evaluation of a pilot in NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent"](#) (Relton, C., Strong, M., Li, Jessica Journal of Public Health, March 2011)

The Volpp study found that dieters with incentives were five times more likely to reach their goal.

How Weight Wins Works

Recognising that most people already know how to lose weight, Weight Wins' method focuses on motivating people to set and achieve long term weight loss goals.

At the start of the programme, individuals specify via the website how much weight they would like to lose and for how long. Every month, participants are weighed by a health professional at a local pharmacy, fitness centre, or doctors' surgery, who signs a dedicated form specifying the weight, which is returned to Weight Wins.

Weight Wins then credits participants for every pound they have lost from their starting weight, and advises them of their weight loss status and earnings. These monthly earnings can add up to half of the total potential reward from Weight Wins. The other 50 per cent is a bonus if the participant achieves their goal weight at the end of their plan.

Weight Wins allows weight loss targets of between 20 lbs and 150 lbs (approximately eleven stone), with plan periods extending to 24 months, including weight 'maintenance' periods.

Rewards range between £100 and £3,000, depending upon weight loss targets, plan length, and fee level selected. Altogether there are 72 plans from which to choose.

Members pay monthly fees to participate, as they would to a gym or slimming club, or they can be sponsored by their employer or insurer. Members seeking extra motivation often choose the higher plan level.

Examples of plans at the lowest fee level (£35 joining fee plus £10 per month) are:

- Lose 20 lbs in weight over 3 months - receive £100
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months - receive £175
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months and keep it off for 5 months - receive £300
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months and keep it off for 17 months - receive £650
- Lose 100 lbs over 14 months and keep it off for 10 months - receive £780.
- Lose 150 lbs over 21 months and keep it off for 3 months - receive £1,100.

Examples of plans at the highest fee level (£95 joining fee plus £30 per month) are:

- Lose 20 lbs in weight over 3 months - receive £360
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months - receive £540
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months and keep it off for 5 months - receive £850
- Lose 50 lbs over 7 months and keep it off for 17 months - receive £1,500
- Lose 100 lbs over 14 months and keep it off for 10 months - receive £1,800
- Lose 150 lbs over 21 months and keep it off for 3 months - receive £3,000

Despite these large rewards, there is no catch - members just need to lose weight and finish their plan to collect their reward. Weight Wins is able to offer generous incentives due to its rewards partners, and health organizations, employers and insurance companies that are interested in the welfare and health of their employees / members.

Weight Wins does not allow applicants to set weight targets below a healthy weight, and does not reward excessive rates of weight loss of over eight lbs (just over half a stone) per month. For example, a plan to lose 100 lbs (around seven stone) would take 14 months to complete.

Weight Wins allows members to lose weight in their own fashion, thus accommodating any dieter regardless of method. Its starter pack includes a weight loss guide and daily tick sheets for dieting and exercise.

While challenging, the Weight Wins programme is designed to be as encouraging as possible. For example, even if a member falls short of their target weight in a particular month, they still earn money for every pound they have lost from their starting weight.

The Facts

- Average long-term weight loss for active Weight Wins members is 26 lbs (nearly two stone) after 12 months, the equivalent to 12 per cent of their initial body weight
- In its clinical trial 80 per cent of the members had lost weight, with 87 per cent maintaining some or all of their weight loss. These results are among the best achieved by any behaviour change programme
- Weight Wins is the first broad-based commercial weight loss program that appeals to men - 30 per cent of members are men
- Employers and insurance companies are planning to offer Weight Wins to their populations as part of their wellness programmes.

- Weight Wins diet rewards plans follow NICE (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) Obesity Guidelines by only rewarding gradual long-term weight loss and maintenance
- Weight Wins' Medical Advisor is Dr. David Haslam, an obesity specialist GP and Chairman of the National Obesity Forum – ensuring a safe and ethical service supporting the core value of healthy weight loss.

Project history

Weight Wins researched its concept via a national online consumer survey of 1,000 people in the UK. The results showed strong demand for the idea of financial incentives for weight loss.

Following its research Weight Wins developed and trialled the 'Pounds for Pounds' programme over a three-month period from September to December 2007, with a maximum weight loss target of 15 lbs (just over one stone).

In the summer of 2008, the company launched an extended national trial, including the participation of the NHS, with maximum target of 50 lbs (around three and a half stone).

In autumn 2009, Weight Wins further increased targets to 150 lbs (approximately eleven stone), with weight loss plans up to 24 months.

So far, over 1,000 individuals from diverse backgrounds have signed up to Weight Wins, with most losing significant weight – and keeping it off.

Ten per cent of participants used a slimming club to progress towards their goal, and 24 per cent belonged to a gym; 66 per cent succeeded on their own simply by eating more sensibly and taking moderate exercise.

The 'biggest loser' in the Weight Wins scheme to date has lost 112 lbs (eight stone), and the two longest standing members have been active for over two years on several back-to-back plans.

Weight Wins is open to members of the UK public; individuals under 21 or over 65 or with a medical condition will require their doctor's permission to participate. Individuals may sign up at www.WeightWins.com.

Recognition for Weight Wins

"The NOF believes that the Pounds for Pounds programme from Weight Wins is a revolutionary approach to encouraging long term behaviour change among overweight and obese individuals. Based on promising early results, the NOF believes the programme and others like it could play a large role in personal wellness and public health."

The Trustees, National Obesity Forum

"Financial incentive programmes have the potential to modify health-related behaviours, including those associated with achieving weight loss."

Journal of Public Health

“It completely transformed my approach to controlling my weight... The monthly goals and weigh-ins over a year with payments let me achieve what had previously proved impossible. I feel like a new person.”

Weight Wins Member Kate M, 58 (from Worcester)

For more information, case study requests, interviews and images contact the Weight Wins Press Office at Mischief PR on (O) 20 3128 6600 or weightwins@mischiefpr.com, or visit www.WeightWins.com.