

## Wellness programs will help small biz bulk up even more

BY MIKE SHERRY | STAFF WRITER

Already acknowledged as one of the area's stronger small businesses, Athletic & Rehabilitation Center plans to bulk up with a new wellness product.

The Overland Park-based company soon will debut a Web-based application for corporate wellness clients that will develop workout plans for individual employees. The workouts will reflect such factors as the worker's on-the-job injury history and the physical requirements of specific jobs.



Condon

The Web site will deliver weekly personalized workouts via a Web page established for the worker, and employers will receive regular, aggregated reports about workers' progress.

ARC CEO Matthew Condon said the biggest innovation is that the site goes beyond other wellness products by executing an action plan for better health.

"We know what to do — it's helping people do it," he said.

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce named ARC as one of the area's top 10 small businesses after it doubled revenue between 2006 and 2008. ARC is on track for 20 percent revenue growth this year.

ARC's new Web product is innovative and exactly what is needed to advance employee wellness, said Jack Bastable, national practice leader of health and productivity management for CBIZ Benefits and Insurance Services Inc.

"If you want to help somebody get well and be well, you've got to really address who they are individually," he said. "And so, anything in the wellness arena that personalizes an approach for an employee is going to be beneficial."

ARC client Vance Brothers Inc., a Kansas City asphalt company, is intrigued by the Web product, Safety Director Kevin Nordhues said. The site can do more than give general advice to employees facing high blood pressure or cholesterol.



DAVE KAUP | KCBJ

**Bill Franz works out with a medicine ball under the guidance of Doug Edwards, a work conditioning coordinator at Athletic & Rehabilitation Center. Franz is undergoing physical therapy after an accident at work.**

"They can say: 'OK, this is John Doe from Department 102. We know he does this, this and this, and we know he has these conditions. These are the things that are going to be able to help him specifically,'" Nordhues said. "That, to me, does sound cutting edge. I haven't heard of that elsewhere."

Vance Brothers illustrates ARC's business strategy of providing a spectrum of services that starts with the hiring process.

ARC has done an essential function analysis of Vance Brothers' various positions. ARC uses the information to help assess whether job candidates are physically capable of doing the job.

"Our whole goal is to be a resource for those employers and to mitigate their exposure to health care costs," Condon said.

Since Vance Brothers started working with ARC a couple of years ago, Nordhues said,

workers' comp costs have dropped to the point that its carrier is touting its success to other clients.

Established six years ago, ARC has expanded from its original physical- and occupational-therapy clinic in an industrial park off Front Street in Kansas City to a regional operation poised to open its 11th location in January.

Condon said wellness not only is a growing business with clients, but is a key component of health care reform legislation. He is banking on greater awareness of programs among workers, as well.

"People are going to look at wellness plans like they look at 401(k)s and other benefits," he said. "They are going to look and say: 'What's this company doing to take care of me moving forward?'"

msherry@bizjournals.com | 816-777-2214