

Why Walmart and Thrive Global are partnering to help people achieve healthier habits



By David Hoke and Arianna Huffington

Walmart associates around the world have stepped up to the front lines over the past months, meeting the evolving challenges of this unprecedented time with courage and strength. They are playing a critical role right now in keeping America “open” and functioning, supporting a supply chain that serves as a lifeline for our communities and families.

They are also, along with many others, experiencing high levels of stress as they work to take care of their communities and families. It’s a reminder of something that has always been true but is especially and urgently relevant now: we can’t help others effectively unless we first take care of ourselves. There’s a reason that in-flight safety presentations always instruct us to secure our own oxygen masks before helping others. Taking care of ourselves is the most essential thing we can do in order to care for others and perform at our peak.

Against this backdrop, Walmart and Thrive Global have launched a strategic initiative to help scale the work Walmart has been doing to support their associates, families and communities. As part of this effort, Thrive has acquired ZP – the Seattle-based company that has already helped tens of thousands of Walmart associates improve their health and well-being through the ZP Challenge, a 21-day digital journey that inspires Walmart associates to make small, better choices each day.

Together, we are now building on this robust foundation and leveraging Thrive’s behavior change technology to have an impact across Walmart’s community of 2.2 million associates and their families, while also exploring extending it to Walmart’s network of consumers and partners.

This new collaboration is built around an idea that both Walmart and Thrive have been championing for years – that every individual has the power to transform their life every day through a combination of small, healthier choices and peer-to-peer inspiration.

The latest science tells us that sustainable behavior change is best achieved through these incremental changes (Thrive calls them Microsteps; Walmart and ZP call them Better Choices). By focusing on small, daily changes, rather than big, long-term outcomes, we build sustainable habits and grow our sense of self-efficacy. And by amplifying and celebrating authentic peer stories, we tap into the power of aspiration and relatable role models to inspire meaningful change in others. By combining these two tactics, we can help people achieve truly sustainable behavior change at scale.

Years of traditional, check-the-box health and wellness programs have yielded predictably modest results for individuals and businesses. They’ve also frequently only addressed part of the issue – focusing on just nutrition or just exercise or just meditation or just sleep without understanding the power of providing solutions for the whole human.

This pandemic has exposed a lack of societal preparedness to deal with global disruptions. It has revealed that individual well-being is not a nice to have, but an imperative for society. Physical well-being can support a strong immune system, while emotional well-being supports mental resilience and adaptability. This is true all the time, but all the more so in times of crisis.

That is why these times call for something more: a whole human approach that brings together the latest science, technology, compelling storytelling, and actionable Microsteps that empower people to make better choices. In addition to ZP's proven pillars of Fit, Food, Family, and Money, Thrive will be adding the pillars of sleep, gratitude, and mental resilience.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Walmart and Thrive have already launched Thrive's technology platform for over 100,000 distribution center workers, while also partnering to roll out Walmart Cares – a new initiative to support the well-being of associates and their families during the pandemic and beyond.

In this time of physical distancing, connecting with others and harnessing the power of partnership is more important than ever. As Walmart's associates rise to the challenge of this time – and look ahead to the challenges and opportunities of the future – we'll be giving them the tools and support to not only continue having an impact, but to take even better care of themselves along the way.



David Hoke

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David has spent the last 20+ years working with a variety of organizations focusing on measurably improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Since joining Walmart in 2012, David has been responsible for designing and delivering offerings that improve the wellbeing of the Walmart workforce. Under his leadership, Walmart co-developed the ZP Challenge, introduced EVEN to address financial wellbeing and developed many other services that improve the lives of Walmart associates and their families. David's history in the industry includes work with the University of Kentucky, Dupont and Lifebridge Health System.

David serves as a Co-Chair of the Institute for Innovation in Workforce Well-being at the National Business Group on Health, serves on the Board of Health eVillages and was awarded the Health Value Award as Outstanding Benefit Professional in 2018 by the Validation Institute and World Health Care Congress.



Arianna Huffington

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Arianna Huffington is the founder of The Huffington Post, the founder and CEO of Thrive Global, and the author of 15 books, including, most recently, Thrive and The Sleep Revolution. In May 2005, she launched The Huffington Post, a news and blog site that quickly became one of the most widely-read, linked to, and frequently-cited media brands on the Internet. In August 2016, she launched Thrive Global, a corporate and consumer well-being and productivity platform with the mission of changing the way we work and live by ending the collective delusion that burnout is the price we must pay for success.

She has been named to Time Magazine's list of the world's 100 most influential people and the Forbes Most Powerful Women list. Originally from Greece, she moved to England when she was 16 and graduated from Cambridge University with an M.A. in economics. At 21, she became president of the famed debating society, the Cambridge Union.

Her last two books, Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder and The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life, One Night At A Time, both became instant international bestsellers.