

Friday, May 14, 2010

Boland and Kirlin take a weight-and-see approach

Washington Business Journal - by [Jennifer Nycz-Conner](#)

Oh, it's on. Again.

Last year, the CEOs of HVAC systems supplier **Boland** and mechanical contractor **John J. Kirlin** led teams of 12 employees in the first-ever B-K Challenge, a 30-day fitness regimen designed to shape up their staffs through increased daily activity. Each team was tasked with completing a daily battery of 15 minutes of aerobic activity, 15 arm curls and one minute of abs for 30 consecutive days, and awarded one point per person who completed the exercises.

The benevolent drill sergeant in charge is Rick Bradley, a health and fitness consultant and the author of "Quick Fit: The Complete 15-Minute No Sweat Workout." Both companies bring the energetic, blue golf-shirt-clad Bradley in to check on employees' health and inspire them to move more.

Move they did. Team Kirlin ultimately triumphed in 2009, but squeaked by with a two-point win.

As of May 11, the B-K Challenge is back on. This time, it's bigger and better than ever.

Both companies are celebrating their 50th year in business. That got Boland CEO Jim Boland and Kirlin CEO Rob Bacon thinking. What if they expanded the teams and the competition? Could they pull in 50 people each to keep the fitness regimen going for a full 50 days?

As I attempted to sneak into the back of the sunny conference room in Boland's Gaithersburg headquarters during the May 10 kick-off luncheon, I was taken aback by how many people were listening to Bradley review the rules of engagement. Sure enough, there were two teams of 50 from across all departments, taking in demos by Bradley, asking questions about the rules, and jokingly inquiring if Bradley would accept large bills in the form of bribes to win the competition.

The challenge is no small task. This year's checklist includes daily doses of 10 minutes of aerobic activity, 15 arm curls and 15 chair dips. That includes weekends and holidays. The goal is to improve employee health by simple movements that anyone can do, pretty much wherever they are.

That's good for the bottom line, of course, as healthy employees are always less expensive when it comes to health care costs than sick ones. But there's a bonus side effect: Improved health, camaraderie and morale.

In 50 days, the teams will break bread (and salad) again, this time at Kirilin's Rockville headquarters.

If experience is any indicator, they'll likely be happier, healthier and maybe even a few pounds lighter.