

Fitwel Finds Leading Companies Such As UBS-AM and Salesforce Driving Demand for Healthy Buildings



NEWS PROVIDED BY
Center for Active Design →
Sep 14, 2021, 09:00 ET

Innovative investors and companies including Anthem, Inc. are leading the way in implementing strategies that promote tenants' and employees' physical and mental wellness

As the world prepares for the largest return to office in history, Fitwel believes managing for stress and anxiety is as critical as mitigating the spread of infectious diseases

NEW YORK, Sept. 14, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- As companies across the world prepare to welcome employees back to office environments, a diverse array of innovative firms are taking proactive steps to implement health-promoting strategies that safeguard the wellness of their colleagues. [Fitwel](#)® – the world's leading healthy building certification system – notes that leading corporate owners and tenants, such as UBS Asset Management's (UBS-AM) Real Estate & Private Markets (REPM) business, Salesforce and Anthem, Inc. have been driving demand for its certification system and Viral Response Module (VRM) to advance these efforts.

The increased focus on health and wellness has been driven in large part by the pandemic as companies have sought strategies to mitigate the spread of infectious disease in their corporate environments, which Fitwel's Viral Response Module (VRM) addresses. However, these efforts also include a broader-ranging mix of siting, design and operational strategies that are critical to addressing chronic health conditions and measurably improve physical, social, and mental



health indicators. Generated by expert analysis of more than 5,600 academic research studies, Fitwel is implementing a vision for a healthier future where all buildings and communities are enhanced to strengthen health and well-being.

Joanna Frank, president and CEO of the Center for Active Design (CfAD), which operates the Fitwel standard, said, "At the start of the pandemic, employees were thrust into a stressful environment where they were expected to maintain the same levels of productivity while trying to avoid illness and, in many cases, stuck in total solitude. Now, as employees prepare to return, it's critical to their emotional and physical well-being to know that their employers have done everything possible to mitigate the risk of them getting sick, while creating an environment that is conducive to managing stress and anxiety. The benefit to employers is a healthier, more productive and engaged workforce."

In 2020, corporate tenants represented 73 percent of Fitwel's users, up 22 percent from 2019, making this cohort Fitwel's largest user group. In addition to proactively implementing health-promoting strategies across their corporate offices, tenants are driving demand for Fitwel among their landlords. A recent CfAD survey conducted in conjunction with BentallGreenOak and the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative found that 95 percent of real estate investors identified tenants as the leading stakeholder group driving demand for healthy buildings. Importantly, corporate tenants and real estate owners are able to use Fitwel's numerical ratings and certifications to inform their investor and ESG reporting as well as assure occupants that their spaces have been optimized, demonstrating to both audiences the progress they are making to maintain healthy environments.

455 Market Street, a Class A San Francisco office asset managed by REPM, is one of five properties owned by the business to receive Fitwel's VRM approval for having implemented robust viral mitigation strategies to protect occupants. 455 Market Street was first awarded the standard Fitwel Certification for chronic health strategies in March 2019, and later obtained the VRM approval in May 2021.

Darren Rabenou, UBS-AM REPM's Head of ESG Investment Strategies, said: "Obtaining Fitwel certification provides reassurance for our buildings' users and investors alike. It's a continuation of our commitment to improve the well-being of tenants, employees and visitors through health-promoting design and market-leading operational strategies. Achieving the Fitwel entity- and property-level Viral Response certification makes our clients' investments more desirable, and equips our property management teams with actionable data."

"At Salesforce, trust is a crucial core value. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, we wanted to prioritize our commitment to the health and safety of our employees, customers, and the wider community. That is why we are implementing the Fitwel VRM certification across our global offices," said Amanda von Almen, Head of Sustainable Built Environment at Salesforce. "Based on science from the Centers for Disease Control, this standard provides third-party assurance that our spaces are designed and operated in a way that creates a safer and healthier environment while mitigating the risk of employees getting sick."

For more information about Fitwel, please visit www.fitwel.org.

About Fitwel

Originally created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and U.S. General Services Administration, Fitwel is the world's leading certification system committed to building health for all®. Generated by expert analysis of 5,600+ academic research studies, Fitwel is implementing a vision for a healthier future where all buildings and communities are enhanced to strengthen health and well-being. The CDC remains the research and evaluation partner for Fitwel. The Center for Active Design (CfAD), a global not-for-profit organization, maintains the Fitwel standard and conducts objective third-party assessments that lead to certified projects. CfAD's new business unit, Adai (pronounced "a-DAY"), is charged with expanding Fitwel to the global market, administering the program while providing best-in-class customer service and technical support. To learn more about Fitwel, please visit: www.fitwel.org.

SOURCE Center for Active Design