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Health and Wellness

## Tips To Create A Happy Workplace | Aparna Sharma | Senior HR Professional & Certified Corporate Director | Editor's Collection

When we really break it down, we spend the majority of our time working, commuting to and from work, and thinking about work—even when we're doing other things. If we want our employees to be productive, it's important to focus on creating a happy workplace. Everyone is at work for around a third of each weekday, and finding ways to keep people feeling happy, healthy, and satisfied with their jobs has incredible benefits for everyone involved.

**Motivate employees through positivity and being a team player.**

- Happy employees are 20% more productive.
- Recognition and feeling their work is meaningful is key to workplace happiness.
- Happiness creates a more enjoyable work environment for employers and employees.



Happy employees are productive employees. By taking small steps to create a happy and motivated work environment, there are likely to be fewer work-related conflicts, lesser absenteeism and more productivity.



### **So, what constitutes a happy workplace?**

Essentially, employees want to feel like they are important to the organization. They want to be appreciated for hard work. They want to know that their work is having an impact, and that they are making progress towards a common goal.

Would you believe me if I told you that the happier your employees are, the more successful your company will be?

It may sound like the definition of a “Care Bear” management style, but study after study has shown that employee happiness has a direct correlation to the company’s bottom-line.

Here are the top seven things one absolutely must do in order to create a happier, more productive workplace –

#### **1) Consistently Deliver Praise and Recognition**

Create a system that makes it easy to ensure your team is being consistently recognized for their hard work.

Many companies have a formal Reward & Recognition program(R&R) in place. While this is good, keep room for “Spot Awards” to appreciate employees right on the spot, than having a cumbersome form filling, selection process.

You can also create a monthly or quarterly award for the team member who most embodies your core values. Brand it with something inspiring to communicate the intent behind the award.

I also highly encourage impromptu praise. Send out an email to the company when you notice someone going above and beyond, or give it a personal touch by writing them a handwritten note. The unexpectedness of the gesture will give it greater impact.

In my opinion, you can never, ever underestimate the power of a handwritten note (especially when sent to the employee's home).

## **2) Make Work Fulfilling**

No one wants to feel like their work doesn't matter.

In order to make work fulfilling, you first have to know the purpose behind your organization. Why do you exist? What purpose does your company serve and who do you help?

Once you can answer these questions, then you can map how each individual's contributions help drive the company closer to fulfilling that purpose. You can literally write down and illustrate how each team member's role is critical for the company to fulfill its purpose.

Even if you're in a commoditized industry like insurance, there are still ways to give your organization purpose.

Zappos is a great example. They sell shoes and clothing online, but their mission is to "deliver happiness." All new hires at Zappos spend two weeks fielding customer service calls, no matter which department they're going to be working for. This ensures that everyone sees the value of their work – "delivering happiness" to their customers.

## **3) Offer Meaningful Perks**

If you automatically assume that paying people more is the key to workplace happiness, guess again. A recent study found 16 unique perks that employees value over a pay raise.

This is especially true of millennial workers, who see compensation more as a threshold than a scorecard.

So what moves the needle? Perks that improve quality of life and demonstrate that your company cares about employees, things like health and wellness programs, child care, and unlimited vacation.

This shouldn't come as a surprise – it's the reason you see top companies like Google, Facebook, and Apple offer extensive perks to boost workplace happiness.

#### **4) Invest in Your Team's Personal and Professional Growth**

I'm a huge believer that personal development is a basic human need, and that your employees need to constantly grow in order to feel fulfilled. When employees feel stagnant, that's when many start scrolling through the job boards in search of something new.

Here are some ideas that a lot of top companies are doing (and most of them don't cost that much):

- Subsidize education for team members who want to take classes, purchase online courses, or attend industry conferences to improve their skills.
- Host “lunch and learns” where a team member presents on a topic he or she is passionate about.
- Start a book club or crowdsource a library.
- Launch a company-wide Individual Development Plan (IDP for short) where employees come up with four personal and four professional goals that they want to achieve by the end of the year. From there, the manager and employee break down each goal into component parts, setting quarterly and monthly benchmarks. Dates are set so the employee has a realistic pathway to achieving those goals.

#### **5) Plan Fun Events that Allow People to Interact and Bond**

It's a fact: having friends at work just makes going into the office more fun. It helps create a sense that you and your colleagues are all “in this thing together.”

Having ongoing fun events at a set cadence, gives your team the chance to connect with their coworkers on a more personal level.

Offsites are one of my personal favorite ways to get people mingling, but you can also do things like a Happy Hour once a month or half-day Fridays in the summer to hang out together.

#### **6) Incentivize Wellness (and Make it Fun)**

While a health lecture may sound like a decent idea to help people improve wellness, it's not something that will get your team excited. For wellness to work, you have to get buy-in and make it something that's enjoyable for your team.

Yoga, healthy potluck lunches, steps/fitness challenges with Jawbone tracking devices, or awesome healthy snacks have all been a hit at most companies.

#### **7) Build Trust**

Your team wants to be trusted. They want to be given responsibility because it shows that you're confident of their abilities. Trust means micromanaging less, but also creating accountability to ensure things are getting done.

*You spend a chunk of your waking hours at the office, shouldn't that time be fulfilling?*



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