



Tue May 28<sup>th</sup> 2019 / Rebecca Wilson



## Six tips to boost happiness and creativity at work

Melina Costi and Chris Griffiths, authors of *The Creative Thinking Handbook*

Being happy at work is something everyone strives to achieve. We spend a large portion of our time at work, so fostering a working environment where employees feel positive can have a beneficial knock-on effect when it comes to employee engagement. [A study](#) from the University of Warwick found that happiness results in a 12 per cent spike in employee productivity. When people are happy and positive, their imagination expands and thus their creativity levels start to increase. Happier employees are more likely to think outside of the box and put in more effort at work - which means they are more likely to arrive at more unique solutions.

So, where do you begin to build a more content and happier workforce?

### **Prioritise employee recognition**

Nothing kills positivity and happiness more than feeling like the effort you put into your work is going unnoticed or unappreciated. Take the time to give positive feedback on a job well done, and you'll keep your employees motivated to keep achieving. It's also important to recognise the difference between plain criticism and positive constructive feedback. Giving your team examples on how they can improve gives them guidance, without dampening their efforts. Developing meaningful and honest relationships with your employees will also give them the drive to challenge themselves; employees will be happier knowing they are being helped to better their work.

### **Combat negative 'dinosaur' speak**

How often have you heard phrases like 'don't rock the boat' or 'we've always done it this way'? Corporate dinosaurs are those who are resistant to change, and it's often phrases like these that foster a stagnant and uninspiring work environment. Whilst you may run into some backlash as creative ideas are introduced, the best

way to combat this is via optimism. Happy employees are naturally optimistic, which is a quality that can be indispensable in the workplace. Optimism often leads to the generation of more creative ideas, as happy employees have the belief that their ideas have the potential to work.

### **Don't forget the fun factor**

Fun is one of the most powerful idea generators we have. Teams are more likely to respect their employers when given the opportunity to play during the creative process. Humour, in particular, helps to release tension, allowing teams to loosen their minds and widen their thinking. The key in introducing humour is it allows you to poke fun at things; this means that you are less likely to get hung up on assumptions when looking for solutions, and instead find better and more creative alternatives. Creativity thrives in environments that are free from strenuous pressure, and learning to relax and introduce fun will encourage happiness and creativity in your employees.

### **Spruce up your office environment**

[Research](#) has shown that your work environment has a significant impact on your health and happiness. Having a bright, open office space will help boost people's positivity; for example, large windows which let in a lot of light will keep people feeling fresh and energised to take on the day. Consider having office perks within your workspace, such as a games room, or access to a gym. Giving your employees the opportunity to make use of their office space with others will help them recharge their batteries and feel more relaxed, positive and less stressed - which ultimately frees up their mind to explore more creative solutions to their work.

### **Make time for creativity**

As adults, most of us do not consider ourselves instinctively creative. However, your brain has a natural ability to solve problems. Make time for creativity to flourish and you will find that innovative solutions will soon follow suit. It can be daunting to feel like you're faced with a blank page when trying to generate ideas. However, creativity doesn't come from trying to force it; by making time for happiness and employee well-being to be a part of your everyday culture, your creative skills will naturally come to the surface.

### **Encourage collaboration**

By encouraging regular collaboration, teams will enjoy working together towards a common goal, aiding each other's creativity. Try holding team brainstorming sessions to help generate interesting and creative solutions. By encouraging employees to work with their teammates, people can pull together the creative brainpower and input of their colleagues, which will make them feel like they are part of a bigger mission for the company or their department. With the rise in remote working, in particular, staying connected is vital in ensuring happiness in your employees for the long-term.

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