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Ways to Improve Work Environment



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ABSTRACT

A healthy, efficient and positive work environment is a big part of the organizational culture, and like I said, can have a big bearing on its ability to attract the right kind of talent, and the top human resource. It is also essential to know that organizational culture and indeed, working environment 'comes from the top.' An entrepreneur's big responsibility is to create, develop and nurture the right kind of working environment for everyone to function in the organization.



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INTRODUCTION

A healthy working environment should:

- Feel recognized for the work they do.
- Enjoy a positive social environment that encourages respect, fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, and allows employees to fully use their talents.
- Enjoy an appropriate balance between work and life responsibilities.
- Feel secure and enjoy a safe physical work environment.
- See that psychological health and safety is protected.
- Have access to meaningful opportunities to adopt healthy lifestyle practices and coping skills to manage our lives in healthy, productive ways.
- Have the ability to influence their work and become involved in the decision-making process.
- Be given opportunities for personal, intellectual and professional growth.

Healthy workplace offers employees access to workshops that promote physical and mental well-being, that are often free or offered at a low cost. A goal of healthy workplace is to allow faculty and staff to grow in all areas of life whether it is nutrition classes or walking clubs, input in decision making, or support from management and co-workers. A Healthy Workplace offers countless benefits to you and your family:

- Improved fitness, health, and lifestyle
- Improved work/life balance
- Improved morale and engagement
- Improved team spirit and job satisfaction
- Reduced stress and incidences of injury
- Enhanced relationships with co-workers



Fig 1 Healthy Workplace

Physical Environment and Occupational Health & Safety – We have had over a hundred years of legislation regarding Occupational Health and Safety. This element influences fatalities and workplace disabilities, and needs constant attention as organizations introduce new technologies, make production changes, demand more for less, and try to contain costs.

Health & Lifestyle Practices – This element assesses how well an organization helps employees to:

- Develop and maintain healthy lifestyle practices,
- Drop unhealthy and/or risky habits, and
- Make optimal use of the health care system.

Workplace Culture and a Supportive Environment – A supportive workplace culture is the bedrock of a healthy workplace. It supports and enables the other two elements. Culture is created, reinforced, and sustained by ongoing patterns of relationships and communications that are known to have an important influence on mental and physical health. You will find an organization's values reflected in its culture – such values as respect, diversity, quality, and teamwork.

Who is responsible?

A healthy workplace is the responsibility of all of us. A healthy workplace requires the participation of all employees across the university and requires the co-operation of all

faculty and staff. Collectively, we must work together to create a positive environment that provides employees with a sense of belonging and purpose.

- Employees are encouraged to take part in any of the healthy workplace programs that are available. They may also contribute to a healthy workplace as a volunteer Healthy Workplace Champion or by submitting health and wellness ideas and feedback.
- All levels of management are encouraged to help employees develop and reach their personal wellness goals.¹

Ways for improving work environment

Identify good and bad staff

Smart businesses know that a good work environment starts with hiring the right people.

"Make sure you're hiring people who are professional, can work in a team and can contribute to a positive work environment," The same idea translates to those who are already in the office. When employees are working alongside a high density of toxic workers, there is a 47 percent chance that they, too, will become toxic.

Improve communication

Be cognizant of how you're interacting with employees. Team members and upper management should consider the flow of communication and whether it's affecting the office environment.

"Employees are motivated and feel valued when they're given positive reinforcement and shown how their work contributes to the success of the business,"

Make the office comfortable

Beyond cultural changes, there are other, simpler solutions that can improve how the office operates. Working in a clean, attractive office can have tremendous effects on co-worker and manager relationships,

Be flexible

Being an understanding leader can encourage better production and a more positive workplace.²

Businesses need to create and nurture a healthy work environment -In order to (a) Be able to attract the best talent to come work for them, and

(b) Retain their employees, lower absenteeism, boost employee morale and create a healthy and stress-free environment to work in.

Tips to create and nurture a healthy work environment through:

1. Promote communication

Communication – or good communication – is the cornerstone of an effective working environment. Promoting two-way communication between peers and across hierarchical lines, establishing a strong network of communication, as well as having an open-door policy automatically makes working much easier and effective for everyone, from the top of the organization to the bottom. It also promotes idea-generation – something that can be very useful in a small business, and boosts creativity. The aim here is to encourage contribution from all across the organization, and make sure that all contributions are valued.

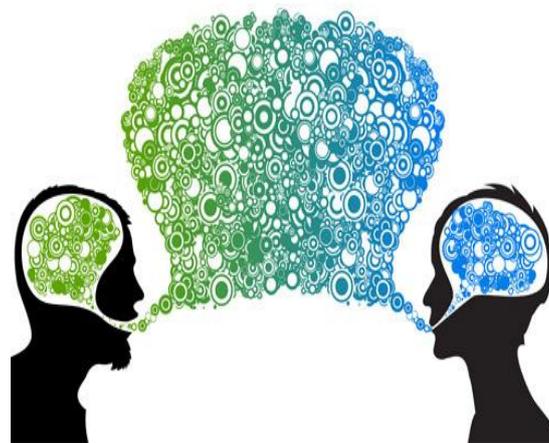


Fig 2 Good Communication

2. Empower Employees

Empower employees or the people in your team to make decisions and plan their work. The idea here is to give as much freedom to employees as possible so as to empower them to work how they want to. People like a certain amount of freedom, and work is certainly no exception. When you empower employees, you're telling them that you trust them to get the job done. You tell them that every employee in the organization has an important and essential part to play in the business's growth. This nurtures a positive working environment.

3. Offer Rewards and Bonuses

Especially in performance-related rewards. Positive reinforcement is a powerful tool that should not be underestimated. It shows that you care about your employees, boosts morale, and encourages them to do better. It helps create a competitive environment within the office. Acknowledge hard-work. Employees will feel good when they will be rewarded for their efforts. All these factors will combine to form a positive and healthy and not to forget, a competitive working environment.

4. Create Teams and Nurture Team Spirit

People like working in teams. Statistics show that people are at their most efficient when they work in team's phenomena called synergy, which states that the combined output of a team is more than the output of each individual added together. Thus, it is very important to form teams, put employees in teams that will get the best out of them, form 'support groups', and promote and nurture unity. Make people in your organization feel valued. When people work in teams, they see themselves as a group that works towards the attainment of a common goal, rather than just bunch of individuals competing against each other.



Fig 3 Team Spirit

5. Provide a Positive Physical Working Environment

A positive physical working environment is as important as anything when it comes to creating a positive overall work environment. It can have a large bearing on the attitude and productivity of employees, and hence on their ability to work well. Things such as ambient temperature, the quality of lighting, personal space, noise levels, the quality of the air, the furniture and fittings, and so on can influence the overall work environment. The aim is to create pleasant work areas for each employee and give them their own space, as well as the freedom to set up their own work-spaces. It is also essential to minimize distractions but at the same time also promote interaction and communication and finding the balance can be key in this regard. In addition, make the office a more bright and cheerful place to work in for everyone.³

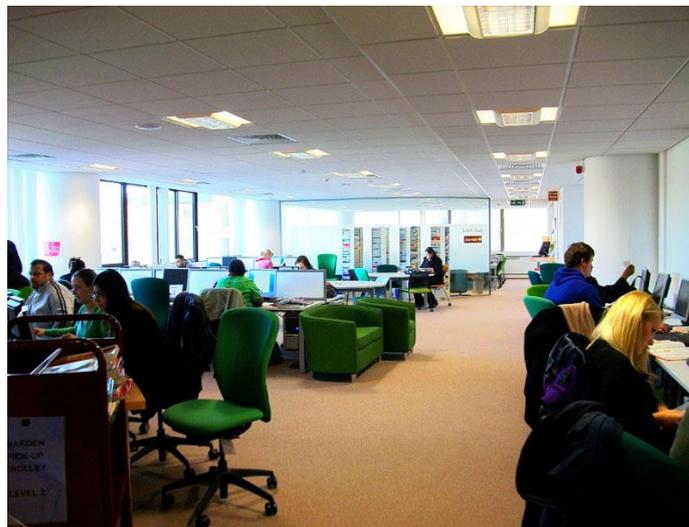


Fig 4 Positive Working Environment

Interaction and communication and finding the balance can be key in this regard. In addition, make the office a more bright and cheerful place to work in for everyone.³

CONCLUSION:

The overall vibe of a workplace, from the office layout and break-room setup to co-worker dynamics and company culture, has a huge impact on your team's performance and happiness.

"Positive workplaces tend to exhibit a common set of traits that foster excellence, productivity and camaraderie,"

Apart from the responsibilities that come with a job, perhaps the single most important thing that influences employee motivation and happiness, and how productive and efficient they are, is their working environment.

Think about it, if your work environment is ‘good’ – meaning you fit well into the organization’s culture, you’re on good terms with your superiors, your peers and your co-workers, you feel comfortable working in the office, and at the end of the day, you look back at it as a positive experience, you’ll find that you’ll be much more satisfied and productive.

Happy employees are productive employees – and they also may be safer, record fewer absences, have fewer work-related conflicts and more likely to remain with the company. Making workers happy, therefore, could pay off in some big ways.^{4,5}

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