



SOLUTION 12

GENERATE HUMOR & FUN

Nobody motivates today's workers. If it doesn't come from within it doesn't come. Fun helps remove the barriers that allow people to motivate themselves.

~ Herman Cain ~

Fundamental Principles of Humor

Humor and laughter on the job are effective in increasing employee motivation and productivity. Yes, employees can have appropriate fun and be achievers and motivated at the same time.

Here are some recommendations on how to inspire and use your humor at work. Remember: the manager is the primary role model and initiator of the fun and humor.

- Always be natural
- Think with a sense of humor
- Don't be too serious
- Plan to enjoy yourself
- Laugh out loud
- Laugh with and not at others
- Help others enjoy their work
- Adopt a "leisure" attitude

General Characteristics of Fun

Do you realize the power and influence that laughter has on people? Laughter and humor has immense therapeutic value to workers. Use it to

your advantage. What are the general characteristics of fun?

- Unites people
- Natural healer
- Reduces stress and tension
- Breaks up boredom
- Generates energy
- Improves communication
- Reduces conflicts among staff

Benefits of Appropriate Humor & Fun on the Job

Companies that have a “fun” and happy culture have proven to not only create loyalty in their employees; but these are also some of the most productive companies in the world. These companies accept only appropriate fun and humor.

What are the benefits of fun and humor at work? The benefits may surprise you, especially if having fun and enjoying your work is unthinkable to you. Why not relax and enjoy life a little more?

- Increases energy level
- Helps communication
- Improves teamwork and boosts morale
- Creates belonging feeling
- Maintains positive attitudes
- Enhances self-esteem
- Promotes ongoing motivation
- Relieves boredom and monotony
- Builds confidence
- Reduces stress

Why is Humor Lacking On The Job?

Many reasons exist for companies to forbid or frown on humor and fun in the workplace. What are the major reasons organizations do not support fun and humor?



- Corporate culture does not support it — we won't change
- Management says fun has no place in the work place
- Fear that co-workers will laugh at and not with you
- Belief that you are not a “hard” worker if you enjoy your work
- Feeling that work is work and fun is fun, but not while working

Humor — Effects on Team Motivation

What are the measurable benefits of humor on teamwork and worker cooperation? Here are the primary effects:

- Helps eliminate stress
- Solidifies teamwork
- Establishes cooperative bonds
- Builds rapport
- Relieves boredom
- Improves productivity
- Reduces tension and monotony
- Improves alertness and information retention
- Aids communication — gains and holds listener attention

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.

~ Victor Borge~

Play and laughter is the beginning of knowledge.

~ George Dorsey ~

Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God.

~ Karl Barth ~

What Can Managers do to Encourage Humor and Fun?

What specific things can you do to stimulate and encourage appropriate fun and humor at work? Keep in mind you are the catalyst for initiating the humor. It's okay to have some “good” fun.



- Smile more often — laugh out loud
- Stimulate daily creative thinking
- Encourage daily humor and enjoyment
- Be an excellent role model — lighten up — set the tone
- Share funny ideas and moments with staff
- Be human and loosen up at work
- Create a “culture of innovation”
- Share good news often
- Be spontaneous and natural
- Make work interesting and challenging
- Use humorous posters to diffuse tension

*People who laugh actually live longer than those who don't laugh.
Few people realize that health actually varies according
to the amount of laughter.”*

~ Dr. James Walsh ~



US Airline Employees Put “Fun” into Their Flying

Laughter and good-natured fun are great health builders and positive motivators. Research shows an organization that has a “fun like” culture has happier employees, less turnover and greater productivity. The first thing you must do is to wear a contagious smile at work. This is a key strategy when interacting and motivating others.

Try to create an environment that has the excitement, energy and keen enthusiasm displayed by young children. This doesn't mean to act like a child but nurture the creativity and delight found in all children. Work can be fun if companies create the proper environment and managers



serve as “good” smiling role models.

A successful American airline has made fun and enjoying work an important part of their corporate philosophy. This “no frills” airline focuses primarily on southwest and western United States routes.

I have flown several times on this airline and find the service excellent and its staff a happy group who always wear a friendly smile. Once in Salt Lake City, Utah, I arrived late and missed my connecting flight. The airline was very apologetic and paid for my overnight accommodations, meals and upgraded me to first class for the final leg of my trip the following morning. This was excellent customer service.

What is the secret to their success even during difficult economic times? Besides having an excellent accident free record, low fares and quality service, their employees exhibit a “fun ethic”. They enjoy working for the airline and will do what it takes to make the company profitable and competitive. Yet, the major employee focus is on a satisfied customer. Smiles and positive attitudes are excellent allies for them.

From the CEO to the baggage handlers everyone communicates the corporate mission, to please and give quality service while enjoying their jobs. Employees are respected, are kept informed and feel their job, whether a pilot or reservations clerk, is important to the airline’s success.

Celebrations involving all levels of airline staff are held regularly to honor and celebrate employees’ hard work and productivity. Company outings involving employees and their families are held regularly to facilitate a “family” environment. Creativity and “out-of-the box thinking” is encouraged and rewarded.

The airline practices no favoritism and treats everyone fairly. Policies and procedures are kept simple to minimize problems and poor communication. All employees know what is expected of them. Cross training, where applicable, is practiced giving employees added value to the company.

Communication is open and straightforward from the CEO to maintenance workers. They are kept informed of all matters affecting the airline. All the employees’ “business fun” and enjoyment is directed to achieving the airline’s objectives and its stated mission.





Self-Assessment

Support of Humor and Fun in the Workplace

Check true or false for the following 10 statements to see how much you value humor and fun in the work place. Do not visualize the future but look back on your previous experiences and present situation at work to guide your answers. Please be honest.

Please Check

True False Humor and Fun Statements

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 1. I often laugh and joke appropriately on the job with colleagues and subordinates. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 2. Having fun and laughing should be acceptable behavior at work. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 3. I feel that humor and fun builds strong team spirit and a good working relationship with employees. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 4. Employees who laugh and offer good-natured humor help create a positive, "happy" organizational culture. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 5. Without laughter and fun the workplace can be a boring and unproductive environment. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 6. I use natural and spontaneous humor at work regularly. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | 7. Laughter and "good" fun have a beneficial effect on employee motivation. |



True False Humor and Fun Statements

- ☐ ☐ 8. Organizations should stimulate humor at work sites with humorous posters and bulletin board items.
- ☐ ☐ 9. Under most circumstances a happy worker is a sign of a productive employee.
- ☐ ☐ 10. Employee humor and fun normally signify an open and friendly corporate culture.

If you checked “true” to 9 of the statements, you see the value of humor and fun in the work place. If you checked “false” to 2 or more of the statements you probably need to loosen up and enjoy life at work. Does the culture prohibit humor and fun? Maybe it’s time to create a happier work place.

People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.

~ Dale Carnegie ~

If you lose the power to laugh, you lose the power to think.

~ Clarence Darrow ~

