

# FRANCHISING

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# EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS

The majority of employees spend the best part of adulthood in a professional setting. It is a big commitment and since the way one feels about their job can impact other areas of their personal life, it is important to find a working environment that promotes employee happiness.

There is no “quick fix” and no “one size fits all” solution, rather it is an ongoing process which requires employers to continually assess their organizational culture, how they treat their workforce and remember that it takes clear two way communication between managers and staff.

A happy workplace fosters engagement, inclusivity and collaborative achievement. Content employees show a shared sense of responsibility; are focused on common goals and feel valued for their individual contributions.

In a happy workplace, employee productivity is typically high and staff turnover low. These environments are usually the product of effective leadership and positive company culture. While an employee’s happiness is of course relative to their interest in the role they fulfill, it takes a lot more than passion to achieve real job satisfaction. Forward thinking companies recognize this and understand the importance of creating a professional environment in which their staff feel appreciated, fairly rewarded and encouraged to reach their full potential.

There are many benefits of a happy workplace, both for the individual and the organization they work for as a whole:

**Boosts Employee Productivity** - A large part of employee happiness is a sense of value, the feeling that their hard work is recognized and rewarded and that it contributes towards the business’s objectives. When this is the case they are more inclined to put in the extra effort and make their contribution that much greater.

As a result, they become a valued employee with more opportunities for career growth and the company benefits from their increased productivity.

**Creates a Strong Company Culture** - A happy workplace is a productive and united one. Employee happiness encourages a close knit team whose members share the same values and are focused on company growth. For an organization, that means a workforce dedicated to achieving business goals. For an employee, it gives them a role to be proud of and a sense of security.

**Benefits Relationships** - Happy people typically inspire positivity in others and establish relationships built on mutual respect. The same goes for happy employees. They form strong bonds with both coworkers and management which makes for more effective working relationships. Office politics are minimized since everyone feels valued and part of a team. The working environment as a whole becomes a nicer place which in itself contributes further to employee happiness.

**Improves Retention** - Happiness at work means higher employee satisfaction which in turn means employees are far less likely to look around for something new. The employer gets to hold on to top talent and reduce recruitment costs and the employee gets to eliminate the stress and strain of looking for new employment.

**Affects Life Outside of Work** - Employee happiness is central to business success. For the employee the happier they are at their place of work the more enjoyable life in general becomes as a result. By contrast, a hostile work environment can negatively impact working relationships, productivity and subsequently business success as a whole. Employees who find themselves in a hostile work environment will often see that negativity creep into their personal lives affecting their home life, emotional well-being and sense of self.

While there is no magic formula for happiness in the workplace there are things that employers can and should do to encourage a better working environment and increase employee happiness and well-being:

1. **Open Communication** - Top down managerial styles where information is given on a “need to know” basis are not productive in today’s working culture. Instead employers should look to adopt open lines of communication promoting honesty and transparency at every level. For example, employers who keep staff in the dark about organizational change are more likely to encourage resentment than employee happiness and those that don’t listen to staff opinion will see a rise in employee frustration.
2. **Good Work/Life Balance** - Maintaining a healthy work/life balance is key to a happy life, and although there are many habits one can develop themselves in this respect the employer also has a major part to play. Flexible working hours that allow an employee to better prioritize their responsibilities can significantly improve their attitude to work. Many organizations are also seeing how the advantages of working remotely can contribute to employee happiness.
3. **Employee Wellness** - Health and wellness are hot topics in employment and there is an increasing sense of responsibility among businesses to ensure both the physical and emotional well-being of their workforce. Wellness strategies can vary, from healthcare plans and gym memberships to access to counselling services to help deal with stress and work burnout. A wellness strategy can contribute significantly to employee happiness.
4. **Clear Career Pathways** - A happy workplace encourages growth so employees should look for organizations that support staff with their long term career goals by providing clear pathways for progression. For example, if an employer lays down a five year plan for employee progression at the company, the employee will be far happier with their prospects than if faced with ongoing uncertainty.
5. **Rewards and Benefits** - When one works for a company that treats them well one will find far more enjoyment



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in their professional life. Hard work should be rewarded and for most people that means more than just a decent salary. Rewards come in all shapes and sizes and appreciation does not always have to come with a monetary value. Recognition is also important. Some companies show their gratitude with internal awards; others make simple gestures like publicly thanking staff at team meetings. All these things add up and make for a happier more productive workforce.

6. **Perks Beyond the Norm** - Some organizations look to increase employee happiness by going beyond the basics. Travel allowances, tuition contributions and family planning benefits are all things to keep an eye out for. Some firms offer sabbaticals to staff who have served a certain number of years with the company, while others may provide subsidized office snacks or out of work activities.
7. **Collaboration** - There is nothing worse than working in a hostile atmosphere where colleagues would rather focus on individual gains than work as part of a team. Any good employer knows that while friendly competition can be healthy the happiest workplaces are those that encourage collaboration. This is often a cyclical process; when one is happy at their work they are more inclined to help those around them, and the more they see the benefits of working as one team the happier they become. Effective teamwork is often crucial to business success so it is in the best interests of an employer to create a collaborative working environment.
8. **Strong Company Values** - When an organization works to a set of core values and does so from the top down

it creates a sense of mutual respect and common purpose. Managers who lead by example experience increased “buy in” from staff and when everyone works together employee happiness is strengthened. Values predetermine company culture and the most responsive employers look to create a culture of continuous improvement. This is a process where all staff are involved to some degree in business decisions, creating a positive workplace where job satisfaction is typically high.

9. **Interesting and Varied Job Content** - Repetitiveness is dull and if one is in a job that involves completing the same daily repetitive tasks, boredom will creep in. To avoid tedium, one should look to their employer to provide varied and interesting job content. Every job has its core responsibilities that need to be taken care of, but perhaps an employer could implement a new approach or invest in technology to streamline some processes. Variety is also key to career development; the opportunity to learn new skills or take on greater responsibility allows an employee to grow.
10. **Appropriate Compensation** - Employee happiness is not always tied to financial gain but it does help if they are paid fairly for their role. A good employer will assess an employee’s pay at regular intervals to ensure they receive appropriate compensation. If their salary is a cause of job dissatisfaction and no review is forthcoming, they will never be truly happy at work if they feel undervalued. Any organization that sees employee happiness as a priority will do its best to find mutually agreeable terms.