

Why You Should Have a Best Friend at Work

It's no secret that friends are great, but Gallup's recent research suggests that having a best friend at work can help you become more engaged and create a more productive workplace.

Gallup's *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements* global study of over 150 countries asked questions covering all major aspects of wellbeing — career, social, financial, physical and community. The results contradicted the old paradigm that having friends and socializing at work disrupts work and makes employees less productive. The study, in fact, proved the opposite. **The 30 percent of respondents who reported having a best friend at work were seven times more likely to be engaged** at their jobs than the respondents who didn't. Those who didn't have a best friend or strong relationships at work only had a 1 in 12 chance of being engaged.

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PEOPLE TRUST PEOPLE

Humans are innately social beings. That's how we succeeded as a species, by depending on and supporting each other. Employee engagement isn't about being committed to a brand or to an abstract network of functions and processes. It's about people fulfilling their commitments to other people they care about, and people who will then reciprocate that with support in the future. A network of trust relationships is the true fabric of any organization. In addition, having friends at work can help workers feel a sense of belonging and connection to the organization and leads to increased wellbeing. So for organizations, promoting socialization is imperative for success.

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BECOME MORE SOCIAL AT WORK

Need help making friends at work? These three simple steps will help you change your mindset around investing in your trust networks.

1. **Schedule time to informally connect:** Gallup's report states that to have a "thriving" day we need up to six hours of social time, but having even three hours reduces the chances of having a bad day by 10 percent. Block out time on your calendar to just catch up with colleagues, especially the ones

you mostly ever connect with virtually. These social moments give depth to the relationship, which you will need to draw from when working together or seeking support.

- 2. **Collaborate with non-team members:** People often think that they can't ask for help or offer it to others if they aren't assigned to the same project or team, but this just isn't true. It is always helpful to have a sounding board for ideas, plus people appreciate being asked their opinion. Be available to lend a hand to others and you will find your own work being enriched beyond your imagination!
- 3. **Ensure your office has a space for socializing:** A common area like a café is a great place to gather casually over lunch, coffee or an afternoon snack without interrupting others. Organize a team lunch, coffee hour or celebration to bring together different parts of the organization for social connections. Ensure the social space is separate from those trying to complete focused work so employees have control over their level of stimulation.

Do you have a best friend at work? What benefits do you see from these relationships? Comment below and tell us how your friendships improve your wellbeing at work.

Learn more about wellbeing in the workplace [here](#).

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Based in Paris, Beatriz is a senior researcher for Steelcase's WorkSpace Futures group, and specializes in the psychology of human emotions and behaviors, and how they relate to work and work environments.

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