

Bringing Fun to the Office

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If you're a mobile worker, you know that it can be tempting to stay in your slippers and lay claim to the better part of your sofa for an afternoon of spreadsheets and email. The flexibility that comes with mobility can convince some that we don't need a community workspace or that the office is overrated.

Are we fooling ourselves? Is there still merit in going into work?

At turnstone, we believe the answer is "yes." Because not only does your presence in the office help your team gel, aid in collaboration and foster relationships, it helps to create that vibe—that personality—that collectively depicts your brand more than any one individual ever could. Being in the office builds relationships and trust with team members, which translates into sparked creativity and fruitful collaboration on projects.

So how do we build the kind of places that people want to come to? How do we convince new hires that we value their voice in the room and their presence around the lunch table? We believe the answer is FUN. And with mobile work on the increase, there has never been a more important time to intentionally foster fun in the office.

If you want to change the climate of your office, here are some things you can do to ramp up the smiles in your space:

Use fun activities to build connections and do good. Fun happens organically when you're building relationships around something out-of-the-box and creative. Try having a contest: Grab your hot glue gun and set aside a day to source finish materials or construction scraps to turn into artwork. Flex your creativity muscle and keep waste from piling up in the landfill. Just as important, perhaps, will be the shared memories you'll have with the person who sits next to you.

Get moving! You don't have to run marathons to reap the benefits of regular movement. Aside from being good for both mind and body, getting up throughout the day encourages people to interact more. All of this is good for wellbeing and creativity.

In a recent article published on Entrepreneur.com, turnstone Chief Brand Anthropologist Kevin Kuske said, "Our bodies weren't designed to sit in a 90-degree posture all day. Movement has physical and psychological benefits. An effective workplace has a mix of spaces and postures. It's about breaking the bond between the user and the desk."

Incorporating a product like Buoy is another fun way to shake things up at the office. It lets your team know that you're not taking life too seriously. And, weighing in at just 20 pounds, Buoy is portable, allowing you to configure your team in ways that best fit their tasks, maximizing productivity and boosting team interactions throughout the day.

Create your own office culture. Creating terrific office culture sets the stage for people being themselves at work. Authenticity in the office leads to trusting relationships, which in turn birth collaboration and innovation. But fostering the kind of culture that attracts top talent and retains team members doesn't happen on accident—it takes intentional effort.

Start by maintaining a central gathering spot for food and moments of celebration. Invite your team to bring in photos of their family or trips they've taken. Find ways to integrate various types of work stations, music and art, and weave them throughout your space. In short, allow people to be themselves at work and send the message that authenticity is valued.

Turnstone customer Joe Fernandez, CEO of Klout of San Francisco, said of their space, "Everyone invites their friends to come and hang out here - if not as a second home, at least as your primary clubhouse," said Joe Fernandez.

Joe and his team have learned that great culture attracts great people, and fun is the linchpin for success.

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JOE FERNANDEZ | CEO, Klout

Invite some color. Much has been said about color, and that's because it's an important consideration to make when designing your space. Color has been used to inspire, represent and elevate moods or connect physical space to a brand. Our colorful fabrics and finishes are two reasons turnstone has such a fanbase with startups and young entrepreneurs, such as Betamore, a turnstone customer and incubator in Baltimore.

Of course, one of the most powerful and affordable updates you can make is simply painting your walls. Consider a bright focal wall or chalkboard paint to start a conversation. Get your team involved by voting on a couple of favorites and seeing which one wins out. You'll win points for democracy and style.

Games, games, games! Even if you're not a Trivial Pursuit wizard, there is merit to loosening up and enjoying games in the office as a way to build camaraderie. Try it before you brainstorm that new project or embark on a product launch.

Goodsmiths of DesMoines has incorporated a pool table into their space, giving team members time to chill and blow off steam between deadlines. Whether it's pool, Mrs. PacMan or Twenty Questions, games help your team relax, laugh and enjoy the journey together.

We spend too much time at work to not be passionate about what we do or love where we're at. We truly want our team members to enjoy coming to work each day. Our goal is for team members to think that a great culture and a fun office can be as much of a perk as is the freedom to work from home.

So be intentional. Invest some time and energy into nurturing your team, cultivating your culture and sprucing up the space you share. Your efforts may not be quantifiable, but they'll certainly be felt by your company's greatest asset: its people.

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