

The Lighten-Up Campaign



It seems like every employment-related blog or article written these days features a troubling subject matter: from under-appreciated workers, to low workplace morale, to increasing workloads -- it's all been measured, evaluated and reported. When I sat down to write this article, I was determined to lighten things up. Here goes...

THE LIGHTEN-UP CAMPAIGN

Simply stated, a Lighten-Up Campaign is a well-managed process that allows those in authority to infuse some fun into everyday office life. These do not have to be large initiatives...small, affordable workplace changes CAN have big, positive impact; they can help fight the monotony and boredom that sets in when employees feel they are overworked and under-appreciated, help improve performance, balance a demanding work load and make employees feel more connected and valued — win-win for employees and employers, alike.

Before launching a Lighten Up Campaign, consideration must be given to the unique aspects of your company's corporate culture. The type of industry you serve, the products or services you provide, and the audience you reach all need to be kept in mind when creating a plan. Regardless of the changes you make, it is imperative that everyone involved remains sensitive to your firm's high expectations for productivity and professionalism.

With that in mind, some basic information needs to be collected before any effort is launched. Your Lighten Up Campaign **MUST** start with a survey. First, ask your employees what sort of small changes they would like to see at the job. Sometimes, without the proper data, firms expend too much time and money on events, benefits and other programs that are neither enjoyed nor appreciated by their employees.

Do employees like the idea of going off-site or do they prefer to stay in-house? Would employees enjoy spending more time with co-workers, after-hours? Feedback on questions such as these is imperative before establishing your course.

Next, you'll need to set up a **FUN COMMITTEE**: This group of key workplace representatives decides what is (or is not) appropriate, reviews survey results, comes up with fresh ideas and promotes new, fun initiatives.

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Need some food for thought?

Here are 4 solutions for adding more fun at work!

1) Build Support Through Outings/Clubs:

Have employees shown concern for their health and well-being? Then run a “Biggest Loser Contest” with incentives, prizes and weekly weigh-ins. Do you have unknown musical talent in your midst? Start a rock band or choral group and feature their music at lunchtime concerts. How about a knitting club or a cooking clubs? Or sports? Build a team and take part in a corporate challenge. More interest in charitable endeavors? Provide group volunteer opportunities to serve local charities.

2) Plan In-House Events: Build your teams or get to know your employees on a more personal level with events such as job-swap day, internal speed networking events, exclusive sales, enlightening presentations... even pot-luck lunches.

3) Celebrate Special Days: Recognize birthdays by decorating cubicals and offices with streamers, cards and balloons. Remember loyal employees’ years of service with visible gestures. Acknowledge weddings, engagements and new babies in a festive way. Many firms even encourage employees to bring their children to work on halloween to trick or treat through the office.

4) Create Traditions or Rituals:

One company I know of “fines” meeting late-comers a dollar, which goes into their Beer Jar. This Jar supports a monthly departmental “happy hour.” An entertainment firm in NYC had an on-going, detailed “celebrity sightings” list taped to the wall, for employees to update. Yet another firm allows employees to “wallpaper” the break room with humorous, work-related cartoons.

Moving beyond “Fun”, companies may want to add some comforts and conveniences to the work place, too. From mini markets that sell stamps, diapers and other essentials, to dry cleaning valet service from on-site masseuse visits to break rooms with dart boards or pool tables. Even late-day prepared food vendors on-site for take-home dinners. Employees truly value having access to accommodations and services that make life easier and more enjoyable.

These are just a few inexpensive ideas that can add richness, personality and comfort to your office environment during these otherwise difficult times.



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