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The Secrets of Workplace Happiness and Job Satisfaction

Happiness is as essential to a functioning office as fast Wi-Fi and strong coffee. People who feel happy at work are healthier, more productive and less likely to quit than those who don't experience much job satisfaction.

A recent Robert Half [report](#) took a snapshot of the office environment by asking 12,000 workers in various fields to rate their happiness. On a scale of 0 to 100, the average score was 71, with marketing and creative professionals leading the pack. And guess which industries lagged behind in levels of happiness and interest in their work? Finance, financial services and accounting. We can do better.

Happiness explained

Just what is workplace happiness? Experts break it down into three positive, interrelated emotions:

- **Enthusiasm** — the high-energy desire to get started on new projects and see things through to completion
- **Interest** — eagerness to focus on tasks and dig into problems instead of feeling frustrated and defeated by them
- **Contentment** — a deep-seated feeling of job satisfaction, stemming from enjoyment in one's work, recognition from management and good relationships with colleagues

Get happy

We all want more happiness — for ourselves and our employees. And even though the business world isn't a Judy Garland musical or Pharrell Williams video, it's possible to enjoy greater enthusiasm, interest and contentment in the workplace. Here are six factors that influence job satisfaction, along with tips for bringing your staff greater happiness.

1. Right fit for the job and company. Workplace happiness actually begins long before the first day on the job. It's important for your team members to have responsibilities that play to their skills, which is why putting staff who love dealing with people in a back-office role, for example, may leave them feeling unfulfilled. [Fitting in](#) is key. Hiring managers can address this at the outset by asking [interview questions](#) that help gauge how well potential new hires would fit in the [workplace culture](#).

2. A sense of empowerment. Nobody likes being [micromanaged](#). We would all rather make our own decisions, which is likely why the senior executives we interviewed report the greatest happiness, most interest in their work and least amount of stress of all respondents. Managers would do well to ensure that their staff, even [entry-level accountants](#), have tasks and projects they are entrusted to run on their own. As they prove themselves, give them even greater autonomy.

3. Feeling appreciated. Many businesspeople are quick to point out mistakes but slow to show appreciation. Being acknowledged is a basic human desire and a vital factor in long-term happiness, so give credit where it's due and acknowledge when employees and colleagues go the extra mile. Managers can hand out bonuses or [gifts](#) when possible, but don't underestimate the power of a simple "thank you." Let staff know you're glad they're part of the team.

4. Interesting and meaningful work. Our survey found that workers who feel proud of their organizations are three times as likely to be happy at work than those who don't. Even though corporate pride means different things to different professionals, one common driver seems to be the ability to work for a firm that supports its local community. Consider asserting your company values with social responsibility efforts and by encouraging [volunteerism](#).

5. A sense of fairness. Complaints about partiality often center on two things: compensation and opportunity. Everyone wants the salary and chances to advance they feel they deserve, and they're disgruntled if they feel shortchanged. Hurt feelings are often the result of poor communication, so management can create a greater sense of fairness by being transparent about their decisions. You can head off overtures from your competitors for your best talent if you [increase salaries](#) on a regular basis before staff feel they must [ask for a raise](#) or promotion.

6. Positive workplace relationships. These come in two flavors: boss and colleagues. Survey respondents who feel a strong sense of camaraderie with their coworkers report greater job satisfaction — up to 2.5 times more — than those who say they don't have great relationships at work. Furthermore, the top reason respondents say they've left a company was due to their relationship with their boss. It's clear managers benefit when coworkers enjoy solid friendships, so start planning [team-building](#) and social events — and be a full participant.

The "secrets" of job satisfaction are really just common sense, and they're actually doable, even in the business world. So as you set your business goals, make greater employee happiness one of them.

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