

Are Happy Employees More Productive?

Are happy employees more productive? Should employers and managers hire people that are more positive and happy with their lives? Should organizations be creating the kind of conditions that enhance worker happiness? These are the kinds of questions that have been occupying the attention of researchers and psychologists in recent years, in an attempt to provide definitive evidence that can or can't demonstrate a link between happy workers and greater productivity.

Since 2006, an international conference attracting hundreds of experts on the topic has been held in key centers around the world. The National Post article, *Put On A Happy Face, Pile on the Profits*, in October 21, 2007, cited research that shows that a 1% positive increase in a worker's relationship with the boss is equal to a 30% increase in salary. Psychologists from around the world, such as Ed Diener, Martin Seligman, Stephen Post, Ruut Veenhoven and John Helliwell have all concluded in the studies the following:

creating conditions under which workers felt happy about their work resulted in greater productivity and other positive work behaviors;

happy individuals were more likely than their less happy peers to have fulfilling, positive relationships, superior work performance and robust health;

happier people tended to get better performance evaluations and higher pay.

In my two decades of work with senior executives and CEOs that focuses on developing productive workplaces, employee motivation and peak performance, it is clear to me that the vast majority of happy people love their work. They get more enjoyment from their jobs, are less likely to be bored and enjoy better relationships with their superiors and peers than less happy people. The happiest people tend to be the most productive, efficient and energetic. They tend to have more mastery over themselves and their surroundings in order to achieve their goals. So the big question becomes are workers happy as a result of satisfying work, or are they happy to begin with and therefore become more productive workers? A parallel question can be are people happy because they have attained a certain level of wealth, success or status, or have they attained those things because they are happier and satisfied with themselves? Is it correlation or cause and effect?

It is my belief, and experience and it's being borne out by recent research, that happy people become more successful, and productive. People's success in life, rather than being the cause for happiness, may in fact be the outcome of happiness. And that success includes being a more productive worker. With companies struggling to survive and succeed in a competitive and recessive economy, and fighting the war for talent, employee recruitment, retention and engagement have become critical management challenges. If happy workers are more productive workers, it is incumbent upon employers and their managers to make a happy frame of mind a criteria for hiring, and create the working conditions that would enhance happiness. To do so would be one of the most significant strategies for improving bottom-line performance.

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