



ENABLE FLEXIBILITY

Happiness means different things to different people

The dichotomy of happiness

Some people describe happiness in terms of excitement, while for others happiness connotes feelings of peace.

The roots of variation

What happiness means to any given individual—*i.e.* excitement or peace—depends on a number of factors, including age, temporal focus, and culture.

The flexible organization

It's important to recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for generating happiness among employees, since the very definition of happiness varies by person. A flexible, "ambidextrous" organization caters to both types of happiness by simultaneously fostering stability (related to peaceful happiness) and innovation (related to excited happiness).

TRY THIS

Determine each of your teammates' meaning of happiness by assessing which types of projects they find more enjoyable; those related to stability or those related to innovation.





CREATE ALIGNMENT

People enjoy self-consistency, especially with regard to their goals

Temporal alignment

People are happier when their short- and long-term goals are clearly aligned than when no obvious connection exists between the two.

Understanding the story

Managers can help foster temporal alignment, but they must first understand the end of the story—what are their employees' long-term goals?

Creating the story

Once a manager understands his reports' ultimate ambitions, he can better assign responsibilities and frame communications in such a way as to align these short-term activities with employees' long-term goals.

TRY THIS

Get to know what makes a teammate tick by having a one-on-one informal meeting at a casual location outside the office; ask about his long-term ambitions, both work- and non-work-related.





FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

Feelings of efficacy correlate with feelings of happiness

Align responsibilities with strengths

Matching projects with an employee's strengths yields both happiness and productivity benefits.

Happiness benefits

Focusing on one's strengths leads to feelings of happiness and simultaneously distracts from focusing on one's weaknesses, preventing feelings of unhappiness. This increased happiness in turn leads to productivity benefits.

Productivity benefits

Working on projects that align with one's strengths leads to better output and to developing those strengths into areas of expertise. The associated experiences of completing a task well and meeting responsibilities reinforce feelings of happiness.

TRY THIS

Rather than constantly trying to encourage your teammates to be good at many different things (which leads them to focus too much on developing their weaknesses), conduct a strengths-finder exercise and play to their strengths.





MAKE IT FUN

It's often the little things that make people the happiest

Fun in the workplace

A fun work environment is a happy work environment. A happy work environment has happy employees. Happy employees are productive employees.

The power of stickiness

Sticky moments are experiences that people look forward to, enjoy at the time of the experience, and fondly remember afterwards; fun can foster these sticky moments.

Fun is easy

There are simple, cheap (often free) things any organization can do to make the workplace more fun, whether by encouraging office decorations or setting up enjoyable after-work activities.

TRY THIS

To engender and be perceived as more fun, decorate your office with bright colors, zany toys, and cute knick-knacks.





BE SMART WITH TIME

How time is spent both inside and outside the workplace is a critical driver of happiness

Time well spent outside the office

Getting enough sleep and spending time with friends and family are both strongly related to happiness.

Time well spent at the office

For employees to have sufficient quality time in their personal lives, it's important to design their jobs in such a way as to optimize their productivity and efficiency—such as by protecting their temporal sweet spots (*i.e.* allowing them to block off meeting-free time each day when they are at their most productive or creative).

A residual effect

Protection of temporal sweet spots will not only generate happiness from the free time available outside work, but will also generate workplace happiness as employees feel more effective, productive, and accomplished.

TRY THIS

Ask teammates what time of day they feel *a)* most productive, and *b)* most creative, and see if there are any general patterns.

