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A better workplace serves employees and company

Many people spend more time in the office than they do at their own homes. As a result, the environment at the workplace is especially important, and businesses big and small should attempt to make that environment as enjoyable and supportive as possible.

A positive workplace environment not only benefits the company's employees, but it also benefits the company. Numerous studies have shown a link between workplace environment and error rate, willingness to collaborate with other employees and even absenteeism. For example, studies found that something as simple as good lighting and adequate daylight throughout the office can reduce absenteeism by as much as 15 percent. In addition to minor changes around the office, there are several other things companies can do to improve the workplace environment.

• Emphasize respect for others throughout the company. No one wants to come to work and feel disrespected. Foster a culture of mutual respect wherein everyone knows bad behaviour between employees simply won't be tolerated. Workplace bullying is not that uncommon, and employees

who feel bullied or disrespected at the office are bound to be unhappy and less productive. Make sure everyone from the company CEO to the summer interns are aware that they must respect others and that they deserve respect regardless of their position within the company.

•Increase and improve communication. Particularly in the current economy, where



uncertainty seems to be reigning over many businesses, open and honest communication with employees is especially important. As a result, communicate more frequently and effectively with staff. Let staff know the company is always open to suggestions, and respond to all suggestions to let employees know their opinions matter.

• Involve employees when instituting changes. When attempting to improve a workplace environment, go straight to the source for ideas on improvement. Employees are on the ground floor every day, and they are an invaluable resource as to what's working and what's not working with regards to the environment at the office. Use them to help institute positive changes, and the result will likely be an improved environment as well as employees who feel more valued.

• Show appreciation. A 2011 study from Massachusetts found that 41 percent of workers studied are not satisfied with the level of recognition they receive at their jobs. Companies hoping to foster a more positive work environment should always show appreciation to their employees when a job is well done. Appreciation can come in many forms, but companies should never avoid expressing gratitude or appreciation simply because they expect their employees to perform their jobs well.

Fostering a better workplace environment can be done in a variety of ways and lead to happier, more productive employees.



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