THE 12 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HAPPINESS AT WORK

Gea Peper - Fennande van der Meulen - Maartje Wolff

HAPPINESS AT WORK

Happy people are more productive, both in everyday life and at work. Paying attention to a happy work environment generates many benefits for employees, as well as the organisation itself.

Research shows that happiness at work results in less absence, fewer workplace accidents, reduced stress, more gratification, happier clients and a higher quality of service. Reasons enough to put happiness on the agenda of every organisation. However one question arises: 'How do you accomplish this?' In this concise booklet, HappinessBureau and Happy Office will look at twelve topics that delve into the answer to this question. We provide a number of tools to achieve happiness at work. There is no definite formula of success that could be applied to every business. Each company has their own unique qualities. Our advice: bring one or more topics into practise and experience how the organisation, team or just a single employee reacts to it.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Good luck!

Fennande van der Meulen, Gea Peper en Maartje Wolff

Organisation

Teams

Employees

Getting started

And more...

ORGANISATION

'People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it'

Simon Sinek

What motivates us? Having a goal!

What motivates us? What keeps us going in daily life? Having a goal to contribute to something greater than yourself seems to be the essential ingredient. Dan Pink, amongst others, discovered this when he was engaged in his research for his book 'Drive'. He describes an experiment that involved bricks of Lego.

The study was conducted as follows: the participants made an object from Lego, the observing researcher praised the participants by telling them how great it was and subsequently placed the Lego object on a table in front of him. The participants then started on their next Lego object.

The other research group saw how the researcher also praised their Lego masterpiece only to dismantle the object in front of their eyes and place the bricks back to where they came from. Despite the fact that both groups received the same financial reward, the group in which the objects were disassembled stopped much sooner than the other research group. Tasks that are done in vain, of which we cannot see the results or what the general purpose of the assignment is, do not motivate us.

Victor Frankl elaborates on this in his book 'Mans search for meaning', a book about life in a concentration camp during World War II. People who had a goal in their life, who knew the purpose of surviving, were much better able to go through all the hardships and misery. Doing something meaningful is vital for the survival of mankind.

Why do we do it?

Despite this information, research shows that only 20% of leaders have a good understanding of their own 'purpose'. Even less can put their purpose accurately into words and even a smaller percentage is able to formulate a plan to achieve their purpose. It comes as no surprise that the purpose of organisations is often reduced to empty promises and hollow taglines. A concrete, clear, inspiring and well-formulated goal is a powerful tool to involve

people and to create happier employees. Financial targets and profit are of course necessary to keep a company up and running. However, a purpose serves a higher goal than just financial gain. It is about added value. It is about what you can give to the world. Let's face it: a target such as 'increase profit for the shareholders' is not going to get employees out of their beds in the morning.

The why

Simon Sinek describes in his book 'Start with the Why' how Apple states its purpose as: 'challenge the status quo'. It is much more fun to work for a company that defies conventions, rather than just building and selling computers. The purpose says it all.
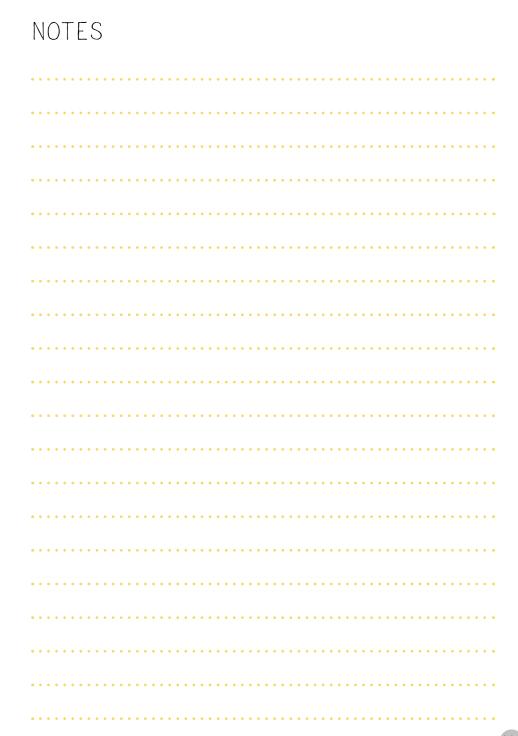
Tips & tricks:

How do you formulate the purpose of your company?

- Take your current mission and vision statements and inspect them thoroughly and critically.
- Is this what drives your company and connects the employees? A purpose surpasses the financial target.
- Involve employees from every rank. Working together will improve results.
- How do you visualize your purpose? What kind of images and symbols do you associate the purpose with?
- Think about its meaning. What effects could it have on customer service, the product range and how we treat each other?

Reading list:

- 'Start with why' - Simon Sinek
- 'Drive' - Dan Pink

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'I aim for a happiness index so good that a fall of 2% causes the same panic as a fall of 2% in GDP'

Maurits Bruel

Measurable happiness

Can you measure happiness? That is a question that we often get from our clients when we address happiness at work. From our own experience, we can finally say: "Yes, you can." Professors such as Robert Cummins (Deakin University - Australia) and Daniel Gilbert (Harvard - United States) share that opinion.

For better or worse

According to Robert Cummins you can measure happiness if you regard happiness as a state of being that is more or less a constant. Every human being is born with a genetically determined value of happiness. You can measure this by asking: 'How happy do you feel at X moment?' Professor of Psychology, Daniel Gilbert, also claims that happiness is measurable. In the article 'The science behind the smile' he explains the principle: "It is no different than fitting a pair of glasses. The optician places a glass lens in front of someone's eye and asks: 'better or worse?' By doing so, the optician collects subjective data with which he is able to judge the strength of the glasses or lenses objectively. The same goes for happiness. By asking regularly, you will be able to get a good image of someone's state of happiness.

If this is the case, then how can you improve someone's feeling of happiness? According to Gilbert, you can achieve this in the same manner as one might lose weight: "by structurally working on it for a prolonged length of time, in practical little steps, that you can repeat and measure. By doing this, you can see results and that motivates to continue."

Happiness and work

One of his conclusions states that there is a significant connection between work performance of employees and the opportunities they get within the company to flourish. Conditions that contribute to a better work culture can influence the performance considerably. He concludes that the actual work of happy and unhappy employees is not fundamentally different. There is, however, a connection between the performances of employees

and the opportunities that they get. These are conditions that actually contribute to a better company culture and thus influence someone achievements at work.

Methods to measure happiness at work

Research bureau Soffos measures, with the aid of a questionnaire, how happy someone feels at work. The questions are based on seven dimensions: talent development, work satisfaction, mental fitness, work climate, relationships with colleagues, productivity & meaning and personal leadership. For more information see: soffos.eu.

Does someone experience their work as boring or stressful? How proud and fit are the employees? How content is someone about the guidance they receive? The Happiness at Work survey researches how organisations score on the forty elements that are most influential on happiness at work. The results are then compared with the Dutch benchmark. For more information see: haws.nl.

Onno Hamburger and Ad Bergsma explain in their book 'Happy Work' how you can enhance happiness at work based on the so-called 'Happiness Compass'. Work is divided into three aspects: pleasure, satisfaction and meaning. Based on several statements you can find out on which points you are content with and which points need more work. For more information about the 'Happiness Scan' see: gelukkigwerken.nl

Happy Apps

There are different apps and digital happiness meters that give you an insight into someone's happy feeling, in their private life as well as at work.

- **Happy app** from HSK Groep (hsk.nl)
- **HappyWe and HappyWeWork** from Multiply Happiness (multiplyhappiness.nl)
- **Moodicious** from Squarevibe (squarevi.be)
- **Gelukswijzer** from Erasmus universiteit (gelukswijzer.nl)
- **Happy@work app** from Happy@productions limited (happyat.me)
- **Limbi** (limbi.com)

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Read on!

- **Neem de temperatuur op** - Robert A. Cummins in Geluk
- **The World Book of Happiness** - Leo Bormans
- **Blog 'Meetbaar Geluk'** at www.happyoffice.nl
- **Het rendement van Geluk –** Professor Ruut Veenhoven e.a.
- **Measuring Flourishing –** the impact of Operational definition of the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing (Lucy C Hone e.a.)
- **World Happiness Reportn** www.scp.nl/Geluk

> '**Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning**'
>
> **Albert Einstein**

Using the 'agile method' to create a happy organisation

Every year, companies implement large transformations. Research shows that more than half of these companies won't reach their set targets. Almost 20% of these targets are missed completely or the company is even worse off than before. Because of this, the strategy of planning massive changes all at once in an organisation is questionable.

Smaller improvements are more favourable and will no doubt make you a lot happier. By learning from the software industry, we can improve the work environment. The method is called 'the agile-method'.

From big and slow to small and nimble

Whenever Microsoft develops a newer version of Windows, you can be sure that a team has been working on it for several years. When the product is finished and tested, it will be officially launched. However, if Facebook wants to add a new functionality to its website, this will be developed quickly and will be tested on a small number of Facebook-users. After the first feedback and necessary alterations, it will then be deployed globally.

Microsoft uses the 'Waterfall-method' in which there is a long thought process and then one big change will be implemented all at once. Facebook, however, works according to the 'agile-method'. They continually make small improvements over a period of time. This is exactly the approach that increases the happiness of a team, an organisation or yourself.

What is the agile method?

Working with the agile method allows a company to anticipate needs and react swiftly to problems. This way of developing improvements is increasing in popularity (see: Facebook, Twitter and Google). The agile philosophy can be adapted to create happier work environments. To

summarize, the core philosophy of agile working is:

Step 1: Constant improvement

Step 2: Quick evaluation and then back to step one.

You can apply this technique by working towards one single target as an organisation, team or employee. This method is most effective when the target affects all involved.

Next, you think of a way to change the obstacles that are in the way of your goal. After a short period, evaluate the results.

If it turns out that changes have improved the work environment, you continue on to the next aspect that is need of change. Is the change ineffective? Think of another way to approach the problem. You don't have to change the whole company to achieve improvements.

Tips for agile working

1. **Keep the team small**
   With a small team you can work more agilely and you are able to react flexibly.
2. **Quit all regular meetings**
   Keep track of time and see how much you lose with regular meetings. Stop meeting and start doing things!
3. **Get some fresh perspective**
   You need fresh perspective in your team. Young professionals, for instance, can add a lot of value.
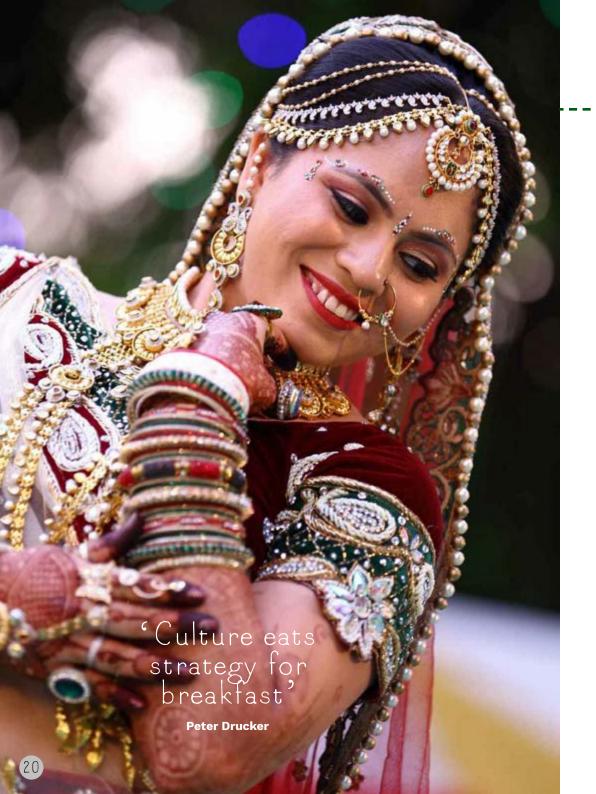4. **Seek innovative and flexible partners**
   If you have a small team you need innovative and flexible partners.
5. **Do not aim for perfection**
   Keep moving and do not strive for a perfect solution.

Source: **T. Haak (2015)** 'Seven tips for 'agile' HR'

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'Culture eats strategy for breakfast'

Peter Drucker

Happy habits

Mostly everyone within an organisation has a pretty sound idea of what the general culture and acceptable behaviour is. Trying to describe it can be quite tricky though, let alone consciously working on it. To achieve a happier workplace requires a happier organisational culture. It will only be created if everyone, from all levels, pitches in and takes ownership.

Working on a better company culture starts with formulating a comprehensive purpose. What do we stand for? Why are we here? Where do we want to go and how are we going to achieve this? When the purpose of a company is formulated and shared with everyone within the company, then you can start developing behavioural values that fit within the purpose.

Closeness

Changing behaviour starts with determining the collective values. Despite the fact that many companies are living their values, there are countless more who are totally disconnected from them. This is often because the established values are meaningless, unknown or too far removed from the experience of the employees. Core values lead to habitual behaviours only when they are clearly actionable and they resonate with the employees.

Involve employees

Allowing the employees to be actively involved in formulating the collective values will ensure that the corresponding behaviour will be easier to understand and implement. Examples and real situations can make this process more specific, realistic and measurable. Only then can people be responsible. To make sure it says relevant, write it down in a protocol, a manual or a 'culture' book. New colleagues coming on board will have these readily available as well.

The Zappos way

The online shoe store Zappos is an organisation that successfully created a happy work culture. How did they do it and more importantly, how did they seem to maintain this?

Zappos' core values in ten steps

- Tony Hsieh made the decision that he wanted to commit to a value-based organisation. This means being patient about revenues and profit.
- Subsequently, Tony set out to find out what his personal values actually were. It was harder than he initially thought. Being honest, looking into personal milestones as well as life changing situations and reading the book 'Tribal Leadership' written by Dave Logan, helped him find his personal values.
- Next, Tony asked key figures (partners, managers, influencers) about their own personal values. He asked: 'On which four or five values do you base your life? Could you describe this in one word or sentence?'
- With the help of a small committee, he collected and assembled all the answers.
- After this, Tony tested the values by asking managers for feedback. He requested them to think specifically about the employees that were compatible with these values.
- The next step was to ask for the commitment of the managers. 'Are you willing to hire for fire people based on these values?'
- After this process, the whole organisation was asked to give feedback on the values.
- Tony came back together with his small committee to analyse the feedback and blend everything together.
- The time was ripe to finally implement all the values throughout the organisation and everything that Zappos does.

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Culture book

An important tool for a strong organisational culture is a culture book. In this book, employees describe on a yearly basis what the Zappos-culture is, according to them. These stories are published without editing. By doing so, an image is formed about their work and what needs to be improved. This culture book also forms a tool for recruitment. Zappos only hires people who fit the organisational culture and the core values.

Want to read more?

- 'Delivering Happiness' - Tony Hsieh
- 'Tribal Leadership' - Dave Logan

TEAMS

'Individually, we are one drop. Together we are an ocean'

Ryunosuke Satoro

Good relationships at work

According to the familiar Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the fundamental requirements are: eating, sleeping, safety etc. After this, comes the need to be loved and to be included.

A human being is part of a group or a community. There are only a few who can be truly happy without being included in some kind of social network. It has been demonstrated that having this support lowers the chance of heart disease and mental deterioration as we get older.
If you ask employees what makes them happy, the following answers score high:
- Nice colleagues;
- A good manager;
- Fun in the work place.

These are all signs of stable relationships in which people like and communicate with each other. These contacts do not necessarily stop at colleagues and managers but can also be applied to clients, suppliers, stockholders and the larger organisational community.

Good relationships at work

The amount of happiness at work is not limited. An excess of happiness in others will not lead to a shortage of happiness for you.
- To make others happy will make you happy as well.
- Happiness is contagious. The more happy people, the more one will experience happiness for themselves.
- If you make others happy, there is a good chance that they will try to make you happy in return.

Get to know people at work. You don't have to become friends with everyone, but positive relationships are essential to a happy workplace. You don't need a lot to build good relationships and to sustain

them, but you need to take it seriously. The following list can help you do this:

- Do something nice for a colleague.
- Say good morning and goodbye.
- Show interest in others.
- Try to help your co-workers.
- Try to create a good vibe in the workplace.

Let connection be the basis for your work. These things might seem trivial and quite simple but it makes all the difference for relationships at the office. People feel more connected and will communicate better.

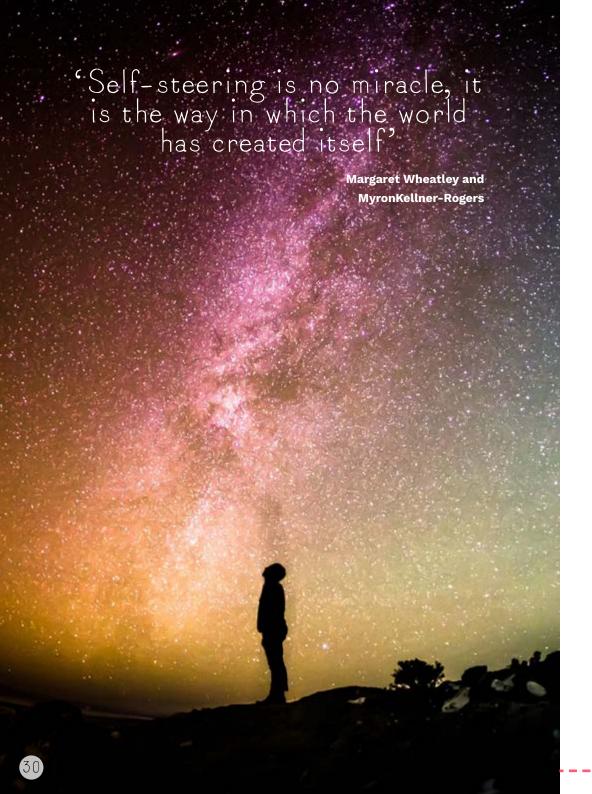Source: **A. Kjerulf (2008),** 'Happy Hour is from 9 to 5'

'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together'

African saying

Southwest Airlines

An organisation that identifies the importance of connection between people is Southwest Airlines. They are also known as 'The Love Airline'. This airline will only hire people if they have a friendly personality. Their skills come second: 'Hire for attitude, train for skill.' For Southwest Airlines, a positive and sunny disposition is of greater value than degrees of skills. Because of this, Southwest is a great employer to work for and more importantly, an efficient and profitable organisation.

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'Self-steering is no miracle, it
is the way in which the world
has created itself'

**Margaret Wheatley and
MyronKellner-Rogers**

Letting go is not the same as letting it drop

In the start-up phase, every organisation starts with self-organisation. Then, over time, processes are established and policies implemented to ensure that everything and everyone is kept under control. This is a shame really, since organisation structures, job descriptions and hierarchy do not always make offices a better place. The choice for self-steering teams gives a chance to break the mould and provide a better alternative.

Success

A self-steering team involves a group of employees responsible for the total process in which products and services will develop. The team plans and protects the product process, solves daily obstacles and improves processes and methods without continually calling on supervision or supporting services. Companies are increasingly interested in the possibilities of self-steering teams. As research shows, it leads to higher quality services, happier clients and professionals who are proud of their achievements. This way of working is a better fit with current society, which asks for methods such as 'agile', SCRUM and lean.

Mutual trust

We can learn a lot from the success of organisations such as Buurtzorg, BSO/Origin, Van Hutten Catering, Patagonia and Morning Star. The pillar of these organisations is mutual trust. There is a deep belief that people are intrinsically motivated and capable of acting responsibly. When this is the case, managers and directors can finally let go of control, which is not the same as dropping everything. Even self-steering teams need some guidance. European research shows that self-steering teams need more support than initially thought. Placing responsibility through to the lowest levels, or steering towards results, asks for a certain

kind of leadership. One which places the professional first, from out of the vision, culture and clear boundaries of the organisation. So where do you start with creating a self-steering organisation and what are the conditions for success?

14 Golden rules to self-steering teams

- Mutual trust.
- Managers and directors need to dare to let go.
- A clear framework (vision, course, identity, goals, values and expected results).
- Good communication: self-steering teams arise from tuning into each other.
- Collective responsibility, the focus is on the team, not the individual.
- The team is a 'process-owner' and has the power to steer this process.
- Supervisors and staff support the team.
- The decision-making process in the lower ranks of the organisation is focused on the demand of the client.
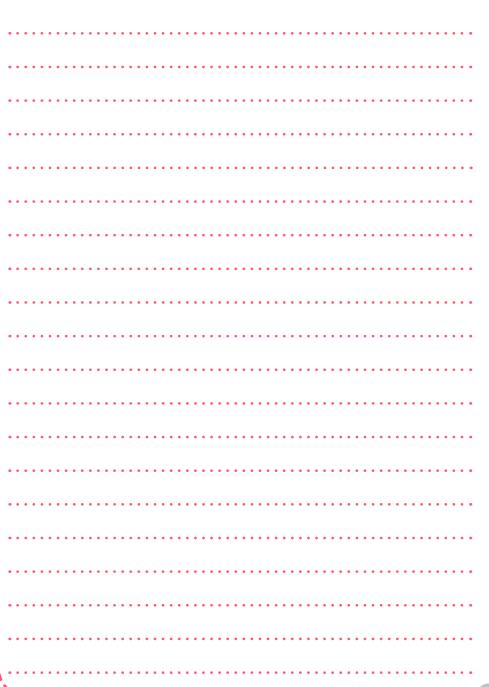- Responsibility of the team will be described as results.
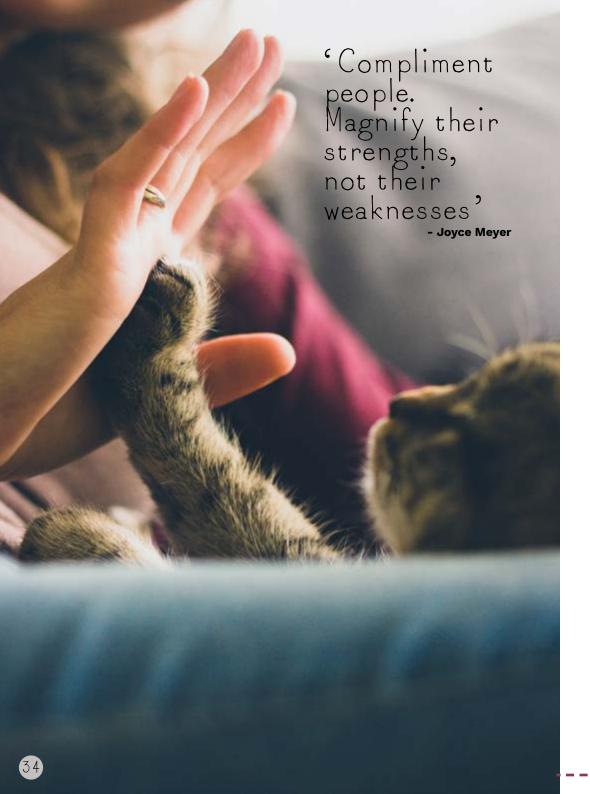- Each team member has an executive and a steering function (sufficient knowledge).
- Tasks show co-dependency and lead to a communal goal.
- Team members are mutually interchangeable for more than one task.
- There are clear standards and criteria on which the function will be reviewed.
- The work offers developmental perspective for the employees.

Read on!

- **Reinventing Organisations** – Laloux (Lannoo Campus, het eerste huis)
- **Dossier Nieuw Leiderschap** (Managament Team) at www.mt.nl/581/nieuw-leiderschap
- **Team roles of Belbin**

'Compliment people. Magnify their strengths, not their weaknesses'

- Joyce Meyer

Give compliments

Giving compliments might be one of the easiest and most effective ways to make people happy at work. Everyone can do it, it doesn't cost any money and it hardly takes any time. The correct way to give a compliment:

- Is relevant and sincere. Do not express your appreciation just because you have to. There needs to be a reason.
- Is not bound by time. Do show your appreciation when it is fitting.
- Is personal. Make sure that the compliment is tailor-made for that person.

Order of the Elephant

A few years ago, Kjaer Group (a Danish company that sells cars in developing countries), introduced the 'order of the Elephant'. This is an enormous plush stuffed animal that colleagues grant each other. An explanation of why you award the elephant to someone is necessary. You can place the elephant on your desk for a couple of days. No-one can miss the stuffed animal, as it is more than half a meter high.

Other colleagues will spot the elephant and might ask 'Hey, why is the elephant here? What did you accomplish?' By doing so, the best tips and success stories will be told over and over. This is a great and low-cost way to learn how to give compliments and to enforce a happier work environment.

Keep in mind that you can give people compliments not only for what they do, but also for who they are. Being royal with compliments does not mean that you can't give criticism or ignore mistakes. People who regularly get praised for what they do well, deal better with criticism.

Ways to give compliments

Below you will find some excellent ways to give compliments:

- **Personal.** Don't make it too big, just make a move towards a colleague, give the compliment and return to your desk. Don't wait until someone returns the praise. Don't add something like "…but you still need to work on…" This is a sure way of ruining the compliment.
- **Use a symbol such as the elephant at the Kjaer Group**. A symbol is something that is universally recognized and it helps with the development of 'praise-culture'. Preferably something that has a connection with the organisation.
- **Use the walls.** The walls in the reception and the meeting rooms of the London-based innovative company 'What if?' are full of compliments to employees. Colleagues can nominate each other for their good deed. The best compliments can be immortalized in bold, colourful letters on the walls and ceilings of the busiest places in the office.
- **The poncho**. Give everyone a paper from a flip-over. Make a hole in the middle and wear the paper like you would a poncho. Let everyone write on the back of each colleague. Preferably something nice. For example, why you appreciate them, why you like them or what they excel in. Give people the time to read the compliments in silence, so they can enjoy them on their own.

Source: **A. Kjerulf (2008),** 'Happy Hour is from 9 to 5'

Want to read more?

Article: 'Een compliment geven? Dat werkt beter dan een bonus'.
http://www.nrcq.nl/2015/10/12/complimenten

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'Spend more time smiling than frowning and more time praising than criticising'

- Richard Branson

Fun and optimism

It is striking that companies have a strong focus on the negative. What goes right is often ignored or given little attention. Meetings are directed at problems, emails are about misunderstandings, a call often means a dissatisfied customer and conversations are usually about conflicts. There is a constant feeling that nothing goes as it should and there is nothing you can do about it. In the end, people will just give up.

Positive psychology

Research from Seligman about positive psychology shows clearly that positive and optimistic people are more likely to succeed than negative people. Facts about optimistic people:
- They have a higher quality of life.
- They live longer.
- They achieve more at work.
- They are less prone to depression.
- They have more friends and a better social life.

These are excellent reasons to choose to be positive. Seligman's research not only shows how easy it is to learn negativity and pessimism, it also shows that you can learn to be positive. In a work experiment, Seligman convinced an insurance company to hire a group of people who did not have the right credentials, but did score high on positivity and optimism. This group of employees performed better than their less positive but better qualified counterparts.

'Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work'

- Aristotle

Tips to increase positivity

Below you will find a few simple things to do to increase your own and other people's positivity.

- Give a compliment to someone. (see page: 35)
- Keep a 'Happiness-at-work' log. You are prone to forget positive things.

At the end of your workday, right before you head home, write five things that made your day or made you grateful about your work. These can be either big or small things. If it made your day better, write it down. Talked to a nice colleague? Meatball-day in the canteen? Everything is acceptable. Most people will remember the negative things better than the positive. Therefore it is wise to give a little bit more attention to the good experiences in life and at work. The happiness-at-work log offers a simple and effective approach.

Positive meetings

A lot of meetings often start with a round of current news. This often results in a big list of complaints and problems which set the tone of the rest of the meeting in a negative way. Instead, begin the meeting with a round of answers to the following questions:

- What is something you are proud of since the last meeting?
- Name someone that helped you

out since the last meeting.
- What are you looking forward to next week/month?
- What is the funniest that you heard last week?

The atmosphere in the meeting will be much better after starting it with something positive.

Have fun

Having a great time at work is important. Each job can be fun or you can make it fun. Even in the most serious situations it is possible to have a sense of humour. Make space for entertainment at work. Let go of the idea that you, as a professional, cannot have fun at work. If you are not in the mood for fun and games, than don't take it away from colleagues who might feel different. Just as important, don't force happiness upon anybody. Don't worry too much about what is acceptable and what is not. Fun can be spontaneous, if you don't think about it too much.

Source: **A. Kjerulf (2008),** 'Happy Hour is from 9 to 5'

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COFFEEBAR
GASTOWN

COLLEAGUES

'40% of our happiness potential is dependent upon our self.'

Sonja Lyubomirsky

Know thyself

Being happy at work does not necessarily mean that you have to go to your work whistling a nice tune or have a big smile on your face the whole day. Working on happiness is about a balance between the positive and the negative. If the balance isn't positive enough, then it's time to change.

Fun, fulfilment and meaning

Having fun, getting fulfilment out of work, feeling connected or giving a meaningful contribution to a larger entity than yourself: what do you value most in your work? When does your work provide that? With the help of the Happiness Compass, a technique developed by Onno Hamburger and Ad Bergsma, you can effectively map out your happiness at work. The book 'Happiness at Work' is a practical guide, and it starts with self-knowledge.

Big five

Personality psychologists have been searching for a reliable way to measure ones' personality for more than a hundred years. The Big-5 personality test has proven to be the most reliable. This test divides the personality in five dimensions: neuroticism (sensitivity to negative emotions), extraversion (getting energy from external stimuli), openness (the ability to open yourself up to new experiences), friendliness (are you open to collaborate with others?) and self-discipline (are you able to keep to your goals?).You can find free tests on www.jezelf.nl (Dutch mini Big-5) or www.jezelf.com (extended English Big-5).

Happiness

What does your personality say about your ability to feel happiness? Emotionally stable people with a low score on neuroticism generally feel happier. This also applies to people with a high score on extraversion. The relationship between openness and happiness is

weaker, but in the end, being open to new experiences helps improve general happiness, especially if you are keen on living an exciting life. People that score higher on friendliness connect to others easier and feel more involved, which in turn make them feel happier. Finally, 'reaching targets' leads to more happiness, so people who score high on self-control are generally more happy.

Source: **O. Hamburger, A. Bergsma (2011)**, 'Gelukkig Werken'

The 9 thinking patterns of happy people

Scientific research conducted by Sonja Lyubomirsky shows that genetic circumstances determine our happiness for approximately 50%. External circumstances such as relationships, income, health and environment determine it for 10%. Our own behaviour and thinking patterns determine it for 40%. Lyubomirksy found that the following nine thinking and behavioural patterns are common with happy people.

- They dedicate a lot of time to friends and family.
- They cherish and enjoy their relationships.
- They express gratitude for what they have.

- They are optimistic about the future
- They are seriously dedicating themselves to their goals.
- They enjoy life and try to live in the 'now' as much as they can.
- They try to keep a balance during difficult situations.
- They are often the first to react to help others.
- They exercise regularly.

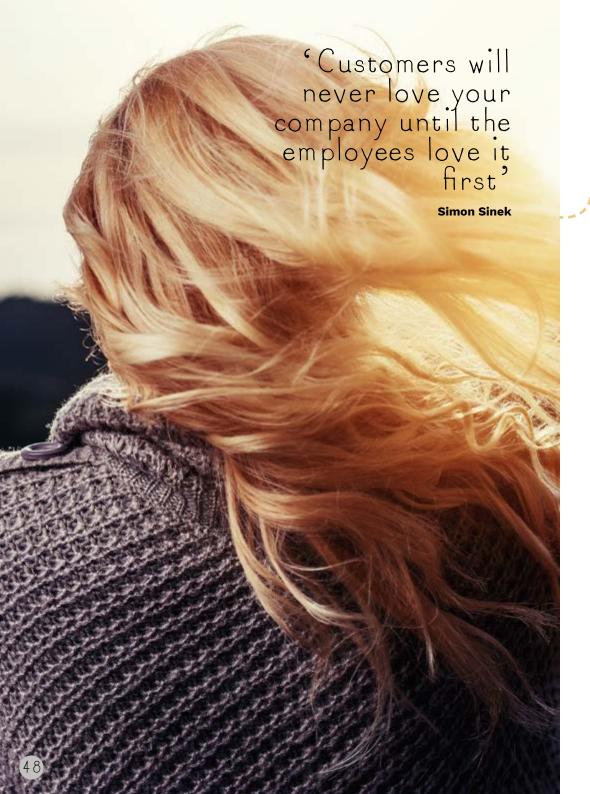Source: **D. Haijtema (2015)**, 'Leve het Grote Geluk'

The Circle of 8

Happy people keep their emotional balance in difficult situations. How can you achieve this? The Circle of 8 can help to exert influence over complex situations. This model, which can be found on page 47, shows that you can take your own responsibility and avoid being put in the role of the victim.

Read on!

'Happiness at Work' - Onno Hamburger & Ad Bergsma (Boom/Nelissen)

The Circle of 8

Pleasure
Energy
Happiness
Satisfaction

I have influence

What are the possibilities?

Source of strength/ qualities

Own leadership
Thinking in possibilties

Accept/connect

Effective behaviour

Choice

'Disturbing' situation

Compared with past or ideal

Ineffective behaviour

Victimization

Judge

Resistance (internal/external)

Norms
Perfectionism
Automatism

I haven't got any influence

Blame
Stories
Complaints
Head in the sand
Resistance

'Customers will never love your company until the employees love it first'

Simon Sinek

The added value of passionate employees

People often state that passion is an important factor in a company. Why is this? Passion is a word that describes an employee who has a 'heart for the job'. When someone is passionate, there is a greater intrinsic motivation to perform. Wanting to do the job right leads to an increase in quality. You continually search for improvement. This contributes to growth. And not unimportantly, if you have passion for what you do, you tend to enjoy it more.

Research from Gallup shows that passion has all kinds of positive side-effects such as lower absenteeism (-37%), fewer accidents (-49%), less quality defects (-60%), improved client satisfaction (+12%), greater productivity (+18%) and higher profit (+16%). The effects of positive and passionate employees are not only positive for general productivity but it also radiates happiness onto other employees and clients.

Ten aspects that positively influence passion

How can you determine how passionate employees are? Research conducted by Effectory shows that the following ten aspects most influence your employees. The extent in which you:

- Are happy with your work.
- Do the thing that you are good at.
- Find your job challenging.
- Are proud of the organisation you work for.
- Have responsibility at work.
- Receive praise you get from your organisation.
- Have space to deploy your own initiatives.
- Feel vital and healthy?
- Receive space to attend to the wishes of your clients.
- Are able to work efficiently.

How can the experience of the workplace be enhanced?

Below you will find a few practical tips on improving the workplace experience and employee engagement.

Create a match between employees and activities. Take action when it seems like the match does not fit. In some cases, the mismatch can be solved by extra attention, supervision and / or training. Sometimes another job needs to be found either within or outside the organisation.

Give attention to your employees and make sure they continue to develop themselves. This can be done by increasing challenges, providing development opportunities and function changes. Ensure there is a path for growth.

Discuss the biggest frustrations that employees face at work and check which solutions they envision. These frustrations often destroy all pleasure in their work. When these are removed the results are immediate.

Discuss which tasks, projects and challenges give or drain energy for each team member. Take this into account when assigning roles and tasks. Sometimes, someone gets energy from a task that might cost someone else a lot. When this is the case, check if there is a possibility of switching tasks.

Make sure you have a good work environment and atmosphere. Make clear-cut agreements about behaviour and invest in teambuilding (such as: trips, a lunch, or a mutual training).
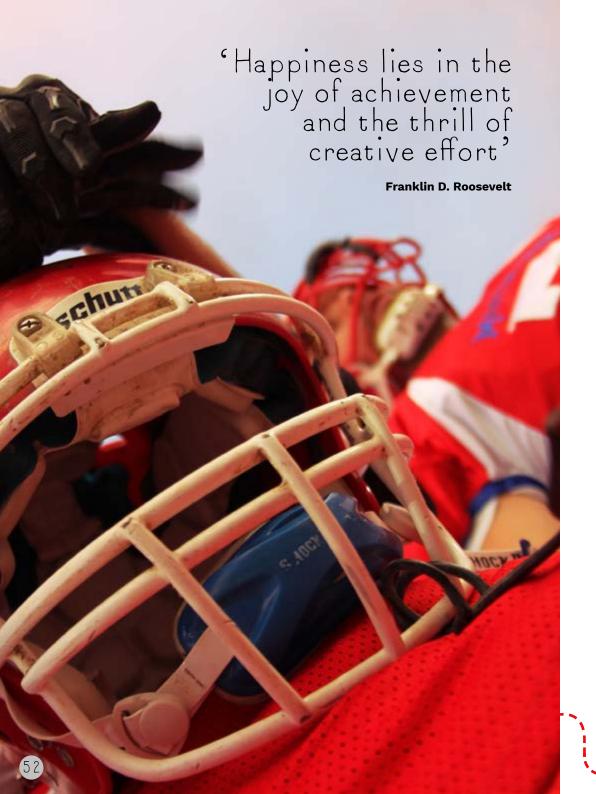
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How can you make sure that employees and managers stay positive about their jobs?

Professor of Work and Organisational psychology, Wilmar Schnaufeli has, backed by years of scientific study, put together a number of practical tips for managers and employees.

- Follow your dreams and passions where you can.
- Make use of your talents.
- Make sure there is a good balance between work and private life.
- Focus not only on results but also on personal development.
- Be optimistic, think in possibilities instead of problems.
- Help and support others at work, be co-operative.
- Regularly ask feedback from others, stay in conversation with your boss.
- Take care of your body: exercise, sleep and relax.
- Form challenging targets but keep them realistic.
- Take initiative; take the possibilities that work offers.
- Keep the job exciting, now as well as in the future.

Effectory (2015), 'Het Verborgen Potentieel van Werkend Nederland'
MT (2015), 'Bevlogen Werken Leer Dan van deze 5 Tips uit de Wetenschap'

'Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort'

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Utilizing talents and getting results

We all want to achieve something. We want to know that our job results in something fulfilling. We want to do something of which we are proud. One of our deepest psychological needs is the need to control our environment. If we're placed in a situation where we have no control, where nothing we do matters, we feel terrible. On the other hand, we love to do great work and to make a difference. Accomplishment feels great.

on a whiteboard where everyone can see it.
• Publicize statistics online.
• Place a bell in the office and make it ring every time someone closes a deal.

The assumption that happy people are not hard workers is predominant. However the opposite is often true. Most people are only happy if they perform well at work.

Make results visible

Achievement results in feeling pride and gives meaning to your job. Imagine working hard every day and never seeing any results. It is important to make achievements visible. You can execute this in various ways:

• Keep a to-do list and check-off the boxes of everything you accomplish. You'll see results soon enough.
• Print a list of every completed task and hang it on a board that is visible within the department.
• Write down the accomplishments

Utilize talent

Research shows that when people's talents are addressed, they often perform better. People who are generally given a task which allows them to fully use their potential are happier, experience less tension, feel healthier and have more energy. Managers who have more attention for the qualities of their employees observe that retention, productivity and client satisfaction increases.

Employee in action

Not every job can be adapted to the qualities of the employees. That doesn't mean there isn't any space to accommodate the employee. It is the responsibility of the manager, as well as the employee, to actively think of how to maximize the utilization of their talents. This is called 'Job Crafting'. When the employee does what he or she is actually best at, then motivation and happiness at work is the obvious result.

Source: **A. Kjerulf (2008),** 'Happy Hour is from 9 to 5'
C. Schenk (2015), 'Mensen Beter Laten Presteren? Spreek ze aan op hun Kwaliteiten'

Job Crafting: how does it work?

- Make a top ten list of your assignments;
- Number one on your list describes what takes up the most of your time;
- Describe per task, how much time it takes to do it. Has it increased, decreased or been stable since you started?
- Finally, describe per task which you enjoy doing and which one you least like. Write down which of your talents is underused.

The next step is to start a conversation about job crafting (a performance review is a great option) with your coach or manager. Tackle the (small) adjustments you can make to make your work meaningful again ('The What'). That can be achieved by changing the tasks to something you enjoy more. Or switch colleagues so you'll never have to work with someone you cannot stand ('The How'). If you realize that an assignment that does not demand a lot of you ('The Why') is actually a fun challenge for someone else, try to switch tasks (unless it is actually something you were hired to do). Finally, a way to enhance happiness at work could be by changing the work environment.

Source: **J. van den Berg (2016),** 'Jobcrafting een Betere Baan Zonder Weg te Gaan'

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'Extraordinary things begin to happen when we dare to bring all of who we are to work'

Frederic Laloux

Lose the professional mask

Most people go to work wearing a mask. Literally. Think of the robe of a pastor or priest, the uniform of a soldier or officer, the suit of a representative or director, the white coat of a doctor. Of course, there are practical reasons for these outfits but they also function as a symbol. With a 'mask' or 'uniform' you don't have to behave like you would at home, but as is required of you at work.

Be yourself

When employees put on their suits or other 'work' garments and head to work, they leave a part of themselves at home. They leave their concerns, vulnerability, emotions, intuitions and spirituality at home. This is a shame, as these are important factors when it comes to making connections, creating genuine involvement and listening to each other. Why can't people take their 'whole' self to work? Why are people hesitant to do so?

Fear

An important reason is fear. Organisations are afraid that, when people are themselves, it becomes total chaos. After all, how do you deal with all these emotions? Employees are, in turn, afraid that if they are completely themselves, they are vulnerable to criticism and ridicule. Therefore, it is more comfortable and safer to keep that professional mask on. The only downside is that the same mask leads to disconnection, envy, political games and even malice. When people are allowed and encouraged to be themselves, they can feel more connected which enhances collaboration. They become self-directed and that makes for an excellent organisation.

> '**You can judge an organisation based on the amount of lies you have to tell to fit in**'
>
> **Parker Palmer**

Take it step by step

There are different ways to invite employees to be themselves in an organisation. For instance, you can start with a round of thanks at a meeting or with a minute of silence. Performance reviews are perfect to 'being yourself'. Show respect for a person's 'mission' or highlight their personal development. You can invite all employees for an event that allows people to think about what it means to be your 'whole' self at work. Questions such as: 'Think of a moment in your work where you have been truly yourself'; 'Tell us more about this and how you felt'; 'How was the atmosphere and how did that change what you were working on?'; 'What were the circumstances that made it so you could be yourself?'. By recording their answers either in a book or a drawing, the employee keeps the memory alive.

Source: **Laloux, F.** (2015), Reinventing Organiations

Wholeness in your organisation

Wholeness is about being yourself completely in the workplace. How does this reflect itself in your organisation? You can use the following points to check your progress:

- My behaviour is the same at home as it is in the workplace.
- I feel comfortable.
- My colleagues and I are encouraged to put aside our differences.
- People who think differently are thriving in the organisation.
- Passion is stimulated, even if it can result in conflict.
- Our organisation has room for more than one type of person.

Source: **Harvard Business Review (2015)**, 'Creating the Best Workplace on Earth, The Dream Company Diagnostic'

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GETTING STARTED

Getting started! Create happiness at work

Lower absenteeism, more fun and a higher quality of service. It is clear that happiness at work has demonstrable results. Still, there is not one specific formula for a successful approach. If we look at different companies that practice 'happiness at work', we can observe that almost all of them have their own method.

Top down

At some companies, the highest level of management believes in happiness as a business model. It is a central theme at all levels of the organisation. In other words, it is not all talk. The company is actively seeking to improve happiness.

Bottom-up

In some other organisations HR or a group of enthusiastic employees put happiness at work on the agenda. This often starts with a pilot, so that a small group of people can work on it and experience it in the organisation.

Chief Happiness Officer

Some companies have invested in happiness at work by creating a new function: 'The Chief Happiness Officer'. Despite the fact that every company utilizes this function in their own way, almost every 'CHO's' main task is to increase happiness at work. This role may be internal, or the CHO may be hired in as an independent advisor or coach. There is no all-embracing success formula that enhances happiness at work. The twelve topics that were described in this booklet, all play an important role. The next steps gives you examples of how you can implement happiness at work in your organisation.

Put it on the agenda
Place 'happiness at work' on the agenda of HR or the board of directors who can take the lead to improve the process. Make room for enthusiastic employees who can take the initiative as well.

Measure happiness in the organisation

To gain insight on how happy people are in your organisation, measure it according to tips given on page 13. As soon as you know where you stand on the happiness level, you can define how you want to increase happiness at work in the future. Regular measurements give great insight in the progress and which actions should be next.

Start small

Start small with a group of passionate people. Launch the pilot so the group can experience what the effect is on a smaller scale. Check what works and what doesn't. Add and delete actions based on these results. After a while, the effects will be noticeable and all teams and employees will improve their happiness and results at work.

HR and happiness at work

HR is well positioned to introduce happiness at work within the organisation. This demands that HR focus on improving the happiness of colleagues. This must res-

onate in every aspect of HR. You can, for instance, not only hire those who are best qualified but also those who are happiest to work in this position. Furthermore, you can train employees to understand what makes them happy in the workplace.

Management and happiness at work

You can improve happiness at work by selecting a management team who supports employees to get the best results and to solidify relations at work. This may mean firing certain employees when an employee is not the right fit for the position and infect others with their own unhappiness.

And finally...

Keep in mind that happiness at work is something you do. Start with baby steps to improve happiness at work and don't be afraid to experiment with ideas that might seem strange in the beginning. See what fits in your organisation.

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About us...

Gea Peper of HappinessBureau and Maartje Wolff and Fennande van der Meulen of Happy Office work intensively together. They completed the executive program 'The ROI of Happiness' at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam and the program 'Happiness at Work Coach' from Onno Hamburger. Furthermore, they are experienced in guiding organizations to a happier workplace.

Happiness at work is important for everyone. It leads to more fun, higher productivity and more return on investments. Do you want to know how you can steer your organization towards a happier business? Happy Office and HappinessBureau are looking forward to help with more information, creating the right conditions and translating scientific insights into practice. From measuring and analysing the situation, giving presentations, workshops and training to creating a plan of action and developing matching tools.

Maartje Wolff and Fennande van der Meulen have years of experience in strategic communication and advice for organisations (www.lemon-lab.nl). "Lots of organisations steer towards financial results. That is a shame, as focusing on happiness at work is just as profitable. Happy people are better at their work. We see it as our mission to place happiness at work on as many corporate agendas as possible. This starts with finding and naming what makes a company different. Next, we make the purpose clear through content and collateral, internally as well as externally. A powerful mission and vision should not be put in some drawer somewhere, it should inspire all involved. This is an important step to a happier workplace."

Gea Peper: "It is my personal mission to contribute to a world where happiness at work is the norm and not the exception. On the one hand, I help improve happiness at work in organisations. On the other hand, I want to spread ideas and concepts through the HappinessBureau about happiness at work by publishing articles, doing research and organising events about this topic.

Gea Peper has over twenty-five years of (international) experience as a change management consultant and HR manager. In 2015 she started her own company, the HappinessBureau (www.happiness-bureau.nl).

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