



Play at Work

Many dot-com companies have long recognized the link between productivity and a fun work environment. These companies know that more play at work results in more productivity, higher job satisfaction, greater workplace morale, and a decrease in employees skipping work and staff turnover. If you're fortunate enough to work in such an environment, embrace the culture; if your agency lacks the play ethic, you can still inject your own sense of play into breaks and lunch hours. Keep a camera or sketch pad on hand and take creative breaks where you can. Joke with coworkers during coffee breaks, relieve stress at lunch by shooting hoops, playing cards, or completing word puzzles together. It can strengthen the bond you have with your coworkers as well as improve your job performance. For people with mundane jobs, maintaining a sense of play can make a real difference to the work day by helping to relieve boredom.

Success at work doesn't depend on the amount of time you work; it depends upon the quality of your work. And the quality of your work is highly dependent on your well-being. Taking the time to replenish yourself through play is one of the best things you can do for your career. When the project you're working on hits a serious glitch, take some time out to play and have a few laughs. Taking a pause for play does a lot more than take your mind off the problem. When you play, you engage the creative side of your brain and silence your "inner editor," that psychological barrier that censors your thoughts and ideas. This can often help you see the problem in a new light and think up fresh, creative solutions.

Playing at work:

1. keeps you functional when under stress
2. refreshes your mind and body
3. encourages teamwork
4. increases energy and prevents burnout
5. triggers creativity and innovation
6. helps you see problems in new ways

Tips for managers and employers

It's tempting to think that the best way to cope with an ever-increasing workload is to have your employees work longer and harder. However, without some recreation time, it's more likely the work will suffer and your workers become chronically overwhelmed and burned out. Encouraging play, on the other hand, creates a more lighthearted work atmosphere that in turn encourages employees to take more creative risks.

- Provide opportunities for social interaction among employees. Throw parties, put a basketball hoop in the parking lot, arrange a miniature golf tournament, stage an office treasure hunt.
- Encourage creative thinking or just lighten the mood of meetings by keeping tactile puzzles on the conference room table.
- Encourage workers to take regular breaks from their desks, and spend a few minutes engaged in a fun activity, such as a word or number game.

Source: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>

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