

Employee Performance: Create a Workplace your Employees Will Love

By Roxanne Emmerich

Remember your first day on the job? Sure you do. Your shoes had a shine like the tiles on the Space Shuttle, and the crease in your slacks could have diced celery. The air was somehow fresher, the birds chirpier. You had signed up for the Big Game, and now the coach had put you in.

Now contrast that with this morning.

Most people who signed up for the Big Game end up making one compromise after another until they've resigned themselves to mediocrity. It's darned hard to keep that first-day buzz going.

But there are also workplaces with an atmosphere that says Thank God It's Monday! --places filled with fun and the spirit of radical transformation, brimming with people at all levels who still say, after five or ten or twenty years on the job, that they love to come to work every day.

What accounts for the difference?

That's not just a feel-good question. Multiple studies across all industries show that an engaged and motivated workforce is also a far more productive and profitable one. A monumental survey of 13,000 US workers by [Watson Wyatt](#) found that highly engaged employees are 26 percent more productive than disengaged employees, and their companies earned 13 percent more shareholder return over the last five years.

When work becomes a place employees actually want to be, everybody wins.

Three Principles of a Great Workplace

There are a thousand things you can do to help create a workplace your employees will love, but most fall into one of three categories: vision, eradication, and celebration:

- **Create a powerful vision to be extraordinary.** Put the constant striving to be extraordinary at the heart of your company's mission and vision. Frame all your employee's goals in terms of being of extraordinary service to others. "I will land 50 new accounts" becomes "I will help 50 new customers find the success they deserve." It changes everything. Life gives to the givers and takes from the takers. Once employees place themselves in the service of those around them, every moment becomes imbued with purpose and significance. They feel GOOD, and their life and work come alive as never before. This is the golden key to a workplace that will draw them happily back, Monday after Monday after Monday.

- **Eradicate the energy vampires.** We all have our negative days. But some people make a career out of sucking the positive energy out of every room, every person and every initiative they come across. These are the energy vampires and they are the death of any attempt to build a positive community. In the most loving terms possible, invite these folks to find their bliss, whether it's in their current situation or on the other side of the door.
- **Create rituals of team celebration.** Create small wins by marking out the steps along the way to major goals and celebrating them as they happen. Celebrate critical drivers in daily huddles--for example, the number of new accounts opened, customer success stories--the works. Define weekly measures of success and hang a bell in the middle of the office to ring whenever steps along the way are met. Hold quarterly celebrations based on meeting key criteria you establish as an organization. Get wild and crazy, have fun!

Notice that NONE of these require a huge investment of money or time. They do require a willingness to focus on what has been proven to work and to keep that focus -- until at last one day your employees find themselves walking in the door with that long-lost first-day spring in their step.

That, my friends, is a day your people will find worth working for.