

Having fun at work? Thank your CEO

This week's question: Studies have shown that workers who have fun in the office are more likely to be creative and happy in their jobs. Do you think that's true? In what specific ways do you encourage your employees at your company to have fun while still getting the job done?

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Lawyers are in the business of serving their clients. It's a high-stress, high-pressure career, with little time for 'fun.' Instead, we prioritize relationship-building, both internally among firm members and out in the business and civic community.

Ramon Abadin, president, The Florida Bar, and partner, Sedgewick Law Firm

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I think that it's less about fun, and more about releasing your mind from the tasks at hand, and keeping burnout from occurring. We are a tech firm, with very technical facial recognition and machine learning projects. The level of focus necessary to develop those solutions is almost beyond human capacity. It's really important to give people the time and space they need to decompress, so that they can deliver the best work possible.

Brian Brackeen, CEO, Kairos

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It takes a creative and happy team to deliver excellent service to clients in any professional setting. Several years ago, CREC launched our "Deeper Breath" program, which includes yoga, meditation, Zumba, healthy eating options, and more for employees. We keep adding to our offerings with massages, healthy lunches and team-building community activities. Our philosophy is: When work is fun, more gets done!

Carol Brooks, president and co-founder, CREC (Continental Real Estate Companies)

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Without question, a great working environment produces great results. While we take advantage of opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate our employees whenever we can, we are fortunate that our employees see working at St. Thomas as supporting an important mission — and that certainly makes coming to work an enjoyable experience.

Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale, president, St. Thomas University

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At Broward Health, patient care is at the heart of what we do. All of our employees are dedicated to Broward Health's goal of providing our community with access to world-class healthcare. We also want to spotlight our Broward Health employees. To that end, we recently unveiled an internal cultural campaign called "Care Warriors" where we highlight the outstanding stories that happen at Broward Health every day. It's a chance for employees to share how their work makes a difference in the lives of patients.

Nabil El Sanadi, CEO/president, Broward Health

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The InterContinental Miami is proud to be the “#1 Top Large Workplace” in South Florida, according to the Sun Sentinel. We’re in the hospitality business, so it’s vital that our employees are engaged and enthusiastic. Our “Happy Healthy Me” program addresses healthy eating in the workplace, employee wellness, and camaraderie among our team members. All of these have a cumulative effect on morale, making our hotel a great place to work and a great place to stay.

Robert Hill, general manager, InterContinental Miami

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I totally agree that when workers are having fun at the office they are more productive and creative in the work environment. A work environment that is conducive to change and encourages employees to have some enjoyment while completing job duties will bring about a higher rate of productivity.

Kevin Johnson, president/CEO, Johnson Management Group

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Definitely. At Marquis, our motto is work hard and play harder. We know that our employees are the lifeline of our success, and that their happiness leads to better productivity and in turn leads to the happiness of our customers. From happy hours and birthday lunches to brainstorm contests and employee newsletters, we’re always trying to add “fun” elements to our daily work routines.

Miriam Lopez, president/chief lending officer, Marquis Bank

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Our United Way culture has always been one of employee empowerment and family inclusion. We believe that by working hard and having fun we can do much more good. We make time throughout the year to enjoy one another and each others’ families, whether at employee picnics or during our own United Way campaign. And, I think that bears out in our high retention of staff, strong employee loyalty and amazing productivity.

Harve A. Mogul, president and CEO, United Way of Miami-Dade

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Absolutely, it all starts with motivated employees. If they aren’t engaged, having fun and love what they do, morale will suffer and so will service. Having a strong culture of recognition certainly helps. It’s something as simple as holding a pizza party, taking employees out to the ball game, or holding competitions like we are currently doing though a worldwide “DHL’s Got Talent” contest — employees need to feel appreciated and valued for all that they do.

Mike Parra, CEO, DHL Express U.S.

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Fun matters. At the Arsht Center, we celebrate success as often as possible and in ways that are unique to us — and that means pig roasts in the loading dock and Star Wars piñatas filled with tickets. We threw an all-staff tea party to celebrate the artistic and financial success of our summer blockbuster *Lookingglass Alice*. We also had an impromptu hallway “snow ball” fight in the offices to relieve stress during the busy season inspired by our *Slava’s Snow Show* program. The open layout of our administrative offices encourages employees to communicate freely. Our Café at Books & Books is now a great option for meetings and to interact with visitors.

M. John Richard, president, CEO, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts

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We believe laughter and levity should come standard with every day. This is why “Fun” is one of our core values at Key Lime Interactive. Recently, a few employees left work early to attend the Marlins game. As long as employees get their work done, we provide them a flexible schedule to do so.

Ania Rodriguez, CEO of Key Lime Interactive

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Most people spend more time at work than they do at home. So, absolutely it is important that team members have an environment that is engaging and fun. As a service industry, it can be a bit challenging to balance meeting the needs of your clients and having fun. At Sapoznik Insurance, we have a passion for wellness, so we focus on wellness and create fun activities around that theme. This quarter we have a Biggest Loser contest and rumba classes every Friday. On a monthly basis we have birthday celebrations, recognize employees in our monthly newsletter, including an employee of the month, and regularly communicate our successes as a company. In addition, we have a mental health break quarterly, where we close down our office and do something fun as a team. Past events have included bowling, a comedy club and going out on a yacht. As a business owner, my team members are my greatest asset. It is important that they are engaged at work, know how much they are valued, and that we are all part of the Sapoznik family.

Rachel Sapoznik, president, CEO, Sapoznik Insurance & Associates, LLC

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Absolutely! The ginnybakes team is all about the power of playfulness and laughter — both at work and in every other aspect of life. We’re always working hard to make our office and production facility a more enriching, compassionate place to work. We are working on an employee of the month concept, with thoughtful ideas for recognition. We also bring food in twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, to give to our employees. Many youth from surrounding areas participate, so they have great meals to look forward to. We serve it family style so there’s a more relaxed feeling. We also supply fruits, and healthy snacks in our break room, to ensure that everyone feels that they work in a caring environment. We celebrate birthdays as well. So is the office fun? Maybe it’s best described as an atmosphere where every team member understands our commitment not only to the cookies we’re baking, but also to each employee that walks through our doors everyday. Happy people are productive people, and passion drives success. These are tenets we’ve built ginnybakes on!

Ginny Simon, founder, CEO, ginnybakes