

Bulletin Board: And we'll have fun, fun, fun in the office

by Amy_Winter

Don't dread going to work every morning. Instead, make work fun.

Fun results from productivity and fulfillment, according to Sharon Livingston, a psychologist and president of The Livingston Group for Marketing Inc.

Bring some short-term artificial fun into the office. Play games, wear funny hats, tell jokes, build friendships, bring toys, play a practical joke on co-workers, do tasks backward or take a walk.

In order to gain long-term fun in the office, pick a job based on your interests. Livingston suggests writing down passions and desires in order to incorporate them into careers. Reinvent your position to bring more joy into a dull work environment. Avoid choosing a career based on family obligation. A talent doesn't necessarily mean pursuing it as a profession.

Because Livingston enjoys her job, she wants others to feel excited about workdays. She performs "insight mining" techniques, such as meditation, to help individuals discover their interests. For instance, Livingston says many people enjoy being presented with challenges. Doctors play detective when searching for the diagnosis of a disease, while librarians enjoy the thrill of finding information.

Many people agree that fun can take place in the office. Eighty-four percent of employed workers say they have fun at work, according to the Ritz Cracker Fun-alysis survey that questioned 1,000 people nationwide. Seventy-seven percent of employed respondents say having fun is an essential element when selecting a job, and 42 percent would rather have fun at work than make good money. Even the boss can be fun, according to 69 percent of workers.

Livingston recommends spending some time alone to reflect and search for meaningful elements you want in a career. In the meantime, lighten up the work atmosphere with games, breaks or jokes.

For more information, visit www.tlgonline.com.

AVOID POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS AT WORK

Even if the presidential election tops the stories in the newspapers, that doesn't mean it has to be the topic of conversation in the workplace. But many bosses don't seem to mind sharing their political views with employees.

Thirty-five percent of bosses openly discuss their political opinions with employees, according to a survey by Vault.com, a media company focused on careers that surveyed 727 employees. And 9 percent of workers say they feel obligated to side with their boss's views.

"My boss insisted that he had to know who I voted for in the election," says one respondent. "Then he proceeded to tell me that if I didn't vote his way, I had no business working for the company."

Political conversations also occur among workers. Sixty-six percent of respondents say their co-workers discuss politics in the office, and 30 percent say a co-worker has attempted to persuade others to vote for his or her political candidate. Forty-six percent of workers have even seen a political argument among co-workers.

Vault provides tips to help you avoid getting caught in the middle of workplace political arguments:

- Don't feel pressured to share your political views. You can excuse yourself from the conversation if you don't want to participate.
- Don't try to push your views on your co-workers or employees. Even if you support a certain candidate, avoid forcing someone to change positions. Bring a sticker to your desk, but don't start handing out petitions.
- Don't assume others feel the same way you do. Try not to put down a candidate just because you think that co-worker would never vote for the person. You may guess wrong, leading to an uncomfortable conversation.
- Don't criticize if you don't agree. Walk away from arguments if you and a co-worker have different political views. It isn't worth risking the work relationship to make a point.

For more information, visit www.vault.com.

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