

50 Ways to Create an Inviting Workplace Environment

1. **Share the Company's Values and Goals.** Employees cannot help your vision come alive if they are only focused on their tasks and don't see how everyone and everything fits together.
2. **Watch for "Help" Signs.** Keep a lookout for where employees may be having difficulty doing something.
3. **Encourage Effort.** Encouragement leads to confidence which leads to continued effort.
4. **Keep People Posted.** Use memos, bulletin boards, announcements, etc. to keep people in the loop of important information. A lack of information is a bedfellow of the rumor mill.
5. **Schedule Lunch Together.** A pot luck, ethnic food day – whatever you want it to be – place a signup sheet for staff to bring a contribution (food, drinks, paper products or a monetary donation) - take 30 minutes to break bread together once a month.
6. **Share Responsibility.** Creating partnerships among staff enhances job performance.
7. **Celebrate Birthdays and/or Company Anniversaries.** Birthdays and anniversaries are important milestones to people.
8. **Hang a "Just For Fun" Employee Bulletin Board.** Share motivational quotes. Kudos. "DID YOU KNOW"... fun facts. Cartoons. Pictures of employees as children. Whatever you fancy.
9. **Create a Wall of Fame.** Take a picture of each employee – including those 'in the field' with a few facts about each one: what they do in the organization, years of employment, what they enjoy outside of the organization, etc.
10. **Honor an "Artist" of the Month.** Put employee talents on display –art work, photography, needlework, carpentry, anything that can showcase employee hobbies and talents outside of the workplace.

11. **Design an “I Caught You...” Campaign.** Employees get a ‘kudos’ for being caught doing or saying something that strengthens workplace connections and imbeds our values. “I Caught You” kudos can be written on blue cards (or you can make buttons) and given to employees by other employees. “Kudo” cards are shared in staff meetings. Small tokens of appreciation can be given after an employee receives a specific number of “Caught You” cards.
12. **Share Lessons Learned.** At staff meetings, share a workplace scenario that went well or went wrong. Do a ‘root cause analysis’ with the staff (not just leadership) to help everyone see the chain of events. Ask for feedback. Acknowledge feelings. Sharing lessons learned shows employees that while mistakes will happen, learning from them leads us to success. Sharing what went well builds pride, synergy and confidence.
13. **Post a Calendar** in your lunch area. List birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, holidays, company events and milestones, community events.
14. **Send a Personal Thank You.** Recognition for something done or said shows employees that you are paying attention and notice positive attitudes, behaviors or actions even if your interactions with them are infrequent. *Everyone can do this.*
15. **Hold a “Guess Who” Contest.** Match childhood pictures with current employee photos.
16. **Send Congratulations Notes.** Whether an employee or their spouse has a baby, gets an award, graduates from a higher learning institute or wins a race, a note of acknowledgment says you recognize them for being more than your employee.
17. **Get Out of the Office.** Hold an after office happy hour, day trip, old fashion bar-b-que, or staff development workshop to give employees the opportunity to interact out of the office.
18. **Best Ideas Contest.** Periodically hold a contest for new innovative ideas or for issues that you are stumped to find a solution. Give a gift certificate or monetary donation for ideas that save the company money.
19. **Create a monthly ‘Get to Know You’ Employee handout.** Include a picture of the employee with the answers to 20 questions (everyone answers the same 20 questions). Create a template to be used for consistency. Great way to learn fun and fascinating facts about each other.
20. **Take a 5 Minute *Fun* Break.** Periodically, call an organized break. Meet in the lobby, lunchroom or outside. Do stretching exercises, play upbeat

music, go outside and toss a beach ball, blow bubbles, do thai chi, conduct an ice breaker - whatever fun thing you can come up with to help employees relax and recharge their battery. Fresh ideas often come when you can walk away from the desk for a few minutes and reenergize the body and the mind.

21. **Create Workplace Agreements.** Be clear and keep them simple. Give rationale for the decisions. Employees should be included in creating the agreements that will strengthen the workplace environment.
22. **Hold a Culture Day.** Have employees share information, traditions, food, music and other things they feel are worth sharing about their culture or ethnicity. This can be a display or included in a staff meeting or luncheon.
23. **Hold a Surprise Breakfast,** lunch or ice cream social for no special reason other than to say thank you or build time for employees to connect.
24. **Design a Series of Lunch 'N Learn Sessions.** Have employees share a skill or bring in a local professional to speak on a topic important to employees (does not have to be work related).
25. **Eat Crow with Style.** Everyone makes mistakes - even the boss. When the mistake is yours-own it, acknowledge others' feelings, share lessons learned and move on (*refer to number 12*).
26. **Encourage Self Evaluations.** Give employees an opportunity to assess their skills, performance, attitudes and goals.
27. **Encourage Peer Evaluations.** Peer evaluations can be very helpful if you are not able to observe all staff, their performance and interactions with co-workers and clients. A self assessment, together with a peer review can give you a more well-rounded picture of performance.
28. **Address Workplace Issues that Create Barriers.** Whether someone is texting throughout the day, making personal phone calls or surfing the internet, these behaviors can hinder trust. While the employee may be meeting expectations or even exceeding them, others may perceive that they are slacking or getting benefits they themselves are not privy too.
29. **Encourage and Empower Staff to Solve Problems.** Even if mistakes are made, building critical thinking and problem solving skills can only benefit your organization and clients, not to mention increase personal confidence and accountability.
30. **Practice Positive Self-Talk.** Negative thinking and personal put-downs can keep you from feeling able, capable and valuable. Instead of "I can't

do this,” consider thinking, “It may be hard, but I can do this.” Instead of “I shouldn’t have said that,” consider “It would have been better if I didn’t say that, but I can apologize and learn to think first before speaking.”

31. **Begin Meetings with a Success** story, effort, accomplishment or appreciation. Keep reports brief but starting a meeting on an optimistic note sets the tone for the whole meeting.
32. **Send the Message “This is *Our* Company.”** When employees feel ownership in the company’s outcome, pride emerges along with innovative ideas and support for each other. If employees are just collecting a paycheck, you will get mediocre or inconsistent results.
33. **Arrange Video Conferencing** between office employees and field employees. This puts a face to a name or a voice and creates stronger partnerships.
34. **Practice Common Courtesies.** Remember to say please, thank you, excuse me, I’m sorry.
35. **Paint the Lunch Room Blue.** A pale blue creates an inviting and relaxing space.
36. **Install a Suggestion Box.** Some ideas come at the strangest times and are forgotten until the next staff meeting. Discuss suggestions at staff meetings.
37. **Design an Internal Newsletter.** It’s often hard to keep everyone “in the loop.” A one page newsletter can be a quick and easy way to get important info out to everyone at the same time.
38. **Hold a FIVE-Minute Workshop.** Ask employees to present five minutes on a particular topic such as “My best email tip, communication tip, time management tip, etc.”
39. **Cut and Share.** Scan a publication and pick out an article or tips that can help others in your workplace. Recycle what you no longer need.
40. **Follow Through Promptly.** The most positive action – when delayed - loses much of its value.
41. **Admit Ignorance.** Saying “I don’t know” gives you more credibility than struggling to know everything and faking a response. A good follow up is often to ask “What do you think?”
42. **Invite Questions.** Questions open dialogue, discussion and problem solving.
43. **Create a Doodle Wall.** When employees are stuck or need a re-charge, doodling on a piece of flip chart paper in the lunch room can be a great 5

minute diversion. It's amazing what can be created when one employee's 'graffiti ' melds with another's.

44. **Assign New Staff "Buddies"**. Assign a seasoned staff person with a newbie for the first 6 months. Having someone to relate to, confide in and ask questions to can help a new employee integrate into the company and learn the ropes faster.
45. **Interview Employees**. Sit one on one with each employee and get to know them. Ask a series of questions that helps you identify how they feel about your company. Questions might include: what they enjoy about their work and why, what they would change and why, what they struggle with, are most proud of, what motivates them etc.
46. **Don't Run from Conflict or Questionable Behavior**. While no one likes conflict, silence can mean acceptance. Everyone needs to know what are acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviors. Be respectful. Separate the deed from the doer and focus on how the behavior creates workplace conflict. Help employees to recognize the affects of their behavior. Allow the employees in question to determine what needs to happen next.
47. **Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself**. Show your human side.
48. **Be authentic. Be accessible. Be a good listener**. And you will gain respect.
49. **Be consistent with boundaries and expectations for yourself and others**.
50. **Never forget that employees are people and people can be your best asset or your worst nightmare**.

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