





DEVELOP COMPANY CULTURE

It's no secret that people who love their employers and are engaged in their work environment are better employees. That value isn't abstract, either. Companies with higher than average employee engagement experience the following benefits:









So how do you ensure you're cultivating company culture and not stifling it? Try these simple tweaks to create a more engaging and lively work environment for your employees.

TIP: MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

Company culture isn't one size fits all. One workplace environment may work for one company and be disastrous for another. This is your business, so make the company culture reflect that. Focus on the core values that are important to you and your business and hire employees who understand and hold these values.

TIP: COMMUNICATE WITH EMPLOYEES.

Employees who feel like they are being kept in the dark might find it hard to carry out the vision you have for your business. Open lines of communication with weekly meetings, emails or whatever form of communication best works for your business.

TIP: PUT EMPLOYEES FIRST.

When you have unhappy employees it reflects badly on your business. Making sure you give employees the ability to have work-life balance is incredibly important in maintaining happy employees. Balance work hours to give employees ample time to enjoy their life away from work. They'll be much happier and will reflect it in their demeanor to customers.

TIP: SHOW APPRECIATION.

One of the best ways to engage your employees is by creating and promoting a lively, enjoyable work environment. Encourage employees not only to perform well and drive sales in the workplace but also to enjoy themselves while working. Schedule employee appreciation days, cookouts, and other fun events to break up routines.

SEE IT IN ACTION

New Balance Chicago uses a blog as a communication tool to engage employees at all four locations in training, customer feedback and employee acknowledgment. They reward their employees for attaining goals by highlighting them on the blog along with a turn on the "reward wheel" for a chance to win prizes.

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If you're not enthusiastic about your business, how are you supposed to convince the people who work for you to immerse themselves in their work? As a business owner, you must lead by example and create the expectation that your actions set the standard.

So how can you set a good example for your employees and provide the right mentorship to cultivate your employees' talents?

TIP: BE A BETTER MANAGER.

Management can be tricky for business owners. You didn't start a business because you were really passionate about managing people. But that doesn't mean you can't be a great people manager. Get excited about new initiatives and motivate yourself to constantly improve your business. If you demonstrate a solid work ethic, you will provide your employees with an ideal role model.

TIP: IMPLEMENT COACHING PROGRAMS.

Coaching programs give new employees hands-on training and a program that helps them get up to speed with your business philosophy and goals. Providing incentives can

work to an extent, but for new employees coaching can be a more reliable way to ensure long-term employee improvement and success.

TIP: SET GOALS.

When you are mentoring employees, you're able to implement goal setting programs to help employees ramp up. Mentors can set up goals that reflect the new employee's position along with give the support employees need to meet and eventually exceed their goals. Goal setting is a perfect way to encourage and motivate employees through the training process.

TIP: IMPLEMENT INNER-EMPLOYEE TRAINING.

Don't have the time to personally nurture the growth of each of your employees? Your top salespeople can be the best resource for training your new or underperforming employees. Implement a program that enables a mentoring relationship between your employees and promote sharing of best practices.

SEE IT IN ACTION

Schuler Shoes relies on their store managers to build a solid team foundation and hold each other accountable to keep the retail business as efficient and profitable. And it works. "Giving our management team the ability to make decisions and nurture their individual store staff members has increased productivity and success in our retail stores," says Jim Dament, owner.

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Setting up company culture and forming a mentorship is great but how do you know if it's really making your employees better at their job? Investing in software that tracks performance is a great way to make sure all the work you've put into engaging employees is actually bettering your business!

TIP: INVEST IN SOFTWARE.

If you haven't invested in POS software that tracks retail data you're missing out on a goldmine of information that could save you money and time. Using your software to its full potential can make tracking performance easier than you ever imagined. Track employee performance consistently, using data to ensure both fairness and optimization.

TIP: RUN REPORTS.

Once your POS software is set up, it enables you to record data and generate reports that use the information in the database to analyze how well your employees are performing. So why not use them? This information is great to help you figure out who is really excelling and who could use a little help reaching their sales goals.

TIP: TRACK THESE METRICS.

Tracking software and running reports are great, but what should you track to ensure employees are efficient in their work? On a basic level, use your retail software to track employee hours using the time clock. This allows you to monitor when they clock in and out and view the overall hours each employee works.

View sales by total dollar amount, total quantity sold, or quantity sold of a particular item for each employee to determine in what areas your employees are excelling and what key performance indicators need improvement.

TIP: REWARD RESULTS.

Make sure you follow through with appreciating employees by rewarding them when they reach their goals. Not every goal needs a tangible prize for completion but setting up a reward scale for goals will help employees work towards their different goals.

SEE IT IN ACTION

Mike Morey of **NBO Shoes** knows the importance of monitoring employee performance. He uses real-time reports to identify coaching opportunities, find areas that need improvement, and reward team members who consistently reach and exceed goals. This data analysis has helped Morey's team increase sales productivity by up to 80% in the past three years.

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