

Making Work Fun!

Seriously...I always thought it was supposed to be WORK

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What does it take to make work fun? Lots of work! But it is a worthwhile investment because it will result in staff retention and ultimately patient satisfaction. So let's look at the business of fun. It's a four-step process.

First, think about each and every member of the staff; do you know what they enjoy? Do you know what motivates them? Some people love competitive games others hate it. Do you have activities for both? Some people love public acknowledgement for a job well done, and again, others hate being the center of attention. Who's who in your practice? You can consider what each person does for fun on the weekends or weeknights then determine if you can incorporate that into work?

Do they enjoy community service, neighborhood relationships, and sport events with their kids, a nice meal out? In order to really make this project effective you need to know all this before taking the next step.

Second, lead by example, people work together as a group and look for clues and signals on how to behave based on the leadership. Do you enjoy what you do and focus on the positive or are you too stressed to even consider having fun? If so, begin by evaluating your own attitude and behavior and making the adjustments to your own behavior.

Possibly you already lead by example, if so let's go to step three, what activities can you put together? Remember, not all things are fun for everyone, so the more diverse your mix the better. And don't do the same thing month after month but every occasionally because nothing is fun when you've done it a dozen times.

I have seen some examples of creative fun from a few of my clients so let me pass those on.

- Create a quiz to help staff to get to know the doctors. Each doctor fills out an “interview” form that asks non-doctor questions in addition to the standard where did they graduate, etc. Ask about their favorite pet, a musical instrument they play, movie they watch repeatedly, or a favorite vacation spot. Then create a “know our doctor” game where the staff can compete to see who knows the most about the doctor(s), whoever knows the most can win a gift card. The next time pick a “know our staff member” form and have everyone participate.
- Have everyone on staff create a poster board of “what I love most” or maybe “what you don’t know about me” and then hang them in non-patient areas so everyone has the opportunity to glance at the boards and have a better understanding of their co-workers.
- The next staff meeting could be a scavenger hunt for information or details on the practice. Create a list of “must have” information and pair up staff, try to pair non-traditional teams, and have them partner to fill in the details on the list. Again, you can reward or simply celebrate the team with the most details.
- Picture day! Have everyone bring in a baby picture of themselves; post those on the bulletin board then try to identify the adult and the baby.
- There is always success when food is involved but try something different, not the usual bagels and cream cheese. Have everyone bring in his or her childhood favorite food or try a new ethnic food once a quarter.
- Create a stress free zone with nature sounds on an iPOD, a beanbag chair and aromatherapy spray...for those days when someone had “that” patient to deal with.

Fun can be simple too:

- Leave a simple thank you note for someone who gave that little bit extra. A smiley face on a post-it note can do the trick of making someone smile.
- Have flowers delivered to the office and then have that bouquet travel to each department throughout the week.
- Bring in cartoons and slip them onto someone’s desk.
- Create certificates of achievement and distribute them to anyone with a 100% on time arrival for a quarter.
- Give sincere word of thanks to any and everyone.

These are just a few suggestions, I have a list of “52 Ways to Have Fun at Work” I never expect a fun event a week but I like the concept. Consider choosing just a few “fun things” and repeating those that work well. If you would like the list, send me an email (mary@eyesystems.info) and I will forward it.

The final step is patience. If your practice culture has been nose to the grindstone, full speed ahead, you can expect that it will take a few months for the new behaviors to become comfortable for everyone. But practice will make perfect, don’t give up!

One last thought, the average preschooler laughs or smiles 400 times a day, by the age of 35 that drops to 15 times a day. Laughing increases oxygen intake which replenishes and invigorates your cells, boosts immunity and relieves stress. Who wouldn't want that? SMILE!