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Be Well Aware – Health Article



How to Create Community in the Workplace

Feeling a sense of community in the workplace is often found to be one of the top three factors valued by employees. When employees feel a sense of cohesiveness, work becomes more meaningful and purposeful. By establishing strategies to build connectedness, companies can possibly increase employee productivity, performance and retention.

To begin building community, companies can look to their employees to help create vision. Current employees can provide insight to what can improve motivation at work and new or onboarding employees can be asked to provide fresh ideas on what may keep everyone connected and engaged.

Acts of Kindness

- Encouraging volunteerism is a great way to foster connectivity and work towards a greater goal. Set a collaborative benchmark and provide examples of ways to volunteer in the community. Scheduling a litter clean up, serving at a local soup kitchen or collecting items for area youth are all positive opportunities to work together to make a difference.
- Living in a world of technology, individuals should feel as connected more now than ever. However, electronic communication can sometimes feel impersonal.

Write a handwritten, encouraging note to a coworker to show appreciation or say well done.



Take It Outside

- Intracompany competition can be a fun way to motivate your coworkers to be active and cultivate team spirit. Create a softball or kickball team to play in a local park and recreation league. Have an employee fitness center. Challenge others to work out for a set amount of minutes per week or cover a certain number of miles in a month.
- Organizing an off-hours social event outside of the workplace is another way to boost team morale and allow people to get to know one another on a personal level. Schedule a hike followed by a tasting at a local brewery. Help employees tap into their creative side by organizing a paint night at a local art studio. Or, simply plan to catch a local sporting event together.

Make Meetings Memorable

- Sometimes it can feel like we are always in a meeting. Once a quarter, start or end your meeting with a new twist. Beginning of a new year? Bring poster board, magazines, scissors and glue and encourage everyone to create a vision board for the new year. Has spring sprung? Take your meeting outside for a walk while you discuss important details. Is the holiday season nearing? Create a potluck meeting and ask everyone to bring their favorite dish as well as the recipe to share.
- Chat with your coworkers and create subgroups based on common interests. Like to read? Build a book club. Enjoy following stocks? Work together to identify potentially profitable stocks. Rather be outside or active? Plan a group hike or trip to the yoga studio



By establishing a community in the workplace, employees can feel a greater sense of belonging in the workplace. With or without a budget, there is a plethora of ways to create opportunities for employees to get to know each other. Building a strong sense of community within the workplace can be a rewarding experience for both the employee as well as the company.

- Begin meetings with a fun icebreaker question or by offering a team-building activity to help build collaboration and foster communication.

Celebrate Milestones & Shared Interests

- Create a place for employees to share accomplishments whether completing their first half marathon or finishing their degree.

References:

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/clubs-workplace-12114.html>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ellevate/2019/07/22/companies-should-include-community-building-in-wellness-programs/#41c7a4032cc8>

<https://www.urbanbound.com/blog/importance-of-community-in-the-workplace>

Exercise of the Month



Partner Exercise: Medicine-Ball Twist Passes

Purpose: Improve Core Strength

Target Muscles: Rectus Abdominis, External Obliques, Internal Obliques

Equipment Needed: Medicine Ball

Start/Movement:

- Partners should stand facing the opposite direction from each other, approximately two feet apart. Place feet shoulder width apart, keep back straight, pull abs in tight and allow knees to be slightly bent.
- The first partner holds the medicine ball with both hands, keeping elbows bent and the ball close to the body. Both individuals rotate (twisting at the waist) to opposite sides keeping both feet planted. The first partner hands the medicine ball from behind to the second partner who retrieves the ball from behind.
- Both individuals turn to the opposite side to again exchange the medicine ball from behind. Continue to rotate the ball in one direction for 20 seconds. Start slowly, gradually increasing speed throughout the set, When finished, repeat opposite direction. Repeat exercise for 3 sets.

See it in action! [Click here](#) for video demonstration of this exercise.



Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



Work Team Potluck Recipes

Office potlucks are a fantastic way to bring a team and employees together because who doesn't love food? Unfortunately, regular potlucks, birthday celebrations, and holidays usually aren't the best for healthy choices at the office. When cupcakes, pop, chips, and other junk food fill the table at most pot lucks, employees are extremely tempted to overindulge. However, an office potluck doesn't have to be synonymous with unhealthy eating. Hosting a healthier version of an office potluck is a great way to encourage healthy eating among employees.

Perks of Healthy Potlucks

By bringing in healthy and tasty foods, employees get the opportunity to try new things and discover that they might like these healthier foods more than they thought. Have you ever had that afternoon crash? Or ever notice that other employees are in a bit of a slump after an office party? One perk of hosting a healthy potluck is that they won't cause productivity to plummet. Unlike foods with high sodium and sugar, nutritious foods will actually give an energy boost to employees.

What to Bring?

It may be hard to think of what to bring for this healthy potluck. While bringing the veggie and fruit trays is always good, it is can get boring. Here are some simple and delicious recipes.

Cucumber Appetizer Bites

Ingredients

- 2 long English cucumbers
- 2 1/2 cups cooked chicken breast, shredded
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt (2%+ fat)
- 4 tbsp Frank's red hot sauce
- 3 tbsp blue cheese, crumbled
- 3 green onion sprigs, finely chopped
- Ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

- Trim the ends of cucumbers and cut into half-inch thick slices. If like pretty lines, before slicing peel the cucumber skin with a vegetable peeler lengthwise every 45 degrees. Set aside.
- In a medium bowl, combine chicken, yogurt, hot sauce, blue cheese, onion and pepper; stir well.
- Arrange cucumber slices in a single layer on a serving platter. Using 2 forks, scoop amount of chicken mixture not wider than a cucumber slice and rather tall, place on a cucumber slice and repeat with remaining slices.



Healthy Zucchini Muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 cups shredded, unpeeled zucchini — (about 1 small/medium zucchini)
- 1/2 cup mashed ripe banana — about 1 medium/large or 4 ounces
- 1/4 cup coconut oil — melted and cooled, very light olive oil, or canola oil
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup brown sugar — light or dark
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs — at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder — I recommend aluminum free
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups white whole wheat flour
- 1/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips — mini or regular (I used mini)

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly grease a standard 12-cup muffin tin or line with paper liners.
- Grate the zucchini, then thoroughly squeeze it with a paper towel to remove as much excess water as possible. Repeat as needed. If you have not already, melt the coconut oil and let come to room temperature
- In the bowl of a standing mixer or a large mixing bowl, beat together the banana, honey, brown sugar, coconut oil, and vanilla extract until smooth. Add the eggs (make sure they are room temperature or the coconut oil may solidify), then beat again until combined.
- Sprinkle the cinnamon, baking soda, baking powder, and salt over the top of the batter, then mix to combine. Sprinkle in the flour, then mix on low speed, just until the flour disappears. By hand, fold in the zucchini and chocolate chips.

- Scoop the batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling them 3/4 of the way. Bake for 20-25 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove the muffins from the oven and place the pan on a wire rack. Let cool for 5 minutes in the pan, then carefully lift the muffins out of the pan and place them on a wire rack to cool completely (this will keep the muffins from becoming soggy)



References:

1. <https://www.wellplated.com/healthy-zucchini-muffins/>
2. <https://ifoodreal.com/cucumber-bites/>