

## Hygge – Pastry may not be the only Danish in your office!



The Danish concept of Hygge (pronounced 'hue-gah') has swept the UK by storm, with its idea of cosiness, calm togetherness and the enjoyment of life's simple pleasures. But might this trend make itself to the workplace as well as the home?

With 'Hygge' shortlisted for Oxford Dictionary's **word of the year**, a flood of Hygge related books making their way to the nation's coffee tables and tablets, and a multitude of stores stocking cosy Scandinavian goods, it looks like this Danish concept of wellbeing is making itself well and truly comfortable. Feeling calm, content and enjoying the moment might not be the feelings you associate most with the office. But, there's a strong case to be made for embracing office Hygge so as to improve employee engagement and attract the

top talent.

With this in mind, we've rounded up some top tips for "Hygge-ifying" your office, and why your employees will thank you for it.

## Why Hygge?

Office environments have changed a lot in the last decade, with tech companies leading the way. Whether it's YouTube and its [racing slide](#), or Adobe and its indoor [climbing wall](#), offices are taking a turn from their bleak corporate atmospheres of years gone by. And, when UK workers are spending an average of [43.6 hours](#) a week in the office, employers should make the environment a nice one to be in.

But this has noticeable impact on the productivity of employees too; the '[What Workers Want](#)' study by Savills and the British Council for Offices discovered that 53% of the UK's office workers believed they would be more productive if they could attain their ideal office environment. Tie this in with the fact that [11.7 million working days](#) were lost in the UK to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2016, there's definitely cause for making the office as calming a place as it can be.

The Danish art of Hygge is arguably the best way to inject a sense of calm and contentment into the office. Denmark topped 2016's [World Happiness Report](#) after all, with the Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Norway and Finland also sitting in the top ten. So how do you Hygge your office?

## Downtime

Injecting quality downtime into your employees working day is crucial to ensuring they don't burn the

candle at both ends. Worryingly, only 17% of **UK workers** take their full lunch break due to various reasons, such as having too much work or wanting to appear more willing for the role. But you should encourage your staff to take their full lunch break as much as possible, as having some time to unwind will improve their engagement with work and boost their productivity levels in the long run.

This might involve making sure your staff have a nice environment in which to eat (that isn't their desks), and that there's plenty of nutritious food around that won't cause a post lunchtime slump. If there's no space in your office for a canteen, how about giving your staff lunch vouchers once in a while to ensure that they get out, or putting lunchtime team socials in the diary?

You can also roll-out clubs and team sports that encourage your workforce to take back their lunch breaks. Whether it's military style fitness classes, lunchtime colouring, or a book club – taking the time out will help your staff to feel refreshed when they get back to work.

Although it may not be feasible in many businesses, you could consider switching from a five day working week to a four day one? Evidence points to the fact that both students and employees are **more productive** during a four day working week with a longer working day. Giving your employees an extra day off will help them to unwind, and practice the art of Hygge at home, too.

## **Cosy Zones**

Who says work has to be done at a desk? To really Hygge your office, the key is to inject some cosy zones that give your staff a chance to take a break from their desks and get to work in a comfortable environment.

As a survey by [Staples](#) found, 85% of employees believe they would be more productive if their office had a space that enabled them to take breaks from their desks.

One company that has “Hygge-ified” its office is Money.co.uk, which has a cosy [Ice Cave](#) for, you guessed it, chilling out in. And, the company’s new headquarters even has a [Star Wars](#) themed cinema room, where employees can watch films and presentations. [Google](#), meanwhile, has private pods throughout its office, that come in some interesting shapes and sizes!

## **Ambience**

Make sure you don’t have lights that glare, and make sure you get some natural light in that office, too! You could even install some cosy lamps on everyone’s desks so they can be in charge of their environment – you might even want to make these Sun Lamps so as to banish any signs of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Music is also key in creating a nice environment. Why not make an office playlist for the whole team to feed in too? Or you could take a leaf out of [Google’s book](#), and install a stage in the office to provide your employees with some light musical entertainment!

## **Socialising**

The people in the office are just as big a part of the Hygge experience as the physical environment itself. Whether your workforce is large or small, it’s really important that they get to know each other outside of the working environment and let their hair down once in a while.

Many companies have an office bar, which gives their employees a chance to get to know each other on the

house. Ticketmaster, even, has done away with doors and implemented a slide for access!

But not all socialising needs to involve drinking. Why not have your HR team coordinate random one-to-one meetings amongst your staff that enable them to get to know each and every person in the company throughout the course of the year. The 'office speed dates' only need be 15 minutes long, but it could spark some interdepartmental friendships that might not have occurred otherwise, and it will help your staff to feel more content with their working environment too.

### **Dress code**

Even if your company operates in the corporate sphere, does the dress code always have to be so? Encouraging your employees to come to work in clothes they feel more comfortable in will help them to feel more like themselves in the office, and enjoy being there too. It might even just be a dress down Friday, but taking a break from a suit or high heels will enforce more of a relaxed atmosphere from time to time. If you want to attract and retain top talent, Hygge is definitely the way to go.