

Fun in the Workplace

“If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play” --John Cleese

Traditionally, fun has had no place in the work environment. Fun has even been thought to be the opposite of work. Fun is what you earn after you have worked hard-- is a common belief most of our parents transferred to us when we were growing up. Fortunately, this notion has been changing. Organizations are making increasing efforts to incorporate fun in the workplace in order to create environments conducive of innovation and growth. Along with that, our own perceptions about work have been changing and evolving, going from Aristotle’s “work is for slaves” to Calvin’s “work is a commandment”, to work is who we are; it is how we define our identity. Companies that have made incorporating fun in the workplace an important element include: Pike Place Fish, Employease, Southwest Airlines, Skandia, Isle of Capri and others. Skandia is in the business of asset gathering of non-proprietary market-linked insurance policies. They focus on attracting the best money managers in the world and providing them with the right conditions to stay long term. Their US headquarters includes trendy coffee bars, world-class sporting facilities and other luxury inspired amenities. Employease is an HR application service pro-

vider that was founded in 1998. Even in its first two years of operations, it saw a tremendous growth of client base, thanks to its innovative product and the people factor. Some say the secret to their success is trust. They rely on trust to hold employees accountable, help them take pride in their work and be responsible for their own results. Fun is a natural phenomenon that emerges in most trust-based environments like this one. Pike Place Fish is a fish market in downtown Seattle, Washington. A key moment in its history was when its current owner, John Yokoyama bought out the previous owner for \$3,500 in 1965 and turned the business from a dreary workplace to a stellar workplace. And he achieved that by transforming a culture of angry and dissatisfied workers to world-famous owners who invest in growing their employees and investing in being the best. Pike Place Fish is now worth around 1,000 times more than its original purchase price. It has gained momentum by building an impressive work culture and has, as a result, participated in speaking engagements, training seminars and consulting. It has also been used as the setting for some movies and commercials.

IPS Recommends...

- **Permitting fun**
Because fun has been traditionally discouraged in the workplace, it is important for leaders to invite fun in the workplace.
- **Placing trust in the process**
Helping employees feel the personal benefit and responsibility associated with bringing fun in the workplace is crucial. If you trust them with your most important assets, why not trust them with fun?
- **Being authentic and conscientious**
Because this process of incorporating fun in the workplace hasn’t been around for long, it requires time and effort as well as a certain level of commitment and natural inclination on the part of employees, and on the part of the organization.
- **Celebrating success**
There is nothing more important in recognizing success, in both individual and group appraisals. Not to mention, celebrating success is fun.



Marketing: The Importance of Being First

What is the most important thing in marketing? Is it having the best product? Having the cheapest product? Is it coming up with the best packaging, creating the most interesting commercials or setting up an amazing website to describe your service? Although most of these are legitimately important to run successful marketing, having the best product is the least important, but often mistaken to be the panacea of good marketing. Here's why. People often think that the best product will win the market so they all try to make a better product or offer an improved service. The market leader already has that better product or has offered that improved service, so it is often futile to compete against that. They are already placed in the minds of consumers as the leader, and marketing is all about perceptions. Now, consider this. How did the leader position themselves as one in the minds of consumers? Was it by offering a better product? No, it was by creating and defining a category to be the leader in and starting out first. This is not only true for Coca-Cola, but also Dell, Pizza Hut, Rolex and the list goes on and on. But not all brands that start out first in a category get to be the leaders. It takes capturing perceptions to win the game. So, among the rest, defining a category and communicating how you are different from your competition can set the final stage for success.

IPS Recommends...

Before considering to launch a new product or service, it is worth taking into account the following steps:

1. Finding out what is the name of the category you are interested in. Industries often give these names to product categories.
2. Finding out if there is a leader in that category. Most of the time this is the sales leader, but it can sometimes be the leader that has best positioned itself in the minds of prospects. If there is one, move on to setting up your own category.
3. If there is no dominant brand, start your own. Under the right planning and timing, this is an excellent opportunity that can propel you to great success.
4. Promote your brand as the leading product. It is extremely important to note that you have a leading product in order to position yourself.

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