

Productivity: How Office Décor Can Help

Whilst compiling the nation's first productivity assessment, the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) held a number of dialogues with individuals from various business sectors. These dialogues continued through business forums held as part of the NCPC's Productivity Awareness Week initiative. During discussions many issues were raised including concerns on how to make employees more productive at work. In response, many individuals brought recommendations to the table. They ranged from more intensive training to incentive based pay to simply keeping employees happy. However in relation to the latter, a further issue was raised - how should employers and supervisors go about making employees happy? According to Diana Mackie in her article for the Huffington Post, '5 Surprising Impacts of Office Décor' the question of keeping employees productively happy could be as simple as choosing the right office decorations.

Mackie writes, 'Your office's decorations, or lack thereof, directly impacts employee productivity, happiness and even absenteeism. Giving your office a stylish makeover will also significantly impact the perception of your company by visitors, especially potential business partners or job candidates! First impressions matter a great deal, and a person's surrounding environment directly impacts their productivity.'

A working environment free of clutter and confusion helps minimize an employee's stress level. A practical way to do this which will also increase on office organizational levels is to avoid the accumulation of random stacks of paper. Invest in folders, filing systems, desk organizers and boxes. These cost friendly items will also cut down on the amount of time needed when searching for a particular document. Ask employees their opinions when choosing colours and

styles. By feeling that they placed some input into the decision making process staff members will appreciate the new systems even more.

Another practical way to help make employees happy is by giving them a corner or a spare room of their own where they can take breaks. Even if the establishment is not equipped with a kitchen or lounge area, allowing employees to take an occasional break away from their desks dramatically improves on productivity. Research has also shown that offices that institute a set lunch hour are prone to having workers who perform at a high productivity level on a day to day basis.

Allowing employees to add some personal touches to their working environment is also a good motivator. It adds a little happiness to their working day, the result being a reduction in absenteeism. From a stylish lamp, to elegant pen holders, selected items will also aid in making the office look great.

Mackie adds that the presence of a live plant within the office can actually work wonders when trying to raise productivity levels. She writes, 'Two recent prominent studies has discovered that having a live plant on your desk increases productivity and cognitive attention. On a less measurable scale, the studies also found that the presence of plants led to increased happiness amongst the office staff. Try adding easy-to-maintain plants like succulents. Some of the best plants for indoor use include Pothos, Aloe, Spider Plants, English Ivy, Rubber Trees, Jade Plants, and Snake Plants.'

When most people think about employee happiness they automatically link the topic to issues of pay - such thought patterns need to be done away with. There are many who would feel happier within their working environment if they were simply given the option of personalizing their

work space. Employers and employees should take the time to discuss the subject matter as something so simple could have a dynamic effect on productivity levels within their unit.