July 2014

BOOST YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

How can we create a work area that feels good for us?

Many hours are spent at work, this month’s issue encourages ways you can ensure that time is positive for employees and your organisation.

In this months issue

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- Corp Workplace Solutions
- Public Workshop Calendar
Many hours are spent at work, ensuring this time is positive for some people, teams and organisations has led to innovative input into the environment. So we asked around to find out what some of our team felt about this topic…

Many offices use motivational art, pictures and inspirational posters to liven up otherwise dull neutral colours, coloured floor rugs and plants.

The Best Bosses I ever had...

- Gave thanks and showed appreciation
- Said hello in person where possible and engaged in social conversations and get-togethers
- Took an interest in each other’s lives
- Listened to staff needs, allow the opportunity to learn more and take on more responsibility
- Encouraged professional development among staff
- Valued staff input and accomplishments
- Was aware of my strengths and assisted me to use these
- Flexible and open-mindedness, ensured that work was fairly distributed
- Took time out to understand my personality and how to work with it
- Provided and took on constructive feedback
- Did not make assumptions and asked relevant questions instead
- Acknowledged workers needs and make appropriate changes accordingly
- Created a positive work environment through a positive attitude
- Trusted in the maturity and professionalism of staff and not engage in micro-management
- Transparent sharing of relevant information that is important for staff
- Timely response to needs in-the-workplace polices and procedures

“Delivered chocolates to people when I knew they were a bit low” :)

“Spontaneously brought in morning tea”

“Have a room/office space put together by the whole team where everyone can go and relax – representing a collage of the team”

“I created a lunch area for everyone with team at work, we put plants and seats, it’s still being used years later”

“We arranged afternoon tea once a month”

“I painted a wall with permission, it was scratched and tacky and we had to work with that next to us all day, it lifted everyone’s spirits”

“I put up personal pictures in my work area”

BOOST YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT
How do we create a work area that makes us feel good?
The Best Co-workers I ever had...

- Were respectful
- Said Hi and always ready for a laugh
- Had the best sense of humour and was always positive
- Cared about me by checking in after a hard day
- Encouraged to keep spirits up and appreciated me
- Shared the hard work
- Shared information freely and listened when I shared
- Shared resources fairly
- Brought in food to share
- Shared a passion, that made the work not about work hours, not about the hours you do but about doing a job you believe in positively.
- Took time out to understand my personality and how to work with it
- Adapted effective assessment/decision making processes rather than emotional judgments
- Had a high level of discernment thinking
- Were able to be appropriately critical and solution focused rather than getting angry because their expectations are not meet
- Took an interest in each other’s lives
- Did not engage in gossip
- Have great morning teas once a month
- Discussed issues as they arose

Reduce stress with workplace humour

It’s been well-documented that humor and laughter can reduce stress and provide many other benefits. And a few areas of life are more stressful than the workplace. So, not surprisingly, it’s been found that office humor can be a good stress-reliever, reducing job stress, boosting morale, bringing people closer, and perhaps even warding off burnout. Unfortunately, it can also alienate people and create a more hostile work environment, even sparking lawsuits, all of which creates more stress in the end.

According to recent research from Professor Christopher LeGrow from Marshall University, workplace humor can help people de-stress, but it can often be offensive. In fact, around 70% of people reported that workplace jokes they’d heard centered around making fun of co-workers based on factors like age, sexual orientation and even weight!

An additional 40% admitted that they themselves had made fun of a co-worker’s age or weight.

Other popular workplace joke topics included jokes based on accents, personal hygiene, and work behavior (like poor attendance, asking the wrong questions, or working too closely with the boss). While there wasn’t a big difference between what men and women found offensive in office humor, women were more likely to be offended at remarks targeting their physical characteristics, such as weight, scars or cleavage.

Often, office jokes intended to be humorous weren’t received that way, according to LeGrow. When workers are offended or threatened by jokes, it’s time for the company to step in and curtail the situation, as it then becomes a liability and a problem for morale and productivity.
So what’s behind this delicate balance of offensive vs. funny office humor, and how can workers enjoy the stress-relieving benefits of humor and laughter without the damaging affects of offensive jokes? It seems that it’s not humor itself that’s the problem, but the use of humor to convey messages that are in and of themselves offensive.

Here are some guidelines to remember when you’re telling jokes around the office:

- **Think of The Message:** Ask yourself what the point, or underlying message, of your joke is. Are you using humor to say something that you wouldn’t say to someone without the joke attached?

- **Know Your Audience:** If you’re teasing someone about a physical feature, a scar for example, do you know them well enough to know if they are comfortable enough with that feature to be matter-of-fact about it, or would mention of it be hurtful?

- **Leave Serious Topics Alone:** Don’t joke about topics that are controversial or painful to someone else, like death, physical disabilities, sexual harassment or racial inequalities (or race in general). Just don’t do it.

- **Be Careful of Politics:** While a surprising number of people make political jokes, it’s very important to know your audience, and avoid making political jokes that would offend someone of a different ideology if they’re part of the group. Something that sounds hilarious when Jon Stewart says it might sound crass coming from someone else.

- **When In Doubt, Leave It Out:** If you’re not sure how a joke will be received, it’s best not to tell it. Some people say that society is too “politically correct” or that people offended by certain jokes are “too sensitive”, but it’s about respecting the people around you. Nobody wants to be made the butt of jokes, and it’s best to joke about a neutral topic.

- **Emulate Seinfeld, Not The Office:** Reruns of Seinfeld, or any of his stand-up routines, provide perfect examples of (mostly) inoffensive but hilarious comedy. Everyone can relate to these jokes because they generally target human nature, the quirks of society, and don’t single out groups based on features like race, sex or other features.

Seinfeld makes us laugh at ourselves, and not at the expense of others. Steve Carell’s character on *The Office*, however, gives perfect examples of what not to do. From belittling people, to constantly adding sexual innuendo by saying, “That’s what she said!” to singling out people based on weight, sex, race and other offensive features, “Michael” is hilarious because he constantly does exactly what you shouldn’t do!

When dealing with people who use workplace humor offensively or aggressively, use assertive communication to stand up for yourself or others; or change the subject and joke about other (safer) topics.

Your co-workers should appreciate it, and you’ll be creating a more friendly, comfortable (but still fun) work environment.

For more information on this article visit [http://stress.about.com/od/workplacetension/a/officewhatnot.htm](http://stress.about.com/od/workplacetension/a/officewhatnot.htm)
EASA is excited to launch its new Training, Conflict and Organisational Consulting Department ‘CORP Workplace Solutions’.

Corp was created to meet the growing demand for a dedicated area specialising in advice and support to workplaces about a range of common challenges. We wanted to be able to dedicate an area of business for employees to explore their own development and organisations to develop and obtain support to grow their employees.

CORP aims to assist workplaces in the following areas:

- **Skill based training** - customised to suit your needs
- **Tool box sessions**
- **HR Consulting** - such as position reviews and specialised recruitment
- **Public workshops**
- **Mediation**
- **Conflict Coaching**
- **Resolving Workplace Conflict**
- **Individual and Team Performance Management**
- **Management and Executive Coaching**
- **Team Performance Initiatives**
- **Workplace Assessments**
- **Group Facilitations and much more**

“People are our resource” - we agree. Invest in your resources and reap the benefit for your organisation. Invest in yourself and look forward to guiding yourself into your own fulfilling future.

Contact us to discuss your Workplace needs:

P: (08) 8941 5661
E: corp@corp.org.au
W: www.corp.org.au

Turn over leaf to see CORP’s upcoming Public Workshops in Darwin and Alice Springs. Training is also available in Katherine. More details on the website.
Public Workshop Calendar
July-December 2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weds 9th July</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 22nd July</td>
<td>Mindfulness and Managing Stress</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 31st July</td>
<td>Motivational Interviewing</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 12th Aug</td>
<td>Critical Incident and Trauma Response for Managers</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 21st Aug</td>
<td>Getting your Message Across: Key Communication Skills</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weds 27th Aug</td>
<td>Key Counselling Skills</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<td>Thurs 4th Sept</td>
<td>Resilience and the Art of Bouncing Back</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<td>Tues 16th Sept</td>
<td>Get to the point: Communication for Managers</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 25th Sept</td>
<td>Mediation and Conflict Skills for Managers</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 2nd Oct</td>
<td>Appropriate Workplace Behaviours (Staff)</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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<td>Tues 14th Oct</td>
<td>Dealing with Difference-The Multi Cultural Workplace</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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<td>Weds 22nd Oct</td>
<td>Leading Change</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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<td>Tues 28th Oct</td>
<td>Motivational Interviewing</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 4th Nov</td>
<td>Critical Incident and Trauma Response for Managers</td>
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<td>Weds 12th Nov</td>
<td>Mindfulness and Managing Stress</td>
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<td>Thurs 20th Nov</td>
<td>Getting your Message Across: Key Communication Skills</td>
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<td>Tues 25th Nov</td>
<td>Key Counselling Skills</td>
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<td>Tues 2nd Dec</td>
<td>Get to the point: Communication for Managers</td>
<td>Full Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 11th Dec</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Half Day</td>
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All Public Workshops require a minimum of 6 participants in order to be confirmed. CORP has a 72 hour cancellation policy. Please contact us as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a workshop you are enrolled in, or charges may apply.