

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING FUN IN A HYBRID WORLD

AAB **PEOPLE**

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Hybrid working has fast become commonplace in the UK, almost overnight becoming the preferred way of working for many employees. It can provide flexibility to individuals and help organisations run with a higher degree of agility when implemented successfully.

However, through working with a wide range of organisations, we have identified a common concern emerging around how they can retain their culture when staff are working from home. This links to the recognised downside of hybrid working, which is the risk of there being reduced opportunity for meaningful interactions between colleagues.

To counter this, it means we need to be making a concerted effort to create opportunities where people can interact with one another and foster positive relationships. This is where the fun comes in! Employees who have a positive experience at work are more likely to display higher levels of productivity and stay with a company for longer. Therefore, allowing people to relax, let their guard down and have fun at work makes good business sense.

Firstly, make sure there are opportunities for fun...

- **Plan in Advance.** Hybrid working can mean it is hit and miss if certain groups interact in the office at any given point. One suggestion is to plan set days in advance for everyone to be in the workplace together. This can help ensure you don't lose out on those key relationships that help make your organisation run smoothly.
- **Revamp your dress policy.** Modern work practices don't necessarily mean formal dress is always required and even more traditional businesses are reconsidering what defines the work wardrobe. Trusting staff to express their personality whilst remaining professional can help encourage a more comfortable, relaxed and inclusive environment.
- **Flexible Working.** A strong, positive work-life balance can mean a lot to people and by creating an environment where people are able to fit their personal commitments around work, your employees are likely to feel happier and engage in culture building activities.
- **Social Committee.** Ask for volunteers across the organisation who are willing to help organise activities on behalf of the organisation. You may be able to provide some initial ideas, time during working hours to plan, or even a modest budget to get them started.

Then you just need to come up with the ideas...

After spending time at home, days working in the office which feel unnecessary, or spent without much interaction, are likely to have a negative impact on a positive culture. Here are some ideas for having fun in a hybrid world that our clients are implementing, which you may wish to consider for your own organisation:

- **Games.** Interactive activities to get everyone involved can be a great way to build on your team's rapport. Quizzes, bingo, and scavenger hunts are all good ways to encourage some friendly competition and can be adapted to also work online if people can't make it into the office.
- **Experiences.** Some small-scale activities, such as a coffee morning or bake sale, can still encourage a smile whilst being cost-effective. If you have the budget, more extravagant experiences can be used at key points throughout the year, for example bringing in a massage therapist for the day, or team escape rooms and murder mystery challenges.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions, or would like further support, please get in touch with Georgia Wilson by calling 0141 221 2984 or by email at georgia.wilson@aab.uk.

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- Get to know one another. Recent changes mean we perhaps don't know the people in our team as well as we should. Ask the team to provide some interesting or fun facts about themselves and share these each week with the rest of the company to help get the conversation started. To make this more interactive, you could keep these anonymous and ask people to guess who the mystery person may be.
- Summer events. Making the most of the good weather is a great way to bring the team together. Everyone appreciates a good BBQ or ice cream, so why not organise this for your employees? Big or small, this type of event can be dressed up or down to meet the needs of your organisation.
- TGIF. Monthly or quarterly, providing some structure to organise after work socialising can be extremely beneficial. This can range from the classic pizza party, to wine and cheese club, board games, movie night or even an action packed activity such as go-karting.

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