

The Secret Formula for Productivity

Values are integral to culture. If you look at the values adopted by various organizations, you will find customer focus, innovation, respect for individuals, commitment to quality etc. Very few organizations have included employee happiness as a value. In India, perhaps the socialistic overdose over the last few decades and the active presence of labor unions have sapped the will of corporate leaders and they look at employees only as resources and not as talent.

Many companies now have a plan R already in place i.e. Robots. Robots don't fall sick, don't need to be motivated, can work 24*7, don't have emotions and don't go on strike and are increasingly getting cheaper. To see the potential of people, a great example is the Art of Living.

Art of Living is a movement that is volunteer driven and has a presence in over 150 countries. There is no official count to the number of volunteers, but the number is in millions. Volunteers are of all types, those who volunteer one hour a month and also those who volunteer full-time.

A core value of Art of Living is "Happiness". The key focus is the growth of the individual. The name of the key trust of Art of Living in India is VVKI – Vyakti Vikas Kendra, India, meaning Center for Individual's Progress, very clearly articulating the mission of the organization.

The techniques taught and the wisdom shared at Art of Living all focus on ensuring that the individual is happy. One key ingredient for happiness is taking responsibility, for others & society. Without this piece one cannot be happy. So the happiness of others is integral to one's own happiness. Volunteers at Art of Living realize this very soon. They realize that to be happy, they need to take responsibility for society and the happiness of others.

When one is happy and stress-free and when one's mind is calm, the realization dawns that we are not independent, but interdependent. Realization dawns that we are so dependent on each other & on society. With this realization a sense of gratitude and sense of belonging develops. This propels volunteers to take more responsibility for people, society and the planet.

Organizations can learn from the experience of Art of Living. They can adopt happiness as a key value. This can be in conjunction with existing systems, processes and policies. When a person is stress-free and happy, they can truly be more productive. An empirical formula for productivity is: Productivity = Hard Skills x Soft Skills x Happiness.

The extreme situation of this formula is when people are driven to suicide because they are depressed. Another extreme example of this formula is when people fall extremely sick because of stress. There are enough instances of these happening in the workplace today.

The other side of the equation is an Art of Living Volunteer, who is so inspired to take responsibility & is always looking for ways to contribute and give, because he/she is stress-free and happy. A Happy



person who has limited Hard Skills and Soft Skills can also contribute a lot. She/he will have the will to learn new skills.



The most talented graduates are not able to be productive, if they are stressed and unhappy. There are enough examples of IIT and IIM graduates who are not productive. Many organizations see happiness as the individual's responsibility and not the organization's responsibility.

Wiser organizations are taking responsibility for the happiness of their employees and are benefitting from this. Increasingly employees are becoming customers to organizations; they have a choice where to work. They will choose to work at a place where the organization also takes interest and supports their happiness.

(Source, Bharat Iyer, <https://tinyurl.com/y84t7oo7>)