JOBS/CAREERS

Are we having fun yet?

By Sheryl Silver, Career Source

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Are you a supervisor or manager looking for
a way to boest productivity in your department? Management consultant Mat
Weinstein, author of the book 'Managing to
Have Fun,' would suggest you find ways to
inject a big dose of fun into your work environment, Weinstein, founder of Playfair Inc. in
Berkeley, California, contends that introducing
more fun into a work setting can benefit the
bottom line by boosting employee morale, loyulty, and productivity.

'What keeps people motivated, in large

nity, and productivity.

"What keeps neople metivated, in large part, is a nurturing environment," says Weinstein. Before we ask employees to deliver service with a smile, we first have to ask ourselves. Are we giving them something to smile about?

about?"
Weinstein contends that employee who have more fun at work convey their enthusiasm to customers, creating better service and customers relationships, and more sales as a result. "People like to do business, with people who like to do business, he asserts.

Maren Donnalley, inside sales executive/general business for IBM's North America Sales Center in Atlanta, agrees. Donnalley, who has

injected fun into her sales environment with such activities as Grary Sock Day, Crary Hat Day, and a reent Ocho do Mayo Celebranch, says. T believe happy employees project their pob satisfaction on the telephone to customers. I see a direct correlation between the fun activities we do and the production and revenues that are subsequently produced."

The telephone company Sprint

curvius we as and the production and revenues that are subsequently produced.

The telecommunications company Sprint has firsthand experience with the bottom line benefits of fun too. 3,000 cmployees of Sprints Business Division participated in "National Fun at Work Day," an event sponsored by Weinstein's Playfair Inc. For the event, Sprint employees formed 12-25 person teams, each of which was given a disposable camera. Each team then had to pick 10-15 cliches from a list of 20, and create photographic representations of these phrases in just 90 minutes.

Commenting on this 'Photo Safari' activity, Margery Tippen, vice president of small business marketing for Spring Business, said its purpose was, "or renow our associates' commitment to the strength of teamwork, as well as the use of creativity to increase their productivity."

Have those beliefs produced measurable

Have those beliefs produced measurable results? Noting that the company has done a

number of team building exercises that incorporates and accourage fun. Bdith Eaquenari, public relations program manager for Sprind Basiness said, "Since implementing them, we have noticed that employee attention, retention, morals and most importantly, productivity, are up."

Weinstein believes reduced health care costs can also be a byproduct for companies whose employees have more fun at work. "Dr. Lee Berk at Lorna Linda California has done cutting edge research which has proven that spontaneous lymphocyte blastogenesis occurs during laughter and play," asys Weinstein. "That means that during itse of prolonged laughter, T cells, which are an important part of your immune system, are produced in much greater numbers." Happier employees, assets Weinstein, are likely to be healthier employees.

When asked if any of his clients have seen

Weinstein, are likely to be heatiner employe-ces.

When asked if any of his clients have se-laughter produce a measurable impact on their health expenditures, Weinstein pointed to an incident involving the Bank of America. "After the bank initiated a "Laugh a Day Challenge' to its Northern California employ-ces, the human resource department received

a complaint letter from an employee who felt the 'Challenge' was a wasto of employees' time and company resources, 'recounted Weinstein. The hank's vice president of compensation and benefits responded to the letter by writing. The monthly Bo Your Best Challenges are no jeke. They are specifically designed to help bank profitability by improving employee health, productivity, and morale...More and more health research now shows that laughter is one of the best stress releases, and stress is our Insteast-growing worker' compensation cost."

If you're not a supervisor or manager, can you be a catalyst for fun without getting yourself in trouble' Weinstein says 'yee,' and illustrates with the story of an employee who worked on the line at Morton Thiokol. The employee, says Weinstein, proposed various fun activities to his boss, making each a reward for meeting a specific production goal. Although the boss was initially skeptical. Weinstein says he ended up cooperating enthusiastically after secing each proposed incentive produce the desired result.

Sheryl Silver may be contacted by writing to her at Career Source, P.O. Box 65764, Washington, D.C. 200035-6744.

Leave policy pays off for ad firm own advertising agency in 1982, she vowed that ber employees would never have to go through ings, like anow, the anough to Buck & Pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the one Today, Pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the one Today, Pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the one Today, Pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the such a pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the such a pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a the Buck & Pulleyn, 48, is CEO and chairwoman of a titler, you have home. If you have a blary you decid how much time you'll need if you and exist you have a complained to the control of the con

By Carol Riciman, Tribune Media in the late 1970s, when Chris Pulleyn's two kids were youngsters, she sometimes had to miss work if one of them got sick.

"It wasn't that often, but for little things, like had cold and eer infections — you know, the who stayed home, says Pulleyn.

And what excuse did she give her employer?

"For a longer, serious illuss, I was upfront, but for smaller things, well, frankly, sometimes I would prevarients," said Pulleyn, who has been in advertising since 1966, "I would say I was sick, under the weather. I would sound pathete." I felt guilty about having to stay home with a sick, hild because my bosses were always so good to me, so understanding. Even though I mover left things undone at work, I felt guilg my real reason would have been an admission of weakness.

"But I hated to lie."

And that's why, when Pulleyn started her

Inc.
Pulleyn has a staff of 42, eight fewer employees than the minimum number of 50 that would make the agency subject that the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

make the agency supper that the locariat ramay and Medical Lawa Act.

But Palleyn's progressive personnel policy of letting employees decide how much time they need to be absent for such personal matters as a birth or illness, child care, elder care or a death far exceed any governmental regulations.

"Our philosophy is that families come first," she said. "After all, we require a great deal of our popels, especially in times of pressure, We save money by retaining good people and get

great work done because we understand about families.

All Buck & Pullern, ahe says, "If you're sich; you say hene. If your kind sick and you can; you stay home. If you had sick and you can; you stay home. If you have a baby, you decide how much time you'll need. If you have a baby, you decide how much time you'll need. If you have a death, you handle your work like a professional but you take care of your family responsibilities. Any you never feel you have boil on about it. Karen McGredy, an assistant account executive, is one of Pulleyn's happy employees. If he was not you would be not a same and the company when I was premiand with my son," said McGey, nother of two. Thut when Scott came early, I was teld to take as much time a I needed, no questions asked. I came back after six menths and was reminded that if I needed more time, I could have it."

Here's how other employees have benefited from the policy.

When Valerie Tyrrel's friend was dying of

ALDS, the desktop publisher took "two-to-three hour lunches every day so! could tend to him."

"Chris Lyons, creative supervisor, asked about the firm* paternity leave when his daughter was born. He was told to omne beek to wark when his wile was "trange crought to ge! to alone." He did.

"Lucy Tichards, office manager, took a two-day personal leave to help out with her grand-till when our efficie leaves have been supervised by the supervisor of the supervis

wy personal seave to help out with her grand-child.

*When copy editor Jennifer Potter Schwartz's father was dying, 'they allowed me a lot of time off without question or complaint.'
Though Pulleyn doesn't 'count the hours or days someone is gone,' she says the policy works because it's based on the nonor system. "Everyone wants it to work."
Occasionally, people have taken advantage, but not more than once. 'I'te like the immune system that rojects the foreign body,' Pulloya aid. "The few people who were irresponsible are gron."

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