

What makes employees whistle while they work



"I'm not sure if he's finding meaning and purpose in what he does here, or if it just beats the hell out of whatever he did in the forest."

There's nothing better than a happy employee. One who comes to work each day with unbridled alacrity, ready to take on the challenges with that all-too-often elusive good attitude, wearing a smile. Not that all employees must have a lobe-to-lobe blissful grin all day, but just a feeling that your workplace provides a sense of satisfaction.

Here are things that all workers seek in a workplace, and how those things rate on the "happy" meter:

★☆☆☆☆ **Money.** Yep. It's important. Employees not only need it and want it; they want more of it incrementally. That is, they want raises. So, why only one star? Because it's just a weekly dollop of grease that keeps their wheels turning. It's not a true cause of happiness. Remember the last time you got a raise—how long did the thrill last? A week? There's got to be a lot more to a workplace to excite an employee.

★★☆☆☆ **More control over their time.** An organization with a liberal policy of telecommuting and flex time can certainly make an employee's head swoon with glee. An employee who puts their time in on their own terms (such as dabbling with their tasks between household chores, or leaving the office two hours early) can indeed be happier. Two stars for this one because the cheer isn't really brought into the workplace. It's somewhere else.

★★★☆☆ **Praise and recognition.** Like money, it's life-sustaining. Timely, deserved praise such as thank-yous, pats on the back and awards are prime sources of happiness. They really make a person feel worthy and wanted. Heap it on sincerely, fairly and judiciously. Just don't overdo it or underdo it. Three stars.

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Sense of belonging. This is the fuzzy feeling employees get not only when they're praised, recognized and appreciated, but when they really understand how their work fits into the company mission. But there's more to it. They must have complete buy-in to the company mission and have a passion for the products or services produced. When this is reached, they feel they belong there. Four stars.

★★★★★ **Camaraderie.** Liking the people you work with is the holy grail of workplace joy. Employees are people and people are social, so it makes sense that when they strike up friendships at work, the magic begins. But be aware that this doesn't last forever. Employees come and go, and the faces as well as the dynamics change. Enjoy it while you have it.