



CHIEF HAPPINESS OFFICER



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Expemo code:
1CCI-21L8-5KL5



1

Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. How important do you think it is for people to be happy with their work? Why?
2. What makes you happy with your work, or has made you happy previously?
3. What makes you unhappy with your work, or has made you unhappy previously?





2 Finding vocabulary

Find vocabulary in the article on page three which has the same meaning as the following definitions.

1. _____ a feeling of great excitement mixed with happiness (n, para. A)
2. _____ being full of energy and happiness (adj., para. A)
3. _____ the senior executives in a particular company (n, para. B)
4. _____ a person or group of people who represent a group of people and speak on their behalf (n, para. B)
5. _____ being skilled at something, particularly when it's challenging (adj., para. B)
6. _____ have a low-level argument about something that isn't especially important (v, para. C)
7. _____ not feeling connected to or interested in something (adj., para. D)
8. _____ being successful and happy (adj., para. D)

3 Skimming for gist

Match the titles 1 - 6 to paragraphs A - D. You will not need all of the titles.

1. Do you need a Chief Happiness Officer?
2. How do you measure employee happiness?
3. Who was the first Chief Happiness Officer?
4. What does a Chief Happiness Officer do?
5. What challenges does a Chief Happiness Officer face?
6. Why have a Chief Happiness Officer?





Don't worry, be happy

The role of Chief Happiness Officer

A. _____

The American poet and novelist, James Oppenheim, is quoted as saying 'The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance, the wise grows it under his feet.' A high value has always been put on finding reasons for elation in the everyday and in what we do, but many people would connect the feeling to what happens when they're not at work. Yet, as work occupies 30% of our waking hours as adults, shouldn't we be as exuberant as possible during this time? It seems a lot of people would think so. In recent research, 80% of people were found to seek information about employee wellbeing in a company when deciding whether or not to accept a job offer. 20% of people look for other work purely because they're not happy where they are, ignoring more concrete factors such as low pay and conflict. So is having someone who's tasked with keeping employees happy a good move?

B. _____

Well-known companies such as Google, Amazon and Airbnb would say an emphatic yes. The role of Chief Happiness Officer (CHO) now sits amongst other C-suite positions in management floors around the world. It would be wrong to think that this is a Human Resources professional with a more endearing title. A good CHO needs to form a bond with the employees and be seen as acting on their behalf. While Human Resources deal with many of the elements that affect employees' experience of a workplace, such as salary, holiday entitlement and promotions, they are fundamentally the mouthpiece of senior management. It's understandable then that there may be a degree of reluctance on the part of workers to share their thoughts too openly. A CHO needs to break through that barrier and be trusted with confidentiality and channel feedback into action which will actively improve the working environment for all. Organising management training to improve conflict resolution, communication skills and stress management are also aspects of a CHO's job description. They'll also need to be adept at forming one-on-one relationships with staff to implement personal happiness strategies.

C. _____

The latter is essential as a skilled CHO will need to gain and earn employees' trust. Encouraging them to share information, which may sometimes be of a personal nature, is no mean feat. There will be numerous ways a CHO has of getting feedback on the experience that employees are having though, and this is just one of them. Anonymous feedback will also be a tool allowing CHOs to compare levels of happiness within departments, teams and throughout the company. Observing employee's actions are important too as, when there is discontent in the workplace, it tends to manifest itself fairly clearly. Late arrivals and early departures, bickering, and the general demeanour of employees as they carry out their work are all aspects to watch which may say much more than individuals will. Turnover is another way that employees vote with their feet on levels of contentment with a company.

D. _____

Creating genuine satisfaction in the workplace is more than just paying people on time and giving them free doughnuts on Fridays. Workers need to feel genuinely part of a company and as though their ideas will be respected and used, potentially changing the way a company operates. Happy employees will be loyal, hard-working and engaged more fully in their work, compared to those who feel disengaged and as though any feedback they give is like water off a duck's back. For a company to truly be triumphant, it needs all of its workers on board, not just a charismatic CEO. If business owners don't look after their workers' happiness, they will desert you for someone who does.

Sources: revisesociology.com, business.com, managers.org.uk, theguardian.com



4 Reading comprehension: Part 1

Find which paragraphs A - D the following information can be found in.

1. Behaviour that may demonstrate discontentment amongst employees. _____
2. A statistic regarding how many people attempt to find information about the potential enjoyment of working for a future employer. _____
3. Possible responsibilities of an HR Officer. _____
4. The potential consequences of not being concerned with your employee's happiness. _____
5. The relationship a Chief Happiness Officer needs to create with employees. _____
6. A reason why one in five people may search for other work opportunities. _____
7. A reason why people are less likely to be transparent with HR employees. _____

5 Reading comprehension: Part 2

In your own words, explain the meaning of the words in bold in each of the following sentences.

1. Encouraging them to share information, which may sometimes be of a personal nature, is **no mean feat**. (paragraph C)

2. Turnover is another way that employees **vote with their feet** on levels of contentment with a company. (paragraph C)

3. Happy employees will be loyal, hard-working and engaged more fully in their work, compared to those who feel disengaged and as though any feedback they give is like **water off a duck's back**. (paragraph D)



6 Focus on vocabulary

Part A: Match the vocabulary to the definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>a</u> pproachable (adj.) | a. easy to talk to and friendly |
| 2. <u>p</u> roactive (adj.) | b. not believing or trusting in a claim made by someone |
| 3. <u>i</u> nitiate (v) | c. very obvious and doesn't need pointing out or explaining |
| 4. <u>g</u> rumble (v) | d. not willing to share information |
| 5. self- <u>e</u> vident (adj.) | e. start a process or an action |
| 6. <u>r</u> etacent (adj.) | f. openly expressing emotions in a way that isn't appropriate or needed |
| 7. touchy- <u>f</u> eely (adj.) | g. taking action rather than waiting for something to happen or for someone else to do something |
| 8. <u>s</u> ceptical (adj.) | h. complain about relatively unimportant things without a view to resolve any problems |

Part B: In pairs, discuss the following questions focusing on the words in bold.

1. What are you doing if you **hold management to account**?

2. If you **can't get around** a fact, what does it mean?

3. If you're **banging your head against a brick wall**, what are you doing?

4. If something isn't **on your radar**, what does it mean?

5. If someone **gives you the side-eye**, what are they doing?

6. If you **fall back on** a skill, what are you doing?

7. If someone is **pulling your leg**, what are they doing?



7 Listening for gist

Listen to each of the speakers and decide which of the following jobs each of them do. You will not need all of the jobs.



1. Chief Financial Officer _____
2. Chief Information Officer _____
3. Chief Executive Officer _____
4. Chief Marketing Officer _____
5. Chief Security Officer _____
6. Chief Happiness Officer _____





8

Listening comprehension

Complete the table by putting a tick in the correct box to answer the questions.

Who ...	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3
A) used to provide therapy for young people?			
B) hired someone who used to be a medical professional?			
C) believes that management needs to be able to justify their actions?			
D) thought the role of CHO wasn't real when they first heard it?			
E) feels caught between different groups of people with different priorities?			
F) thinks that people's home lives were generally worse a few generations ago?			
G) started the company that they work for?			
H) has proof that employing a CHO was beneficial to the company?			



9

Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think is meant by the quote, 'The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance, the wise grows it under his feet' from the article?
2. Do you think the idea of a Chief Happiness Officer is a good one? Why/Why not?
3. Do you think the happiness of employees is the responsibility of a company? Why/Why not?
4. What do you think a company can do to increase levels of happiness for employees?

10

Extended activity/Homework

Read the question.

The idea that a company should concern itself with the happiness of its employees is a good example of modern culture overstepping any kind of sense.

A company provides a job, a safe work environment and pay and that is the limit of what can be asked. Individuals can be only responsible for their own happiness. Some of the most unhappy people in the world are those who have been provided with everything they could possibly want. Employees are adults, not spoiled children.

To what extent do you agree with the above statement?

You should:

- Write at least 250 words.
- Check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.