



Reprinted from the December 2012/January 2013 issue of BIC

Don't worry, be happy ...

"Many of us remember that "Don't Worry, Be Happy" energetic Bobby McFerrin tune.

Well, it appears "happiness in the workplace" is becoming an emerging trend for research, management and discussion. Nic Marks, a British economist who has worked on happiness and well-being initiatives for the British government, has created a survey titled "Happiness at Work" in conjunction with Delivering Happiness at Work — a consultancy co-founded by Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh. Hsieh is also author of the 2010 bestseller "Delivering Happiness," in which he talks about how he became interested in happiness and how it can be enhanced in the workplace.

The survey thus far has been completed by 11,000 users in more than 90 countries. The research points out happiness is a serious business and does not have to come at the sake of profits or productivity. The consultancy goes on to posit happier employees are better employees. They are more motivated and productive, less likely to be sick or leave the organization, and are better at relationships.

Susan Goldstein, author of "Stay Happy at Work, or Move On — How to Know When the Time is Right," suggests you ask yourself several questions every few months because analyzing what you do for work on a regular basis is an ongoing reminder work is a place to grow, not a place to stagnate. Goldstein says to ask yourself, "Do I like what I do? What kind of contribution am I making?

Am I fulfilled? Is my work repetitive and uninspiring? Am I making a difference? Have my skills grown? Have my interests expanded? Where is the focus of my passion?" Responding to these questions can help you answer the key question, "Are you happy at work?"

According to the early findings of the "Happiness at Work" survey, you're more likely to be happy on the job if you:

- Work for a smaller company with fewer than 100 people. You're 25 percent more likely to be happy at work in a small company than one with more than 1,000 people.
- Supervise others. Managers/supervisors are 27 percent more likely to be happier at work than the managed.
- Work at a job that involves caregiving or direct service. Caregivers are 75 percent more likely to be happy than those working in sales.
- Work in a skilled trade. Skilled workers are 50 percent more likely to be happy than unskilled workers.
- Are not in your 40s. Older people are significantly happier at work, with the least happy being those in their 40s.

Since a study released early in October by www.tell-your-boss.com found nearly two-thirds of Americans are unhappy with their jobs, perhaps now is the time for your company's employees to spark some conversations about happiness at work by taking the 47-question survey at www.happinessatworksurvey.com. According to the firm, the survey is carefully designed using the latest well-being

research. The survey designers are experts in the field.

The survey takes 10 minutes to complete and includes questions about your job, colleagues and managers, workspace environment and your individual demeanor. After completion, you will receive a personalized report intended to help move you forward in the discussion of being happy at work.

James Key Lim, CEO of Delivering Happiness at Work, said, "Some consider happiness to be fluffy in the workplace." Lim goes on to cite an extensive body of research showing a happy work force can make a big difference; one large meta-analysis found happy employees have, on average, 31-percent higher productivity, their sales are 37-percent higher and their creativity is some three times higher than less happy workers.

The research notes top factors determining a person's happiness at work are whether they enjoy the actual tasks required, are able to focus on the things they do best and whether they are proud of their employer. Other factors that can impact happiness are relationships at work, the job's social impact, feeling in control of your work and of workplace decisions, and feeling like you're progressing and learning.

My personal philosophy — life's too short to be unhappy at work! Don't worry, be happy!

For more information on Dr. White's programs and publications, visit www.successimages.com or call (225) 769-2307. •