

# Stop Laughing and Get Back to Work

What do you do when you've always given your team members a turkey or a ham for the holidays, but they want a gift certificate?

Do you mumble under your breath, "You ungrateful little jerks"? Do you lament, "You're lucky to be getting anything?"

**OR...**Do you give them a gift certificate *plus* the turkey and ham?

To be precise: the turkey and the ham in the form of two members of the senior leadership team dressed as, you guessed it, a turkey and a pig while they handed out gift certificates!

## **Our Funny Client**

Our friends at [The Ohio Masonic Home](#) pulled off this feat recently to help their team celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday. Perhaps you are thinking that it's a bit silly and over the top. It is, but that is what makes it memorable.

Which is precisely why you should be doing the same in your organization!

But isn't work for, well . . . *work*?

Now you're saying to be a good leader we have to dress up like farm animals?

Slow down you killjoy.

While of course work is meant for getting things done and achieving goals, a culture of lightheartedness and fun helps you get that accomplished quicker and with a smile on your face.

In 2010, a 700-person experiment in Britain found that providing "happiness shocks" actually made participants happier and that they were in turn an average of 12% more productive as a result.

## **12% more productive . . .**

For the record, the happiness shocks did not come in the form of a stun gun, but rather watching a comedy clip or enjoying a snack and drink. (My apologies to those of you who were thrilled at the opportunity to zap certain team members.)

## **That's Crazy Talk!**

It's sounds crazy to think that something as silly as having fun at work could impact productivity, and ultimately an organization's success, right?

Yet each year, when Fortune lists the "100 Best Companies to Work For", 81% of the best companies responded that they are working in a "fun environment." The statement used to measure this number is simply, "This is a fun place to

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work.” After a decade of research, they’ve found a very compelling statistic: in the companies that apply for the list but don’t make it, only 62% of people say they are having fun at work.

*This gap is one of the largest they have found in the survey.*

### **Beyond the Turkey and the Pig**

Our buddies at The Ohio Masonic Home are naturally funny. You can’t spend time with them and *not* laugh. But they also work hard. They’ve committed to making their organization a cool place to work. And that means laughing and having fun as a team.

What can you do to create the same in your organization?

- 1. Create a Tradition** - Something tells me this won’t be the last year that those turkey and pig costumes see the light of day in Ohio. Another organization, The Venetian in NJ, recently played host to a leadership academy that I facilitated. At 10 AM we were told we had to stop for a few minutes to observe their daily ritual: a music blaring, hands flying, dance routine in the rehab gym that involves residents and staff from all different departments. It’s hard not to have a smile on your face when the Justin Timberlake is booming and everyone around you is giggling.
- 2. Make it a Surprise** - While having fun at work should be a conscientious effort that’s not left to chance, it should also be spontaneous. Instead of planning the next employee event, why not surprise them? Surprise adds a whole other level of fun to any event! When I was an administrator, one year our Fun Committee (Yes! We actually had one of those!) planned an event that involved me dressing up like a gypsy and telling people’s fortunes. While people knew it was me with all the veils and coins on, they didn’t realize the secret contained within my crystal ball that was covered with a sheet. I’d ask my customer, a resident or staff member to ask me a question and they would summon my crystal ball to answer it. After rubbing the ball under the sheet a few times I would dramatically whip it off to reveal the head of my buddy, Ron Bucci, who at the time was the Administrator of our Independent Living community. The shock and laughter that followed was just incredible! Like women wearing painful high heels however, laughter does come at a price: poor Ron, with his head stuck in a glass bowl, was barely able to breath for hours!

### **Creating a Desirable Culture**

Drive and The Ohio Masonic Home are on the same page when it comes to creating a culture where people look forward to coming to work! Here’s what Scott Buchanan, their (very funny) CEO, has to say about working with DRIVE:

*“Drive has given us a roadmap to successfully implement changes to our organizational culture. From the staff sessions we have a better understanding of their needs and where we can focus our resources to attract the best employees possible. Since engaging with Drive our company has seen a significant change in the engagement of our staff and the grasp of the sustainable change we are going through.”*

Want to find out how we can help you build a culture where people want to come to work and don’t leave? [Pop us an email!](#)

*This article was written by President, Denise Boudreau-Scott.*

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