

Dr. Judit Szilágyi – Tamás Schieszler:

## Happiness as a competitive advantage

(summary)

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**We spend most of our time at our workplace, thus it is crucial how we feel during these 8-10-many hours.**

- Due to increasing workforce shortage, typically the employees are the ones that get to evaluate why they should work at a specific employer.
- In general happiness is not a part of corporate culture yet, but it could be a significant advantage.

According to the now obsolete, generally accepted paradigm of the 20<sup>th</sup> century happiness is a private matter and it depends on high performance and successful work.

- The exact opposite can be true as well, **happy employees are more efficient, creative and engaged than those who absolutely do not feel good at the workplace.**
- Numerous studies show that if we are well, some otherwise inactive brain functions start working, for example there is a **direct correlation between personal well-being or level of trust and innovation or business success, which can directly influence revenue.**
- We can regard happiness of employees as pure CSR, contributing to a **formation of a healthier society** around us.

**More and more companies prefer agile culture.**

- The 20<sup>th</sup> century method, in which the leader delegates and determines what employees should do, simply doesn't work everywhere anymore.
- The principle where empowered teams have aligned goals and make decisions independently about how to reach them, is more suitable to today's complex challenges. **This approach works well in teams where the level of personal well-being is high.**

**Handle humans humanly**, but what does it look like in practice?

- Happiness = personal well-being = we are satisfied with what we are doing, we realize our full potential in our responsibilities, we see the meaning of our work, we have positive feelings towards our environments and we have good relationships with our colleagues.
- **On the one hand, it's crucial how the processes are built, how the whole system works together, on the other hand the human element, the level of trust and the relationship between coworkers have the same importance.**
- *Martin E.P. Seligman*, the father of positive psychology created the **PERMA** model that can be perfectly translated into the context of work, and we can use it as a checklist.
  - The suitable office environment, ergonomic chairs, fruit days contribute to health and **positive emotions** that are the foundation of personal well-being. But happiness requires a lot more.
  - Possibility of flow experience due to **engaging** work
  - **Relationships** are indispensable, feedback culture is key
  - It is crucial for the employees to realize the **meaning** of their work, to see their role in the big picture.
  - The company's successes must be transparent. Employees must know their growth opportunities and set their own goals according to them and realize their own **accomplishments.**

**Companies must make active effort in attracting and retaining employees**, this is typically restricted to a material level today. This only satisfies one criterion from the above.

- Trendy buzzwords like table football, bike storage, relaxation room with a PlayStation, coconut milk and olive oil, have become common in the competition for the workforce.
- **Candidate and Employee Experience** are more and more in focus, the commonly used toolkit only scratches the surface, but it's a great starting point.
- **Mindfulness** is becoming more and more well-known, sometimes even as corporate trainings
- But only few companies start **conversations about happiness and personal well-being**.

#### It is a two-way street!

- **Employees need to realize their personal responsibility**, that creating well-being is in their own circle of influence, they need to work on themselves to be happier.
- Simultaneously, **company operations need to be reconsidered and reconstructed, if needed**. Leaders need to represent the new values credibly: communicate trust, inspire collaboration of systems and create space for common growth.

Let happiness be part of corporate culture, as culture is a competitive advantage that is impossible to copy. We need to keep it in mind that culture is a sensitive, not easily manageable corporate layer, it can't be changed in the matter of days, it can only be developed gradually.



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