



KINDNESS IN THE WORKPLACE



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Expemo code:

1F7P-G1LC-C17

1

Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. When was the last time someone said something positive to you about your work? What was it about?
2. When was the last time you said something positive to someone about their work? What did you say?
3. How important do you think it is to say kind things to others at work? Why?

2

Finding vocabulary

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

1. _____ → able to change according to the needs of a particular situation (adj., para. A)
2. _____ → an act of communication with someone (n, para. B)
3. _____ → a spoken or written communication that says how good someone is at something (n, para. B)
4. _____ → being of less importance or smaller than other things (adj., para B)
5. _____ → connect two or more things together in a way that is very strong (v, para. B)
6. _____ → an act of giving gifts, help or time to someone to support them (n, para. C)
7. _____ → in a way that does not waste time, money or energy (adv., para. C)



3 Reading for gist

Match the titles to paragraphs A-C. There are more titles than paragraphs.

1. Positive companies profit
2. The power of remote work
3. The missing element
4. Kindness and mental health
5. How to be kind
6. The individual need for kindness

The power of the positive

The power of the positive

A. _____

The shift in the way we work has been easy to see since the pandemic. There has been a rise around the world of people working remotely, whether it's full-time or part-time. The work day for many people will involve periods of working on their own from their room, kitchen or home office, mixed with online meetings. It's likely that they will also be thinking about picking up their children from school, making meals, and doing various other chores. While there's little doubt that there are a lot of advantages to this flexible way of working, it does mean that we lose something which the traditional Monday to Friday office jobs did provide us with: the chance to be kind to each other.

B. _____

Being with the same people in the same building all day, there were many opportunities for those smaller interactions. Whether it was waiting for the kettle to boil, or sharing the photocopier, or even just walking out of a meeting together, there was a chance to ask about someone's life, or say how well someone looked, or compliment them on a presentation that they did really well. Despite being minor communications, they are really important to us as human beings. Studies have shown that they make us feel valued and lead to reducing the risk of us becoming overtired, increase our feeling of well-being, and make us work more effectively. Saying something nice about someone makes you think about them. In turn, this makes you feel more connected to them. It is that connection that helps us to feel bonded to those people around us and much happier as individuals.

C. _____

Yet it isn't just individuals that feel the positive effects of a compliment. A study of over 3,500 businesses employing over 50,000 staff showed that a culture of generosity helped the company too. Companies where kind acts were much more common saw workers stay with the company for longer periods of time, work harder and more efficiently. All of this made the company produce more and save money when compared to other businesses where employees were less likely to connect with their colleagues. So everybody wins when positive things are said. So the next time you're waiting for an online meeting to start and other people are sitting there quietly, try saying something nice about someone. You might just make someone's day!

Sources: hbr.org, hrmorning.com



4

Reading comprehension

Read the following statements and decide if they are the same as the opinions given in the article. If it is the same, write Given (G). If the opinion is not there, write Not Given (NG).

1. Mixing our private and professional lives is more common now than it used to be. _____
2. It's harder to concentrate at home than in the office. _____
3. Making hot drinks together allowed for informal interactions which are actually very meaningful.

4. We used to waste more time in offices than we do working remotely. _____
5. People used to dress better in offices than they do at home now. _____
6. Small, positive interactions in the workday make us work better. _____
7. Your relationships at work can become more important than your family relationships.

8. Studies have shown that companies benefit financially from encouraging a positive work environment. _____



**5 Focus on vocabulary****Part A: Match the vocabulary to the definitions.**

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>juggle</u> (v) | a. give or be a good example of something |
| 2. <u>caring</u> (adj.) | b. making you feel socially uncomfortable |
| 3. <u>exemplify</u> (v) | c. the state of being in charge of and directing other people |
| 4. <u>status</u> (n) | d. being kind, helpful and having an interest in how other people feel |
| 5. <u>leadership</u> (n) | e. the social or professional position of someone compared to others |
| 6. <u>awkward</u> (adj.) | f. a list of topics or situations to be discussed during a meeting |
| 7. <u>agenda</u> (n) | g. an amount of money that is to be used for a specific purpose |
| 8. <u>fund</u> (n) | h. do two or more tasks simultaneously |

Part B: Now complete the following sentences with a word connected to the Part A word in brackets.

1. Samantha, when we go to the conference, can I leave the new employees in your _____ please? If you can show them around and give them an idea of what to do, that would be wonderful! (caring)
2. The company manual includes some useful _____ of our various selling and marketing techniques. (exemplify)
3. While she had made some mistakes as a CEO, it didn't really affect her _____ within the company and she was highly-respected. (status)
4. They haven't found someone to replace the head of the department when he leaves yet, so we are likely to be _____ for a few months. (leadership)
5. The Head of Sales made a sex joke at dinner which was just wrong and not funny. Everyone just laughed _____ and someone quickly changed the subject. (awkward)
6. I know we're all surprised, but I think selling our company to the Americans was actually his hidden _____ all along. (agenda)
7. They are talking about _____ the Department for Business to invest more money in public services. (fund)



6

Listening for details

Listen to the interview about the importance of kindness in the workplace. Tick the questions that you hear.



1. Are there any other approaches companies can take to increase recognition and bring employees together?
2. What do you think it is that makes people unkind to each other?
3. How do you encourage connections when everyone is so physically far apart?
4. Do you think people have become less kind to each other during the digital age?
5. What advice would you give to employees who feel that their manager isn't kind?
6. As a business leader, what can you do to promote a culture of kindness in your company?

7

Listening comprehension

Listen to the interview and decide if the following opinions are Given (G) or Not Given (NG).

1. It's important to lead by example. _____
2. Leaders should only focus on the most obvious kind of behaviour. _____
3. People only really seek recognition from people they know personally. _____
4. Leaders should find a way to reward all members of their team. _____
5. It's important to build time for positive feedback into a meeting. _____
6. Giving positive feedback will come easily to most people. _____
7. Try to set aside part of your budget for buying gifts for particularly kind employees. _____
8. If people are given gifts for their work, try to make them personal and meaningful. _____

8

Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think of the culture in your workplace? Does it encourage employees to be kind to each other? How/Why not?
2. What do you think could be done to improve the culture in your workplace in this regard?
3. What is the relationship of senior management with the rest of the employees like at your workplace?
4. Do you think all employees in your workplace feel recognised and valued? Why/ Why not?



9

Extended activity/Homework

Write an email to a colleague that you currently work with or worked with in the past that you particularly thought was kind and helpful at work.

Consider the following questions:

- When did you first notice that they were kind and helpful?
- What did they do to make you notice them?
- What effect on you or other people do you think their actions had?
- Why do you think they are like this?
- What difference do you think they make to the workplace?

You should:

- Write at least 150 words
- Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

