

How to bring a playful mindset to work

Would you like to enjoy your work more? Set goals, reframe tasks, compete with yourself, look for fun and experiment to keep improving. Those who manage to bring playfulness to work tend to be more creative and enjoy better relationships with colleagues and clients.



March 4, 2021

While there's been a lot of talk regarding the added pressure of working from home during lockdowns, little has been said about how to release that stress and how to improve the work experience. In a study of 2,690 people in Spain and Latin America, [Mireia Las Heras](#) and Maria Barraza found that men and women who bring a playful attitude to work tend to be more creative and enjoy better relationships with colleagues and clients compared with those

who don't.

What does it mean to bring a playful attitude to work? It's about tapping into energy and enthusiasm for all that you do, being proactive and taking the initiative, and finding the fun even in monotonous tasks. Those who do so experience less stress, boredom and burnout, have fewer workplace conflicts, and are generally more motivated and satisfied in their work.

Interestingly, the study found this was truer of working fathers than it was for working mothers, though perhaps this is due to the fact that mothers still tend to assume more of the duties and chores related to the home and family life.

A playful attitude at work requires a positive, open mindset, able to reframe existing challenges in interesting new ways. Especially for younger generations of workers, being able to gamify tasks at work will help win their commitment.

Work and play

Here are four tips to achieve a playful mindset on the job:

1. **Set goals.** Make lists and continually look for new ways to be more effective and efficient, to do things better. Reframe old problems to find new solutions.
2. **Compete in every task.** You don't need to compete against others, you can compete against yourself, scoring points along the way. It's not about winning so that others lose; it's about playing cooperatively so that improvements help the team as a whole.
3. **Look for fun, even in monotonous chores.** Enjoy the process of accomplishing a task, perhaps through the relationships with colleagues that are created along the way. Giving your all, even when it's tiring, will help you carry on and make progress.
4. **Learn along the way to make better decisions.** Experiment. Trial and error is your ally. Keep an open mind to change your approach and innovate for continuous learning.

Adopting a playful attitude at work can allow you to enjoy your work more and, at the same time, reduce resistance to change to help you and your organization thrive.

MORE INFO

[Mireia Las Heras' website](#) includes research and resources, including gamified simulations.

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