

The importance of having fun in your business

Why *fun* is a much greater motivator than money

Contributed by Roland Hanekroot

Most of us business owners spend as much time with our staff as we spend with our spouses, and we certainly spend more money on them. So how can we make sure we get the greatest return from all that time and money we invest? How can we engage and motivate our staff, without blowing the budget?

The good news is that money has very little to do with it. You may be surprised to hear that the greatest motivator of people at work is a three letter word: fun. Fun is actually one of the key success factors for any business.

Research all over the world is clear, people are not always motivated by money, or a Rolex watch. Real motivation and engagement of people (staff) comes from something else entirely.

At this point, I imagine most of you would like to argue that this may be true in other industries, but in retail - it is all about the cash. Let me ask you this: what gets you out of bed every morning, what gets you excited?

The most fun you've ever had

Think back to a time when you had the most fun in your work, the most memorable, engaging, exciting fun days you've experienced. Was it the day you got paid or was it something else entirely?

- Was it the time you opened your shop?
- What about the day you and your staff worked together like troopers to get the store reorganised and ready for the launch of that new product range?
- Or maybe it was the day that you and your staff broke a sales record for the first time in months?

So what makes you think that your staff's experience is any different?

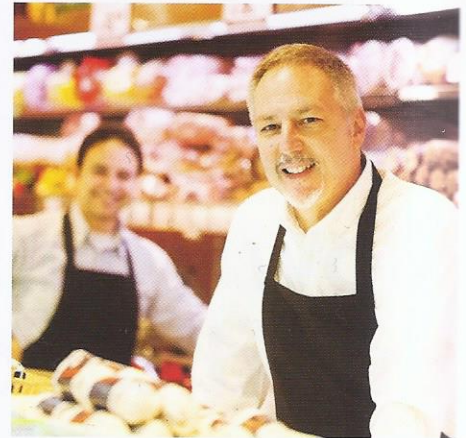
How much fun would you have in your business if:

- Customers return and drag their friends along with them
- Everyone in the business is proud of the product of the business
- People get to focus on things that are important to them
- There is a strong culture of giving back
- The business is actively engaged with its community
- The business is flexible enough to manage around the individual needs of the people
- We win new and exciting contracts and find new challenges
- We feel part of something bigger.

The steps

Here are some great steps you can take to increase the amount of fun you and your staff have at work:

1. Get absolute clarity about the purpose of your business, why it exists and why anybody else would care about that.
2. Be sure to share this purpose with your staff, and explain why it makes a difference to them.
3. Engage your staff in setting goals for your business.
4. Instigate regular planning sessions with your team to share the progress you are making towards achieving the goals.
5. A great idea is to start to think of business as a team sport, like soccer. Now if you are the



coach, what do you need to do to encourage your team to perform better and win?

6. Never forget that we are social animals first and foremost and we want to be part of groups and communities. Paradoxically, one of the most effective ways to engage your staff is to actively support a charity or community organisation. I don't mean to just send money; I'm talking about volunteering and getting involved hands on with a charity as a business. There are many studies showing the beneficial impact of this on staff engagement. ■

Making fun the key success factor in your business will not only change your life for the better, you will also make more money than you thought possible.

Roland Hanekroot is a business coach and mentor, founder of New Perspectives Business Coaching. He is also the author of the acclaimed "The Ten Truths for Business Owners" series of books. To find out more about Roland, please visit <http://newperspectives.com.au>