

5 Characteristics of A Positive Work Environment

By Michael Poh in Office



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Aside from the job scope itself, one factor that significantly influences how [employees](#) feel about work is the environment. By work environment, I mean **everything that forms part of employees' involvement with the work itself**, such as the relationship with co-workers and supervisors, organizational culture, room for personal [development](#), etc.

A positive [work](#) environment makes employees feel good about coming to work, and this provides the motivation to sustain them throughout the day.

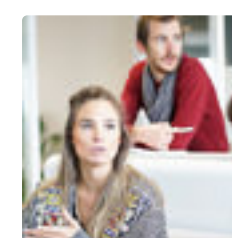
If you're looking for a new job, then I would say that assessing the work environment is a crucial step you shouldn't skip. After all, this is the place you might be working at in

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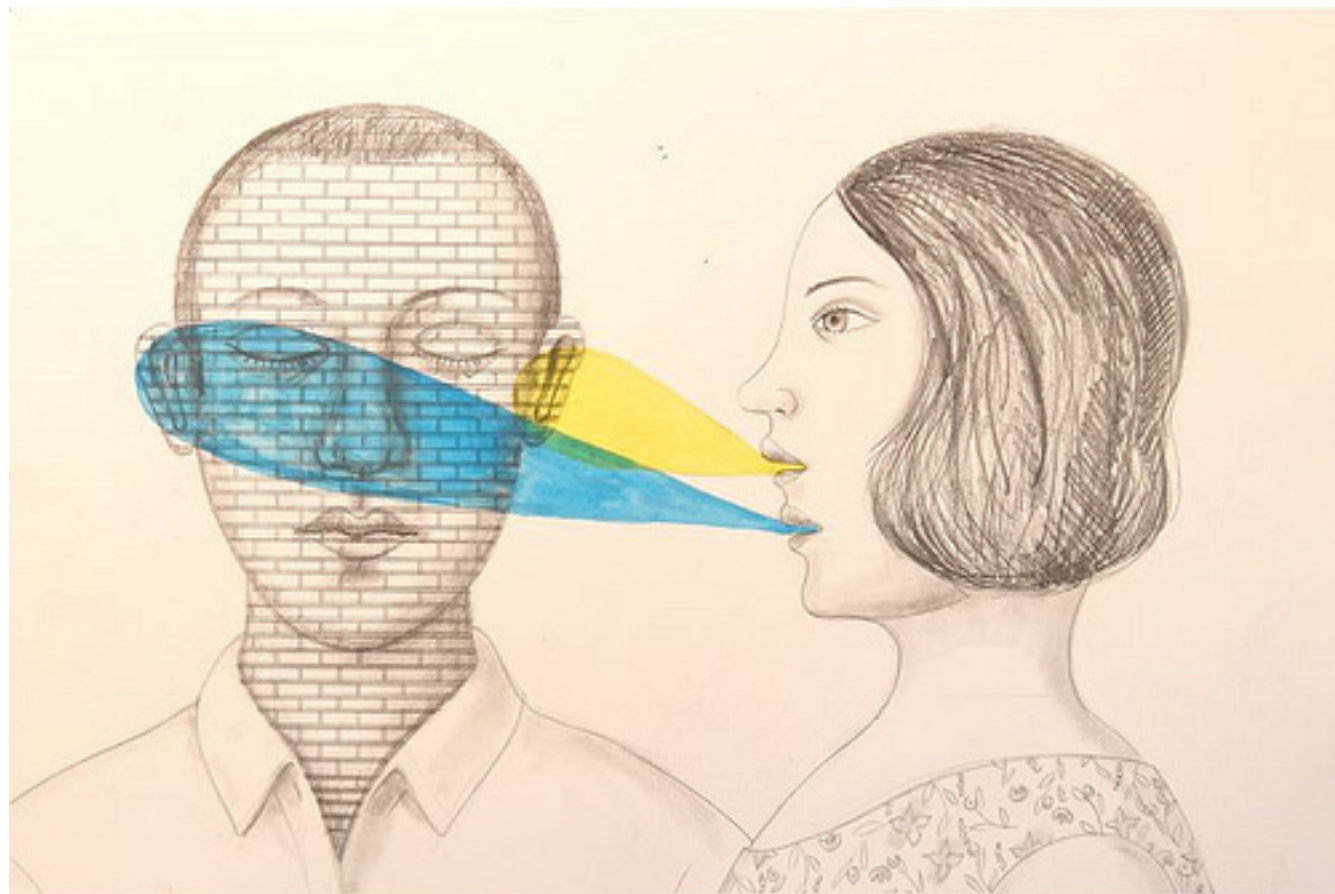
future and you wouldn't want to be dragging yourself to work every single morning!

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Due to the job variety available in the marketplace, this article is probably a little generic and may not apply to all types of jobs. However, as you shall see below, these qualities are much valued by employees and [employers](#) in most jobs. I would say that they are pretty universal in that sense, except in a few exceptional cases.

1. Transparent & Open Communication

In essence, a transparent and open form of communication addresses the employee's need to feel that what they have to say has [value](#). It is what makes employees feel that they belong in the organization. Work then becomes meaningful because the employees know that what they contribute affects the organization that they are affiliated with.



(Image Source: [{studiobeerhorst}-bbmarie](#))

It is thus essential for staff to **discuss the organization's philosophy, mission and values, from time to time during retreats, [meetings](#)**, etc to ensure that everyone knows what they're working for other than their paychecks. Having open discussions get people involved and allow them to share their views and perspectives on how to achieve [company](#) goals. After which, the management side will give their own perspectives on how to fulfill the organization's mission.



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Give and Take

Such two-way open [communication](#) will eventually break down the hurdles present in hierarchical or bureaucratic organizations. At the end of it all, it promotes trust in day-to-day interactions between co-workers, as well as between subordinates and supervisors.

Everyone becomes more united with the organization's mission in their [mind](#). There is mutual respect among all employees, regardless of their official statuses.

This is when employees **will not be afraid to suggest ideas to** [improve](#) the work processes, thus benefiting everyone in the organization in return.

2. Work-Life Balance

There has to be some sort of balance between work and personal life. In general, having that sense of balance will improve job satisfaction among employees because they will feel that they're not overlooking the other areas of their lives that are, if not more, important to them than work.

The Constant Juggle

When employees **fulfill their various needs and** [goals](#) in life, such as those of [family](#), friends, spiritual pursuits, self-growth, etc, they can then feel more confident about themselves and perform their best at work. Apart from that, employees that are exposed to more experiences in life outside of work can use what they've gained and apply that to their work.

In other words, work-life balance can **promote [creativity](#) and out-of-the-box thinking**.

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A Nod from the Top

‘Good’ employees or workers are often defined as those who put in loads of effort and sacrificed their [personal](#) time in order to perform well in their work. Some employees are simply workaholics who would rather neglect other aspects of their life for work.

Managers have a responsibility to [show](#) that this is not right, by rewarding **employees who maintain good work-life balance [habits](#) (e.g. leave work on time) and can still perform well**.

In this case, the organization may adopt a firm stance on work-life balance by educating employees on the benefits of having such balance in their lives or even include it under their mission statement.

Related post: [How Freelance Designers can find Balance in their Work Life](#).

3. Training & Development-Focused

In a time when change is more rampant than ever before, it is necessary for organizations to be keep abreast with the changes and train their employees accordingly. For instance, technology is evolving so rapidly that what organizations commonly used ten years ago could be made obsolete today (e.g. Zip drives, dial-up modems, etc).

Adapting to change is never more crucial in this era because **those who don’t, get replaced**. This applies to both the individual and the organization itself.

A training and development-focused organization has a clear roadmap for training their employees to sustain and enhance the productivity of the organization as a whole. Essentially speaking, there are two kinds of skills that can be developed: hard skills and [soft](#) skills.

- **Hard skills:** impact work productivity directly e.g. knowledge of a new database management system
- **Soft skills:** interpersonal skills which could affect the morale of the organization.

A positive work environment would have routine trainings to [improve efficiency](#) and instill positive attitudes among employees.

4. Recognition for Hard Work

Rewards are necessary to encourage certain [behaviors](#) in persons. This is known as **positive reinforcement** under operant conditioning in the field of psychology. It is used in organizational behavior [management](#) as well: by rewarding employees who put in effort for their work, this will promote similar behaviors in the future.

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Shower Praises

A reward here doesn't have to be monetary in nature; sometimes even a **simple verbal recognition** by the supervisor is all that is necessary to spur the employees' [motivation](#).

When hard work is appropriately rewarded and duly recognized by the management, **employees will naturally feel valued by the organization for what they put in.** Such mentality is healthy for the organization because employees will be willing to go the extra mile without worrying about not getting anything in return.

Acknowledging their Presence

Apart from having a [system](#) of monetary rewards in place to award those who perform at work, **daily interactions can also be a good means of recognizing efforts.** It's free too! Managers ought to verbalize their appreciations for simple little things when employees go the extra mile. However, these should be made specific and personal for the [employee](#) to feel that what they do are being taken seriously and appreciated.

5. Strong Team Spirit

As social beings, we naturally seek support from our peers and seek to belong to a group. Come tough times, the team should come together to deal with whatever problems are out there. This is where a **sense of unity** is evoked in the team and employees will no longer just feel that they're working for themselves. They are now working towards something bigger than themselves, and as a team.



(Image Source: [marie-ll](#))

Instilling a [strong](#) team spirit is not easy because it **involves the acceptance and tolerance of differences in perspectives and working [styles](#)** between teammates. There is a need for them to see that they're working towards a common [goal](#) before they can look beyond the differences.

Band of Bros

Have team-bonding activities that let the team focus on the positive sides of each member and negate the negative ones. Celebrate events like birthdays for each member of your team to show the exclusivity. Deal with issues together. **Basically, whatever it is that you do, do it as a team.**

One pitfall to look out for when team spirit is high is the [groupthink](#) phenomenon. This psychological phenomenon occurs when the group cohesiveness gets so strong that judgments or [decision-making](#) get clouded.

Think about it, **when team spirit is strong, members will be inclined to [support](#) whatever decision made as a team** without raising any valid objections. The solution is to have a member playing the role of the Devil's Advocate during discussions.

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