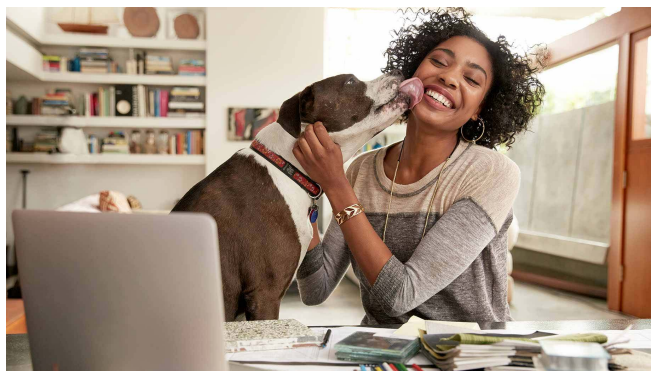




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How to Help Employees Look Forward to Mondays

BY JANE SMITH



STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Employee wellbeing dips on Mondays
- Weekends feel good because of flexibility, purpose and development
- Bring these elements to the workplace to improve wellbeing and performance

It's Sunday night.

You're curled up on the couch, looking for a new Netflix series to start, but you just keep scrolling and scrolling because your stomach is in knots.

Part of you wants to open your work email and get ahead of the deluge, and part of you wants to stay up super late watching TV to put off the inevitable: Monday.

Sound familiar?

Even if you love your job now, most of us have been there before. And if you lead people, it's likely that some of your teams feel like this at the end of every weekend. Maybe you do too.

When employees head into Monday with a sense of dread, it affects their engagement and performance, and that stress also takes a toll on their wellbeing.

According to Gallup research, people's wellbeing peaks are weekends and holidays, and their valleys are Mondays.

Wellbeing doesn't just mean physical health. It's made up of five elements that work in harmony to make you thrive -- or struggle. The five elements are purpose, social, financial, community and physical.

Over time, lower wellbeing leads to more absenteeism, higher healthcare costs for the organization and higher turnover.

If there was a way to bring employee wellbeing levels on Monday up near where they are on the weekend, wouldn't you want to try?

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organization and higher turnover.

There may not be a magic solution that makes Monday morning feel like Friday afternoon, but we do have some employee-tested, leader-approved tips for making Mondays enjoyable on their own merit.

First, What Are the Factors That Make Weekends Great?

Not to state the obvious, but on the weekend, you have relative freedom of time and place.

You have a few obligations now and then, but for the most part you can go where you want, engage in activities that give you purpose and develop your interests.

Gallup research shows that flexibility, sense of purpose and opportunities for development are three of the biggest factors people -- especially millennials -- look for when choosing a workplace.

And people *are* choosing their workplace these days. It's a buyer's market because of low unemployment rates nationwide. If employees can find those perks elsewhere, they will.

How to Offer Flexibility That People Value

Employees want flexibility of both time and place as the boundaries between job and life become more blurry.

If your company has a policy that promotes the most requested forms of flexibility -- remote working and flextime -- make sure you model them for the people you lead.

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Work from home or a coffee shop occasionally. Demonstrate that it's OK to leave early to watch your kid's game and then catch up later in the evening.

If your company doesn't offer much or any flexibility, communicate with your teams to let them know you value them as people and will work with them to make individual requests possible. Create a culture where they're not afraid to ask.

You can also offer flexibility in creative ways:

- Institute shorter summer Fridays.
- Work from the coffee shop as a team.
- Encourage breaks.
- Limit meetings on the calendar.
- Encourage employees to share personal interests in the workplace.

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Who knows ... the success you see in rising engagement numbers may inspire others in the company to follow your lead.

How to Increase Sense of Purpose

People want to work toward a common cause they can be proud of. On the weekends, that often manifests in the activities you do with your spouse, kids or friends.

Work can offer just as much of a sense of purpose, though, and here are some ideas to make that a reality for your people:

- Share the company mission and values.
- Let them see the bigger picture of the project.
- Get their input on processes.
- Encourage them to get involved in professional goal setting.
- Talk to them about their personal goals and weave those goals into their work assignments.

When your people feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves *and* feel like they're reaching their own aspirations through their work, they'll show up on Monday morning ready to make things happen.

How to Develop Your People

All of us want to become the best version of ourselves.

On your days off, you may listen to a podcast, read a book, attend a religious service, or chat with a close friend to gain insight and personal growth.

Experts say that people who seek out more development tend to be more successful, and those same people are going to quickly become frustrated if they don't grow and develop at their job.

While it may seem tempting to spend all your time coaxing the low performers to decent performance, your high performers are the ones who will be most productive and innovative, and they might even be the company's future leaders.

Focus your development efforts on them:

- Be a trustworthy mentor.
- Have frequent coaching conversations.
- Offer continued learning opportunities.
- Ask them what they'd like to get better at.
- Let them grow.

To put a finer point on the last item, letting them grow might mean letting them go.

It takes a generous leader to recognize a talented person who might outgrow your team or your own ability to mentor them.

Rather than keeping them in their role because it's easier for you, help them network with other leaders and set them up for future success. Better to lose them to another role within the company than to a competitor's offer!

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You have the power to significantly improve employee wellbeing when you increase flexibility, purpose and development.

Your organization will thank you for the higher productivity and lower turnover, and your employees will thank you for making Mondays feel a little bit less like ... Mondays.

Gallup can help make Mondays feel less like Mondays for you and your employees.

- [Download our perspective paper on the employee experience](#) to learn how wellbeing fits with engagement, performance and more.
- [Learn how we can partner with you to create a culture of wellbeing at your organization.](#)
- [Watch our 30-minute webinar](#) to learn the seven steps of the employee life cycle and why they all matter.

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