AVOID THE CULTURE CRASH

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO TEAM HAPPINESS & SUCCESS

WRITTEN BY

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**"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success"
- Henry Ford**

MY PASSION FOR TEAM CULTURES

Hi and thank you for taking the time to read my eBook.

The fact that you have downloaded this suggests to me that you recognise that your workplace doesn't have the kind of culture you desire and is potentially heading for 'the culture crash'. Congratulations on taking this first step! It is my hope that the 45 tips contained within will help you turn this around and create a more positive work place culture.

Like most people, my early experiences with teams were predominantly through sport. An avid base baller for almost 40 years I have played in and seen some amazing team performances. From the age of 20 I have been self employed, co founding two successful businesses, Active Lifestyle and Corporate Challenge Events, where I am still the Managing Director today. Over this time my entrepreneurial ambition has lead me to read, research and trial any and everything about what creates successful businesses and teams.

It became apparent to me that success in business and sport is less about you and more about those around you. Teamwork, collaboration and communication are all themes that appeared time and time again, however the biggest differential seemed to be in the leadership of these teams.

I very quickly became interested in organisations with great leaders and what it was that separated them. In fact the quote that probably sums up where my fascination in teams began is from Sir Richard Branson the founder of Virgin himself; 'If you look after your staff, they will look after your customers, its that simple'.

The more I read and researched the more I realised that this idea of high performing teams and positive cultures is not new. We have known about it for centuries and in fact the evidence of this knowledge is scattered throughout history;
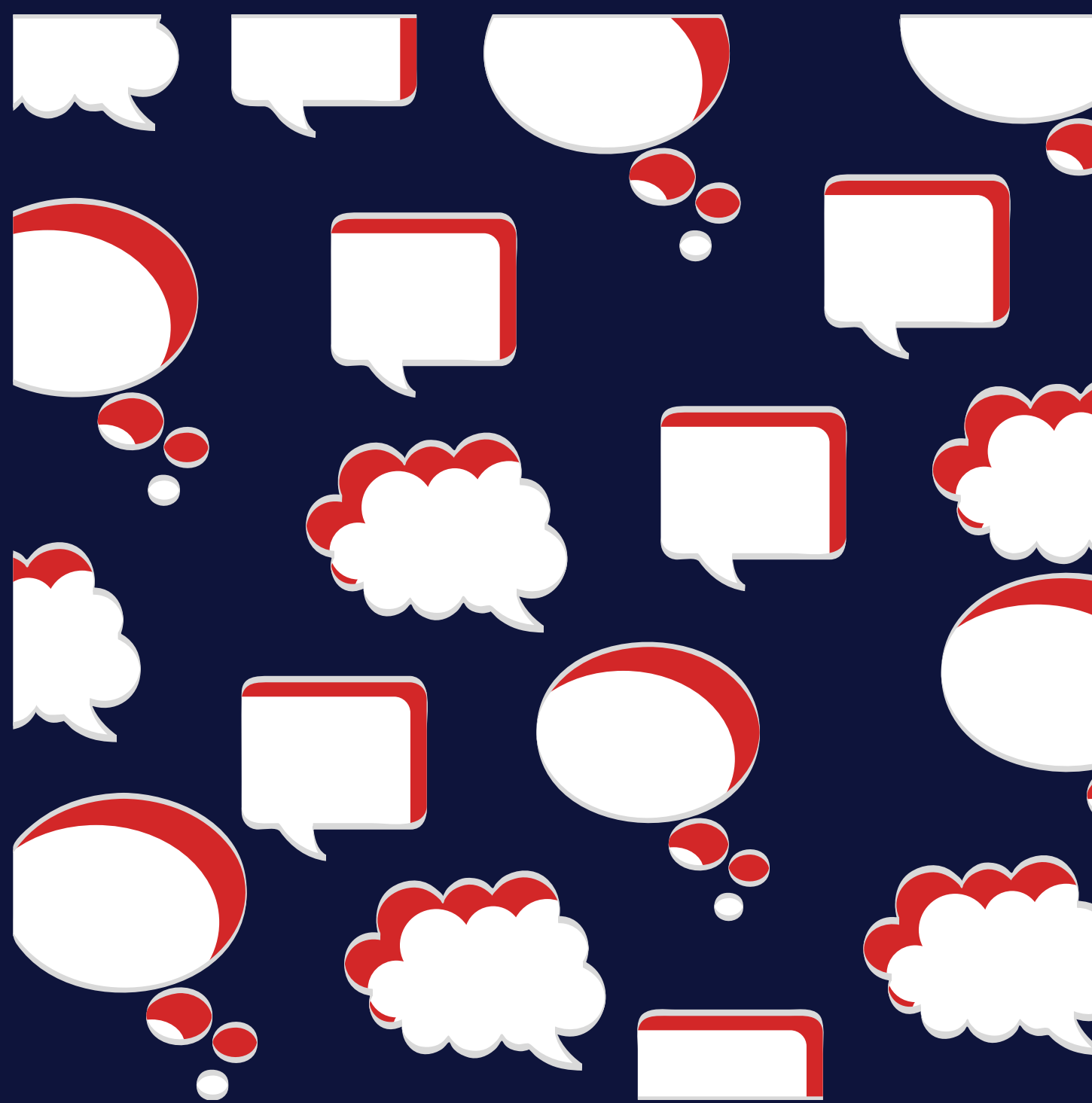
"Remember upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all."
- Alexander the Great
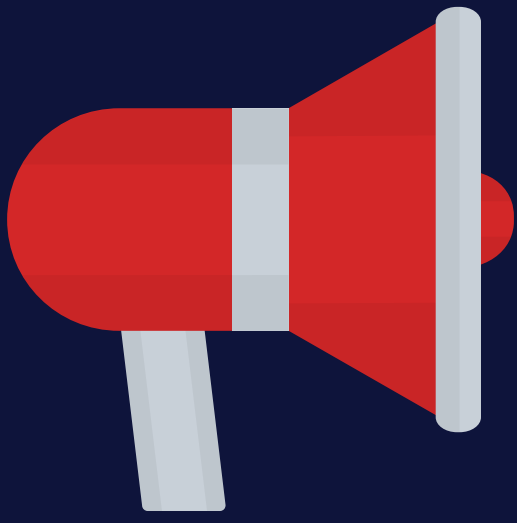
Charles Darwin.

"In the long history of humankind (and animal kind too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed"

Brian Tracy.

"Team work is so important that it is virtually impossible to reach the heights of your capabilities or make the money that you want without becoming very good at it."
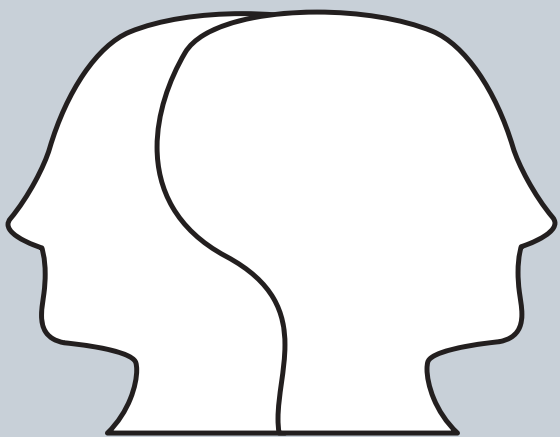
Babe Ruth.

"The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime"

The list of these quotes and supporting evidence goes on and on over history and so I could not understand why we all did not practice it. We know it works, we've seen it work for others, like Seek, Google and Virgin yet many of us still don't do it. Why?

For almost 20 years as a team building and corporate training facilitator I have witnessed some amazing workplace cultures and I have also experienced some very dysfunctional teams.

The reality is, high performing teams do not happen overnight; they take hard work and time to develop and maintain. What I came to realise is that the answer to WHY we don't practice this more is actually quite simple, we don't know where to START.

This e book is a resource that I have developed combining the best of what I have seen, read and applied over many years. I have segmented it in to three key areas that help simplify your approach and having applied all of these strategies in my own businesses over the last 25 years, I guarantee this to be a resource that will rescue your business from the culture crash.

Enjoy!

The beauty of this eBook is that it's short, it's simple and it's to the point!

We all live and work in an increasingly busy and cluttered world and there are endless amounts of content and material to be found on any one topic. Yet there are still the same 7 days per week, 24 hours per day and 60 minutes per hour. I have designed this eBook as a simple reference tool for you to use and apply. I'm only a phone call or email away if you ever need more detail on any of my tips. Now before we get into 'how to create a positive team culture', allow me to define a couple of crucial terms in the context of this eBook – CULTURE and SUCCESS.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Scientifically speaking, it is the collective habits that we form as a group; our collective behaviour. Collective habits across a group create the culture.

For me the best description of culture is the vibe or feeling you get when you walk through a workplace.

I have created the acronym FUMISH to help determine whether it's a positive culture.

Friendly
Understanding
Motivating
Inspiring
Supportive
Happy
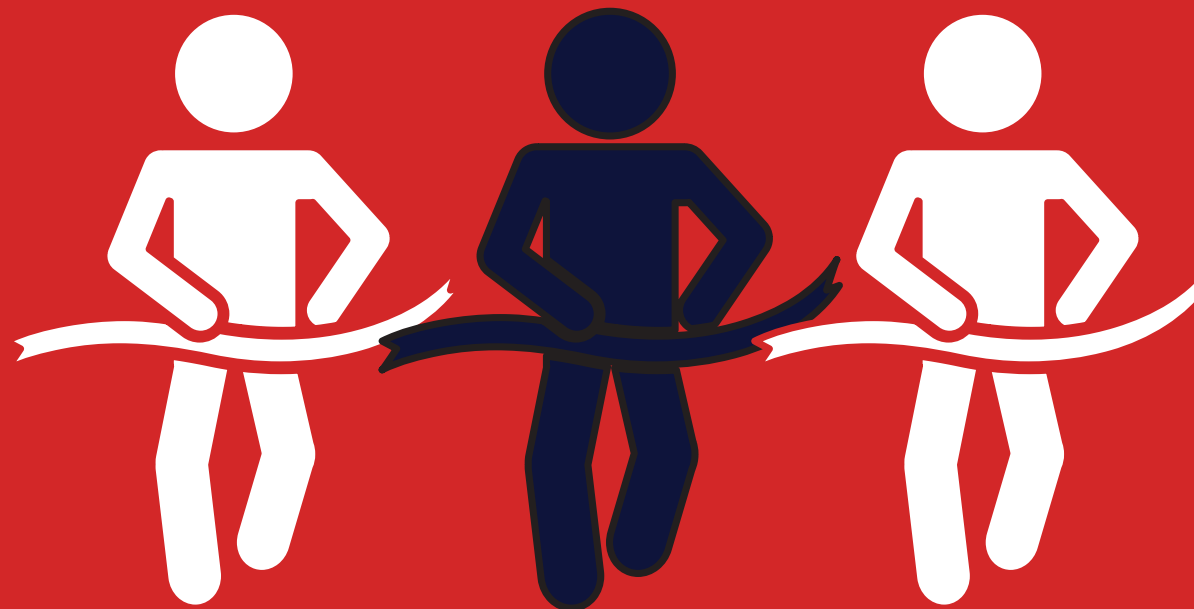
Do the staff in the organisation feel this? Do visitors to the organisation feel this?

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

For most organisations success is determined by profitability, and fair enough too!

Being profitable is an important part of staying a viable business; but financial gain shouldn't be the only indicator of success.

Building a sustainable, long lasting business that supports your community within the business and gives back to your community outside the business are high on my indicators of success.

Job satisfaction and staff retention are also important indicators of success.

THE 3 E'S OF A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE

I believe practising a positive team culture requires...

Education
Engagement
Environment

The following guide is broken into three main chapters - Education, Engagement and Environment.

Each chapter will provide the 'nuts and bolts' of 'how to create a positive team culture for success' – some simple strategies that you can implement straight away to get you on the path to creating success for your organisation.

ENVIRONMENT

POSITIVE CULTURE

EDUCATION

ENGAGEMENT
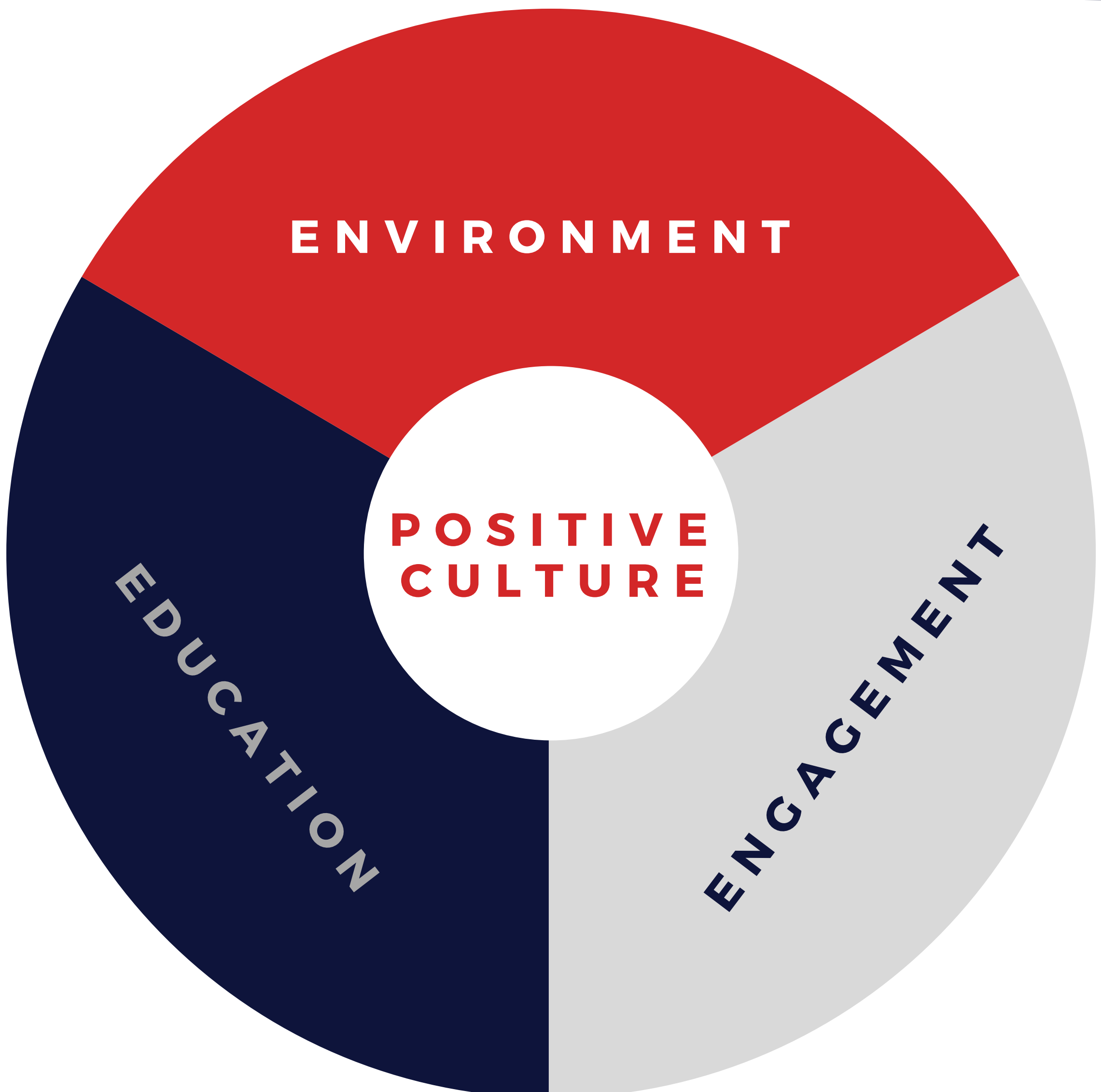
CFO says to the CEO: "What if we train staff and they leave?"
CEO responds: "What if we don't and they stay!"

You will find career growth, opportunity and challenge in many articles by industry professionals and scholars as three leading reasons why employees stay with an organisation.

Staff like to learn to be better at what they do. The more you upskill staff, the better they will perform for you. Thus, regularly educating and training staff will lead to improved performance and a more positive work culture.

Here are my strategies for education...

01 Vision, mission, values.

Implement a simple induction program that covers the vision, mission and values of your organisation. Have the session delivered by the CEO or top line manager and include a conversation about how your employees' personal values and your company values can align.

02 Profile your team.

Conduct a profiling workshop or series of workshops with all of your staff. A fundamental part of improving a team's culture is to help everyone better understand themselves and the role they play within the team. There are many behavioural profiling tools available such as Extended DISC, Myers-Briggs, The DOPE Test and iWAM to name a few. My personal favourite is Belbin Team Roles.

03

The Fish! Philosophy.

The four practices of this internationally recognised book are very simple yet will have a profound impact on your team culture.
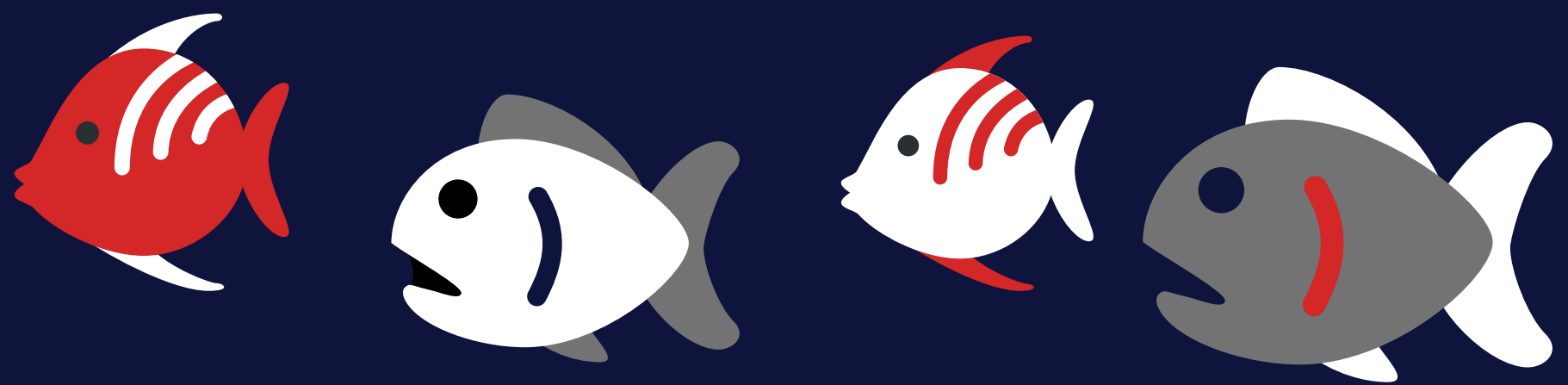
1 – Choosing one's attitude.
2 – Playing at work.
3 – Making someone's day.
4 – Being present.

I'd advise purchasing a copy of this book for each of your staff to read. Make some time to sit down with your team to discuss the practices and how they can apply to your workplace.

04

Useful belief.

This book authored by Chris Helder showcases the approach of 'Useful Belief' compared to 'Positive Thinking'. Once understood and practiced, this simple principle can transform how your team see each other. Have each of your team read this book and at a team meeting discuss how a 'Useful Belief' can be used within your workplace.

05

Discover your 'why'.

We all choose our careers for many and varied reasons. Explore, with your team, the 'why' behind what attracted you all to the same business and industry - this will create a powerful point of connection and purpose. This could be useful to feature during a team day or as part of your regular staff conference.

06

Incentive based professional development programs.

These are great tools to motivate your team by providing highly personalised rewards along their development pathway. A program like this should include an interview with each of your team to understand their development goals. Once you agree on the goals, consider the rewards. They may be as simple as providing resource books, gym memberships, industry subscriptions right through to access to advanced training programs.

07 Appreciation inquiry session.

Traditionally, planning days and retreats have been reserved for management only. Where possible and feasible, find the time to involve all levels of the business and conduct an Appreciative Inquiry session. This session will enable everyone to celebrate the exceptional moments that have led the business to where it is today and will engage the whole team on where to take the business into the future.

08 Understand mindset.

We have all developed into who we are today via our years of experience. Understanding the differences between a fixed and growth mindset and discovering how to practice a more growth mindset will help your team excel together. Undertake a facilitated session aimed at understanding and exploring these mindsets and how they can impact positively on your workplace.

09
Coaching.

A coach or mentor can be invaluable in helping you or members of your team see the world differently. Most coaches or mentors will incorporate self-reflection into their sessions which can be an eye opener for many leaders and managers. Engage a coach for your leaders to help them better understand themselves and manage their team.

10
Trust matrix.

One of the most important elements of any team is to trust each other. The Trust Matrix identifies two key components of trust - character and competence. It links the importance of these components in creating team cohesion and the ability to have authentic and critical conversations. Consider scheduling a session exploring character and competence using The Trust Matrix

11
Emotional Intelligence.

Being more 'emotionally intelligent' helps you to understand your fit and how you can provide the greatest value to your team. Learning emotional control adds another level of value to this. Schedule a session to explore the emotional intelligence of your team and what action needs to be taken to improve this.

12
Decision Tree.

Collaborative decision making involving all levels of the business will create a significant buy-in and feeling of purpose from everyone within the organisation. The Decision Tree will help visually represent this to create greater clarity for all. Discuss this at a team meeting to help your staff understand how it works and how it positively impacts a business to operate this way.

13

Resilience training.

Contrary to popular belief, stress can be good for you. Understanding the body's response to stress and how this can affect performance and decision making can be a game changer for many people. It will ultimately help you create a high performing team that thrives in all environments. Conduct a session with your team aimed at understanding the body's response to stress and learn strategies to manage this for optimal performance.

14

Positivity ratio.

A balance of positive to negative language when addressing an individual or a team will enable you to maximise performance. The positivity ratio provides the science behind the right balance of positive to negative language for optimal performance. A workshop on this topic will help your team understand this balance to create higher connectivity and performance..

15

Difficult conversations.

We achieve success or failure at work and in life one conversation at a time. The problem is – when we 'wing' it (especially if we don't feel comfortable about it), conversations don't always go as we hope they might. By exploring difficult conversations, your team will have the courage to challenge their current reality, listen to their instincts and make conversations work all through understanding how to plan the conversation carefully.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is being involved and invested in the team you are in. It requires an attentive focus and an active willingness to work towards the goals of the team.

Imagine having a team of employees that are completely engaged with their role and in the business. Now envision the culture of the organisation with all employees engaged.

Here are my strategies for engagement...

01

Fitness Fridays.

Well it can be any day you choose but generally speaking, everyone's spirits are higher on a Friday. Start a group fitness session at lunch time on whatever day you end up choosing. Make sure it's at a level that can involve everyone regardless of ability and fitness level. Then witness how much fun this will bring!

02

Facebook.

Create a closed Facebook group that only staff are invited to join. Encourage everyone to share what they do to promote a positive culture in your business. You will be surprised at all the little things that make a difference. It can also inspire others to follow suit.

03

Teambuilding events.

A well planned and executed team building program will not only lift the energy of your team but allow individuals to experience each other outside of their normal work environment. Your staff will get to appreciate everyone for who they are, not what position they hold. Team building activities can also be fun and creative ways to develop ideas or strategies for the business.

04
Team Lunches.

Once a month or at least on a regular basis, organise a team lunch. It may be as simple as in your lunch room or taking advantage of the great outdoors. You could consider a roster of which staff members bring a plate to share and then rotate it around to involve everyone through the year. Another idea is to incorporate a theme for each lunch.

05
Performance based Christmas celebrations.

Set your team some tiered goals to achieve for the year and promote various incentives for achieving each tier. If achieved, the rewards can be tied into your workplace Christmas celebration. Be bold and set the ultimate reward as something spectacular like a trip away to an exotic destination.
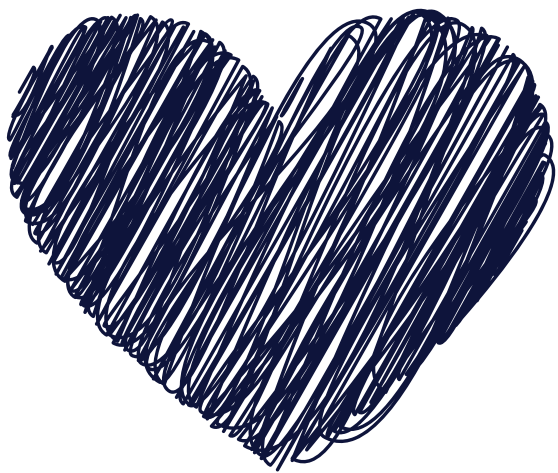
06
Promote selflessness.

Encourage everyone to do something for someone else every single day - not for what they will receive in return but for the sole purpose of giving. Watch how this can transform your culture. There are some great charity team building programs out there as well that you could do to involve your whole team working together to 'give' to a central cause.

07
Office games.

Organise an office tipping competition. It could be for your popular football codes or choose something obscure that involves everyone learning more about a new endeavour. These types of competitions will generate plenty of light-hearted social conversation as well.

08 Birthdays.

Celebrate individual birthdays or provide an extra annual leave day for birthdays. If you reward and appreciate people, they will reward and appreciate the business in return.

09 Anniversaries & special occassions.

In an informal way, get to know the wedding anniversaries, children's birthdays and other personal milestones of your team members. Make an effort to acknowledge these. It all starts with communication and intent listening.

10 Innovation projects.

Create small project teams that involve staff interested in that project even if it is outside of their general area of employment. Focus these projects around the future of the business and allocate time for these teams to work on them. You just never know what new ideas and innovations will develop.

11 Taisho.

These short Japanese exercise sessions can be undertaken in any location. All that is required is a laptop and Internet connection to download a Taisho session. The three minute investment to get your team to participate in this will create immeasurable productivity and connection for your team.

12

Book club.

There is an enormous resource of books covering all aspects of business available these days. Why not promote the reading of a particular book related to an area of interest or issue in your organisation. Then schedule some meetings to discuss what has been read as well as its potential application to improving your business.

13

Flowers & gifts.

Send flowers or a gift to staff on extended sick days. This can show your genuine concern for their health and wellbeing. This is also good to do for other types of leave such as bereavement leave and even annual leave if taken for a personal or family celebration.

14

Public acknowledgement.

Acknowledge publicly a job well done at team meetings. Recognition in front of peers for success can be a continual form of motivation and inspire others to follow. However, it is important to realise that not everyone responds to public acknowledgement so it can pay to check first.

15

Private acknowledgement.

A personal email, note or meeting that acknowledges and appreciates an individual's or team's efforts will boost morale. Some people do respond better to private recognition. The important point is that everyone responds positively to a 'pat on the back' for a job well done, however some like it publicly and some privately.

Environment, as the third E in creating a positive workplace culture, relates to how your workplace is set up to look and feel.

When I refer to workplace, it is the everyday workplace for each individual within your business whether that is an office, outdoor location, vehicle or even online.

What environment does the organisation want to develop and promote when holding team events, meetings and staff conferences? This is an important question to ask yourself.

Here are my strategies for environment...

ENVIRONMENT

01 Team Meetings.

A regular team meeting with interesting, relevant and structured content is a great way to keep everyone engaged. Involve your team by asking for their ideas on topics or issues to cover in these meetings. You may also consider a guest speaker on occasions to provide another insight into an area that impacts your business.

02 Staff Conference.

Failing to plan is planning to fail." A great event to do planning as a team (or key management as a minimum) is an annual staff conference. It's an invaluable tool for reinforcing your company's purpose, reconnecting your team to 'why' you all do what you do, and planning out the strategies towards your annual goals. A staff conference doesn't have to be lavish and expensive, it just has to be regular!

03 Create a Motivation Board.

Creating a goals board becomes a visual representation of what you are trying to achieve as a team. It also makes it easy for everyone to keep track of progress. If things are tracking well, it can be motivational. If things are behind, it can prompt teams into greater action.

04 Artwork.

Artwork that creates inspiration, connection and meaning for your team is a simple way to set up a positive work environment. Finding a piece of art that appeals to the entire team can be a challenge so why not create a piece of art as a team that reflects the company's vision and values. There are some fun team building programs which do just this!
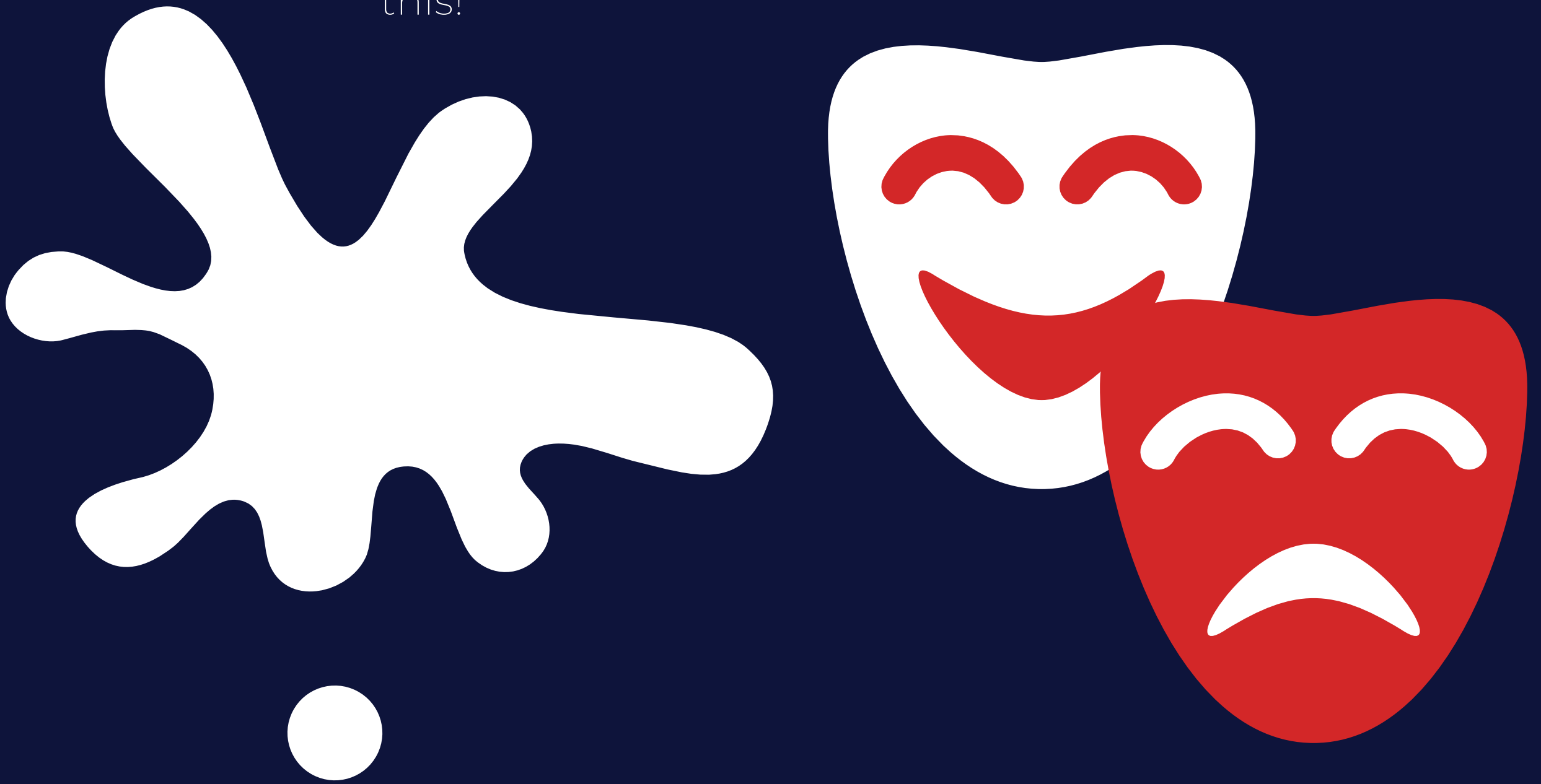
05 Motivational Speakers.

Many organisations limit providing inspiration and motivation to once a year at their annual conference. Try scheduling various speakers throughout the year focusing on topics of interest to your team or simply to provide some variety and encouragement in quieter periods. If you have offices in multiple locations, speakers can deliver via webinar sessions to enable access by staff anywhere.

06 Standing Desks.

Offer standing desk options for your team. There is a lot of research that suggests standing at your desk rather than sitting is significantly better for your health and will improve productivity. Shared standing desk stations not only provide for the welfare of your employees, they also encourage engagement as your staff will mix with others as they change work stations.

07 Flexible Workplace.

Providing flexibility for staff to occasionally work from home, and before or after hours, shows an understanding to their needs beyond the workplace. I'd advise to set a policy for this so clear communication is maintained and staff know where and when other staff are working. In this age of the Internet and mobile technology, it can be just as easy to work from home than in an office, and can often result in an increase in happiness and productivity.

08

Plants.

A very easy and effective way to liven up any environment is to bring in some nature. It's not only the appearance that it impacts but the sense of community amongst your team by ensuring the plants are looked after and flourish. It will also likely support your CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) endeavours by contributing to the greater 'green' environment.
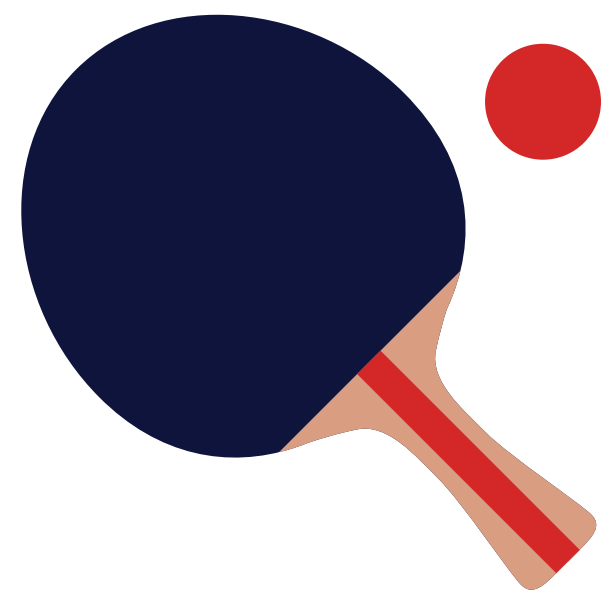
09

Creative Space.

Transform a meeting room or lunch room into a space where your team can gather, relax and be comfortable. Use colour, add bean bags, provide some games and make it fun! These spaces can be ideal for meetings too where creativity is required as well as providing a space to escape and relax when things become busy.
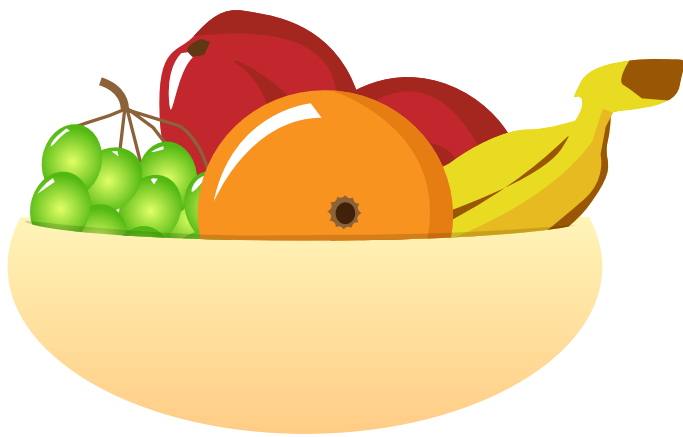
10

Health & Welfare.

Providing complimentary fruit bowls, natural or filtered water, annual health assessments and regular fitness sessions are useful strategies to support the ongoing health and welfare of your staff. A healthier workplace will be a more productive and happier workplace too!

11

Coffee Machine.

Whilst there are differing opinions on the impact of caffeine, many people love a regular coffee and tea especially in the morning. Don't underestimate the value of providing a coffee machine with good coffee in the office. It shows you care and will be a cost and time saver for your employees as they don't have to venture to the local café for their caffeine fix.

Music.

12

Although it may not be suitable for all workplaces, background music can be a great motivator, as well as help people stay calm and enjoy the environment they work in. You may consider sharing the responsibility amongst staff for who chooses the music or radio station each day..

Industry Awards.

13

Do some research and select an industry award that applies to your business and would recognise an area that your team has significantly contributed to. Some award applications can be lengthy so consider sharing the load amongst your team. Even putting in a submission can provide motivation and acknowledgement for your team. The application process also provides an opportunity to review the business...

Internal Awards.

14

Friendly competition is a great motivator for every business. Awards recognising individual and team performance are great ways of driving success in a fun and friendly environment. Just make sure the awards cover all areas of the business and staff. You should highlight the importance of these awards by presenting them at an annual awards dinner or at your annual staff conference..

Lighting.

15

Lack of sun light exposure has been closely linked to vitamin D deficiency. In turn, vitamin D deficiency have been linked to depression. Where possible, create the opportunity for your team to have exposure to sunlight. If it's not possible to have windows, think of alternative options such as outdoor meetings and lunches, regular outdoor fitness sessions and even small group walking meetings.

THE END IS YOUR START

The science of emotions proves that people who experience positive emotions perform more efficiently and effectively, think more clearer and are more productive than those who experience negative emotions.

Similarly, we know that the fitter and healthier we are, the more positive and alert we will be.

Yet many of us don't focus on this!

As I mentioned at the beginning of this eBook, I believe one of the main reasons we don't spend enough time improving the positivity of our workplaces is due to not knowing how.

Hopefully this has been a useful guide to show you 'how' you can start to improve your workplace culture immediately and develop a positive team culture for success.

I understand that not all of my tips and strategies are applicable or feasible for all businesses, however the important thing is that you do something to create a more positive culture in your workplace. It will make a difference!

You now have the 'how', you just need to make the 'time' and 'commitment' to implementing a plan that will transform your culture into one that creates success for your organisation.

My dream is that we can all learn to create more positive teams in all areas of our lives. Imagine the ripple effect this would have on our communities globally!

CONTACT MY TEAM ANYTIME

If you would like more information on any of these strategies, you are most welcome to contact me or any of my team at Corporate Challenge Events.

We are focused on creating positive team cultures! We can provide further advice, or deliver a team building program, corporate training workshop or staff conference for you!

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