

Can You Create Happiness In The Workplace? Fibernetics did and you can too!



Cambridge, Ontario based telecom company Fibernetics recently announced a partnership with 'Happiness Psychology' guru Shawn Achor. You may have seen Shawn Achor's TEDtalk at some point in the past few years, Shawn Achor The Happy Secret to Better Work, it is one of the most watched of all time.

In announcing this partnership Fibernetics co-founder and President John Stix reaffirmed his commitment to creating an organizational atmosphere that encourages workplace happiness because he believes that is part of a winning strategy to success.

For the first 10 years of business Fibernetics grew quietly in Ontario's heartland. Then, in 2013 John Stix got the feeling that things were not going as well as they could be and he sensed that the company had lost its way. That sent Stix on a journey of learning that lead to his amazing recent success. Now the company has seen a month-over-month growth in business and, according to Stix, Fibernetics is retaining over 99% of their customers every month, whereas the typical retention for other Internet phone and data service providers is 84% per month. He attributes that in part to the outstanding customer services his happy employees are providing.

In September 2015, when John Stix presented the keynote speech in Las Vegas at the 15 Impact conference he received what was described as the first standing ovation for a key note in the conferences history. This conference is attended annually by North America's Business Leaders and Marketers. In November 2015, Fibernetics won the "Accompass Award" a Canadian HR Award for best Employer Branding with their "Im In' culture.

How did Fibernetics go from a Cambridge Ontario telecom provider to a leader in

workplace culture? Their leaders recognized a need, went into action and recognized the value of people first.

4 Stages to transforming your workplace into a Happier place

Stage 1 – Open Your Eyes and Look for Opportunities to Change

In 2013 John Stix looked around his workplace and felt that innovation, fun and passion had been slipping away. He began talking to his co-founder and members of his team and discovered that he was not alone in this feeling. With this realization he began a personal quest to find how he could turn the situation around. All great leaders need to be willing take personal responsibility to identify weaknesses in their organization, challenge themselves to understand the problem and seek ways to find solutions. They do not have to undertake this alone, but they do have to embrace the responsibility to ensure it is done.

To take an organization to another level someone in leadership needs to be open to identifying opportunities for improvement. However, they cannot always see these needs on their own especially if they are insulated from the problems. Managers and leaders in HR are in a position to gauge the pulse of the organization and help open the eyes of the leadership team regarding the need to change.

Stage 2 – Leadership Action

After months of research to better understand the challenges and potential solutions for his workplace Stix felt it was time to bring his leadership team together. This lead him to hold a daylong workshop retreat where they could develop a strategy to bring back the feelings lost in the daily grind of the larger organization. At this retreat they focussed on finding solutions to the problem.

HR can initiate action by bringing ideas and inspiration to the organization. By remaining aware of trends, techniques and opportunities, implementing them on a small scale and bringing them to the attention of leadership HR can facilitate change.

Stage 3 – People Focus

Emerging from the leadership meetings at Fibernetics were motivational ideas with practical steps. The changes did not focus on policies and procedures, new technology, pay raises, cutting the bottom 10% of performers and so on but they did involve many tangible changes. The changes focussed on changing the way the company related to the employees and the employees related to their work, one another and the company.

Among the ideas was the development of a new motto – the 'Im In' employer brand accompanied by introducing core values of innovation; accountability; just do it and find a solution; trust; teamwork and happiness. HR needs to be a player at the table to offer guidance in how to craft values and develop a plan to take action.

Stage 4 – Strong Implementation

Many organizations talk about making changes and many organizations make

incremental changes. However, while real change does take time and often many steps, lasting and fundamental changes are not made quietly or passively. Fibernetics rolled out their changes at a celebratory Gala for employees, with their motivational and inspirational President leading the way. The company made changes to the way they operate from the colours they painted on the walls to the weekly celebrations designed to encourage fun and happiness in the workplace. Fibernetics also connected with another Ontario company, Plasticity Labs (formerly 'The Smile Epidemic') to implement a workplace intercompany social network to encourage happiness and engagement and help keep track of both.

It appears that Fibernetics is on the right track with this commitment to a culture of happiness as the company continued to grow, growing by 50% over the past couple of years.

You can read more about Fibernetics partnership with Shawn Achor in the article on the company website [John Stix Announces Strategic Partnership in Canada with Shawn Achor](#). You can also learn more about John Stix at [JohnStix.ca](#)