

The Optimism Factor by Helen Macdonald

Imagine a force that can increase your business effectiveness, improve customer satisfaction and drive up profitability without huge expenditure or massive implementation strategies. Imagine having a workforce that wants to come to work, is actively engaged in a constant search for better ways to do things, and which makes better choices with your customers, inside and outside the business.

The good news is that this force exists and is easy to access and make a permanent part of your business and personal life. It's called "The Optimism Factor" and recent research has shown that it can become a "force for good" in any business. Defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "an inclination to hopefulness and confidence", optimism has been shown to have a massive impact on all the critical business measures, from productivity to profitability. After all, wouldn't you like your staff to be confident and hopeful about their jobs and your business?

"Employers who actively sustain a positive environment could experience up to 25% improvements in efficiency and customer satisfaction"
- Journal of Applied Psychology

The "Optimism Factor" is based on five principles, which make up the word S.M.I.L.E. While there are numerous elements in each step, some examples include:

- **Smile** - the manager's attitude on a daily basis has a direct effect on employee morale; employees reflect their manager's approach on a subconscious level
- **Mind** - identifying and agreeing on realistic goals helps employees to believe that they can achieve better results & allows them to build a mental picture of success
- **Insides** - encouraging team members to look after their insides by taking breaks, eating well and drinking lots of water; physical surroundings are also important
- **Learning** - opportunities for development are rated in the top five motivators for employees; formal and informal chances to improve are critical for team members
- **Enthusiasm** - this highly contagious element is the cornerstone; an inspiring, forward-thinking manager can definitely raise the performance levels of any team

"High morale in workplaces leads to decreased stress levels and illness-related time off, as well as stimulating productivity"
- Australian Psychological Society

Optimism is not a "magic bullet", and creating a positive environment will not happen overnight, however by taking the simple steps listed above, and implementing the rest of the principles, we can all improve our personal optimism level and that of our team members. So find reasons to S.M.I.L.E. at work. Set and achieve individual & team goals around creating a positive, optimistic approach. Look for reasons to celebrate success. Optimism is good for your business and makes work a better place to be!

*Helen Macdonald, **the Corporate Optimist**, specializes in Staff Retention, helping her clients get maximum results from happy, productive employees. As a speaker, author & master facilitator, she works with companies large and small throughout the Asia Pacific region. This is an extract from her second book, "The Optimism Factor", due for release in March 2004. Her message is that optimism is a powerful force in business which will help you attract more customers, more profit and more success! For more information, call 03 9533 4568, email info@macsresults.com or visit www.helenmacdonald.com*