



MAINTAINING MOTIVATION

Winter can be a hard cold time for everyone, getting to work before the sun comes up and going home after it has gone down. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) symptoms including depression sleep problems, lethargy and anxiety (and grumpiness!!).

So how can you as an employer ensure that morale and motivation stay at high levels during the winter months?

Ensure your employees have a break outdoors during the day

It is easy to work through lunch or grab a quick bite at your desk. However, this means we really are missing out on the chance of seeing any daylight hours. Even a short ten minute stroll outdoors can lift the spirits and refresh the brain. Provide incentives for those taking a break outdoors, such as staff deals with local coffee shops or cafes.

Use bright colours around the workplace

Using colour therapy has been shown to significantly improve people's moods. Offices that are grey and drab are more likely to result in employees feeling lethargic and lower their mood. This does not have to mean a total office refit. Use bright signs and pot plants around the place, make a difference.

Make sure the office is well lit and not too hot!

Having low levels of lighting will only lead to increased SAD symptoms. Ensure that your workplace is well lit at all times to reduce feelings of lethargy. Make sure that windows are kept clean and as much natural light is entering the office as possible. Also great idea on a nice sunny winter's day to let the air come in. Make sure your office temperature is between 18 – 22 degrees this winter, and in more active occupations between 16 – 19 degrees. The humidity should be between 40 – 70%.

Get active

Exercise naturally releases endorphins, improving moods and lifting spirits. Educate all employees about the advantages of leading a healthy lifestyle through exercise. How about organising a sponsored walk for charity. Exercise has many advantages including getting everyone up and active, team building, helping a good cause, raising organisational profile through free publicity, getting everyone out of the office during lunchtime, and focusing employees' attentions away from their own problems. Or what about a car rally, or a mystery treasure hunt, or a ramble around local well known historical points. Most importantly don't forget about organising those Rugby or Sweepstakes make sure your team is part of the rugby hype!

Encourage healthy eating

Eating high levels of carbohydrates, such as pies, pasties, white bread and other starchy products, can lead to high levels of lethargy. Encourage your employees to eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, to improve energy levels. How about supplying free fruit one day a week in your lunchroom?

Consider looking at your wellness plan for your staff over the winter months. It will be well worth the energy when you see improved levels of motivation and morale, productivity and performance will also increase, while turnover and absences will naturally decrease. Following the above tips can help ensure that your employees' motivation does not dip during winter.

Have a great, healthy and positive winter!