



# CREATING A MORE CONNECTED WORKPLACE

BARISTA & CO

## Great coffee can be a conversation starter, a connector, and even a culture champion because it helps create moments that bring people together.

So much so, in Sweden, a country renowned for happy workplaces, their culture has an ritual called Fika (translated to describe a “coffee and cake break”), which many swedes consider as being an essential part of the day.

Pronounced (pronounced “fee-ka”) the concept is seen as a break to be spent with friends or colleagues. A social experience that’s a legitimate reason to set aside a moment for meaningful time to connect. IKEA even says some of its best ideas and decisions happen during Fika breaks!



As well as being great for idea sharing and collaboration, connected workplaces also have the benefit of being more productive, inclusive, and engaged. Appreciating this reality, Barista and Co recently chatted with HappyHQ's co-founders, Janine and Louisa, who are on a mission to help guide people-first company cultures.

We wanted to hear their ideas on ways companies can encourage a meaningful sense of connection at work. Having helped and inspired 1000's of people to embed people-first practices in the workplace, over a brew (of course), they shared their insights as well as tried and tested ways to create a more connected workplace.

***“Better connections help us feel more respected and accepted for who we are, creating a better sense of belonging, yet people are feeling less connected to their colleagues than ever”.***

***“Companies are now tasked with consciously encouraging collaboration and communication amongst employees –helping people to know each other better, celebrate the good, learn from the bad, have fun, and even laugh more”.***

## So, whether your company is WFO, WFH, WFA or a mix of all three, here's HappyHQ's five tried and tested ways to create a more connected workplace.

### 1 Get to know each other

It might sound obvious, but think about how much importance you place on really getting to know your colleagues? Quality relationships in the workplace are positively connected to psychological safety and performance. We're also more likely to share ideas openly, innovate and problem solve.

Create initiatives like weekly five minute sharing sessions to hear about different people's passions outside of work – you'll be surprised by how much you can find out about someone in just five minutes. Or, try changing the question "did you have a good weekend?" to "how was your weekend" and stop, actively listen and zone in when you get a reply!



### 2 Advocate office microbreaks

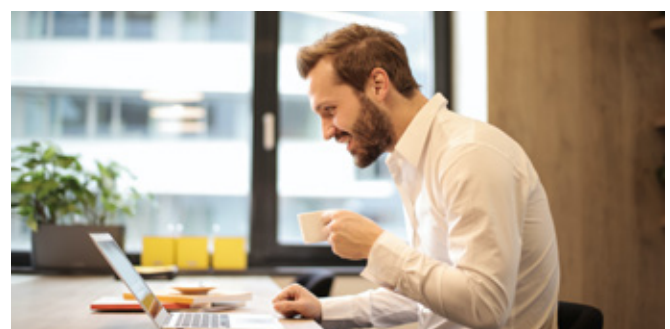
The seemingly inconsequential (and often random) interactions with colleagues, are in fact what bonds relationships and builds tight-knitted teams.

Quick blasts of non-work-related activity are also proven to reduce stress and increase productivity, so advocating 'micro breaks' can be a great excuse for spontaneous catch-ups to break up the monotony. Try breaking up meetings with 5 minutes of non-work related chat or making sure that meetings are not back-to-back so you have time for microbreaks in between, you'll all be a lot more productive and engaged for it.



### 3 Intentional meeting 'overtime'

As spontaneous chats are less organic with remote work, you can create simple opportunities for people to connect in a virtual setting. For example, when hosting meetings, add in time for an intentional meeting overtime. Let the team know you're happy to 'hang out' at the end of the call for non-related work chats.





## 4 Fail happy

Unfortunately, many of today's workplace cultures do not have a healthy relationship with failure. At HappyHQ we love to apply the term 'fail happy' as it sees failures as opportunities to learn and explore new ways of doing things.

**To help normalise failure in the workplace, you can:**

- Lead by example - let people know that it's ok to fail by sharing your stories of falling short. This will provide psychological safety amongst the team and encourage people to speak up and admit future failures.
- Build a learning culture - failures aren't isolated incidents, so make them a positive conversation by openly discussing what could be learned amongst the team
- Create a no blame culture - shift the focus from who did it, to what happened. Effective team dynamic is an environment where everyone is accountable.

Remember failing isn't the end result, it's just part of the process!



## 5 Re-think traditional team building exercises

In a world where people are already feeling constantly connected to their work, mandatory/forced team-building activities will likely do more damage than good.

It takes much more than zoom parties, catching colleagues out of trees, or yoga to help teams feel more connected. Instead, companies can help people feel less stressed and anxious by creating opportunities for people to connect in a way that leaves them feeling re-charged, re-energised, refreshed, and included.

If you're not sure how to do this – simply ask people their thoughts and ideas. It works.



These culture initiatives are all quick and simple to implement, so it's important to remember that more complex culture goals won't work if they're treated as 'experiments' to guess-work issues that aren't backed by proper feedback, so make sure you give people a voice so their ideas feel heard and valued.

Through their culture audits, culture maps, workshops, and consultation, HappyHQ inspires sustainable growth by guiding people-first culture journeys.

Find out more [happyhq.co.uk](https://happyhq.co.uk)