

The Talent Advantage: Why Friendships in the Workplace are a Good Thing

By Nancy MacKay, Ph.D

Adapted from the book: The Talent Advantage by Dr. Alan Weiss and Dr. Nancy MacKay, published by Wiley.

Research from HBR and the Gallup Organization shows that:

- People who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs
- If you have close friends at work, your employee satisfaction level increases by 50%
- Only 18% of people work for organizations that provide opportunities for social bonding

The following five strategies will help you build friendships in the workplace.

1. Identify the friendship roles that you play.

- Builder; champion; common interests; companion; connector; energizer; mind opener; navigator (Vital Friends by Tom Rath)

2. Use the five love languages.

- Deep social bonds are the major predictor of team success (HBR 2007)
- Quality time; gift giving; acts of service; verbal appreciation; affection

3. Make spending time with you enjoyable.

- Who do you enjoy spending time with?
 - ✓ Spouse
 - ✓ Friends
 - ✓ Children
 - ✓ Relatives
 - ✓ Customers
 - ✓ Colleagues
 - ✓ Bosses
- Fewer than 1/5 people consider their boss to be a close friend.
- Employees who have a close friendship with their boss are more than 2.5 times as likely to be satisfied with their job.

4. Be an exemplar for others.

- Generosity; vulnerability; candour; accountability

5. Invest time in building friendships.

- Just 17% of employees report that their boss has made “an investment in our relationship” in the past three months.

