

If I was... determined to be happy at work

Janice Haddon is experienced in HR and management consultancy and is an executive coach and life coach. She is managing director of consultancy Morgan Redwood and here outlines her strategy for being happy at work:

If I was determined to be happy at work I would first consider the type of organisation I want to work for. I would list my personal values, prioritise them and ensure I work in an organisation with a culture and values that match.

I would consider the policies and expectations of the organisation. Not only the key things around a safe environment, but my job description, ensuring I have clear objectives and targets so that I know what I need to achieve.

The next step would be to make sure I hit all my deadlines, and look to see what I could do to make a positive difference and where improvements could be made. Time management skills are vital in this. Not getting things done and having a growing to-do list becomes stressful – so I would stay mindful and fully present in what I am doing to make sure I achieve what I need to.

No matter how senior I am, I would check with my manager – or even my board – as to what is required of me and explain back to them my understanding of what they want, what I will achieve and what I will deliver.

This will avoid confusion, and me

wasting time on delivering things not required, as well as the frustration of tense conversations about having to re-do work. Instead, I would make sure I understood my manager's style of working and I would update them regularly.

More broadly, I would want to know how my work helps to meet the organisation's overall strategic goals. I would study the organisation's competency framework and make an honest assessment of how I am performing and work out how I need to improve.

This would lead to a development plan for how I could develop and grow. It would be fantastic if the organisation could support me in that, but I would take personal responsibility for my improvement and growth. I would seek regular review meetings with my manager to let them know how I am getting on and ask questions and receive feedback.

Colleagues are vital, too. I would do my best to form relationships with work colleagues so I could have great conversations and great day-to-day interactions with them. I would be positive and have a "can-do" attitude, as people like to be around positivity. If someone has a low mood and everything is too much trouble it irritates and people stop wanting to talk to you.

The connection we have with people is important to our emotional well-being so even if things are not going

well outside work, I would do my utmost to "leave that at the door" to avoid a negative impact on others and affecting my performance. I would also try to help others, as it will make me feel good and take my mind off my own troubles.

I would want the people working for me to have the same experience of clarity around objectives that I demand for myself, and my management style would be to coach and support the growth of my colleagues and appreciate them for what they do.

As things can change daily in the workplace, I would be flexible and happy to consider and embrace change. If I am not sure how it might affect me I would ask questions and avoid gossip and the negativity others might be feeling – I would do my best to help others adapt.

To drive my positive energy in work, I would ensure I make best use of my personal down time, exercising regularly to keep my natural "happy hormones" – my endorphins – in great shape, and eating a healthy diet.

Creativity and relaxation, including hobbies and spending time with people that help me laugh and enjoy life, would provide balance.

When working, I would then be a "whole person" and not just a part that turns up for work.

But if I ever wake in the morning with a sinking feeling, then I would be determined to look for another job so that I could be happy elsewhere.

