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Should you be friends with your coworkers?

I recently read an article written by Virginia Backaitis in the New York Post, titled *Friends with benefits – Being BFFs with your coworkers pays dividends*. It was about a company where employees were friends with their coworkers. The company even goes so far as to tell jobseekers that if you don't want to be pals with your coworkers don't even bother applying. They only hire friends, friends of other employees, etc. I think you get the idea.

The CEO felt his employees have to like each other and want to hang out with one another. While most companies certainly have employees that are friends, this one seems to go a step further. They all know very personal items about each other, from a long term break up to infertility. The CEO feels that if the staff knows about the personal lives of each other, they will know why a person is acting a certain way, that it may be temporary, or another staff member may be able to help. While not all working environments feel this strongly about being this close to your coworkers, according to Annie McKee, author of *How To Be Happy at Work*, "having friends in the workplace makes you happier. And when you are happy, you tend to be more productive and do better at work."

Our jobs can be more satisfying when we are able to make friends. According to a survey conducted by psychologist Jean M. Twenge, "groups of friends outperform groups of acquaintances in both decision making and effort tasks." While making friends at work can affect our productivity in a positive way, it can also add to our overall happiness not only in the work place but also our everyday lives.

Developing deep friendships is good overall for the employee as well as the employer. Google and Facebook both feel it is important enough to provide opportunities

for their employees to bond. This bond building is provided through joint sports, exercise, and even meals, which are "good ways to foster cooperation." Some organizations such as McKinsey and Chevron, are developing alumni networks like colleges do. The networks encourage employees to see the importance of developing friendships on the job even when they don't stay at a job for years like workers did in the past.

Sometimes developing a deep relationship isn't necessary to have a "high-quality connection" with a coworker. Jane E. Dutton, professor at the University of Michigan finds that working on a single project can build engagement and trust for employees. This respect and trust may lead to friendship on a deeper level on or off the clock. It may just make for a better work environment knowing you can trust a coworker or enjoy working with them based on their expertise or work ethic.

I have found in my research for this article, it is important to develop a friendship with your coworkers. The level of friendship is up to you, but no matter how strong the friendship, it can only benefit you on and off the job.

Sources:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/06/opinion/sunday/adam-grant-friends-at-work-not-so-much.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/matthew-finch/the-importance-of-having-3_b_17305330.html

New York Post, Monday September 25, 2017 – article *Friends with Benefits* by Virginia Backaitis

Hot Off The Line

Q – New York Paid Family Leave (PFL) takes effect January 1, 2018. What are the employee eligibility requirements?

A – An employee with a regular work schedule of 20 or more hours per week is eligible after 26 weeks of employment and employees with a regular work schedule of less than 20 hours per week are eligible after 175 days worked. More information can be found at: https://www.ny.gov/sites/ny.gov/files/atoms/files/PaidFamilyLeave_BusinessOwnerFactSheet.pdf

HR Stats & Facts

- The top three frequently cited standards by Federal OSHA in 2016 were: #3-Scaffolding, general requirements, construction; #2-Hazard communication standard, general industry & #1-Fall protection, construction. *Source: www.osha.gov/commonstats*

Fun Facts

- The Erie canal was formally opened in November: November 4, 1825 to be exact. *Source: www.grablists.com*
- November starts on the same day of the week as March every year. *Source: www.ten-facts.com*

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are a first-tier government contractor with \$50,000 or more in federal government contracts and 50 or more employees at one location; or, a second-tier government contractor (supplies to a first-tier contractor) with \$50,000 or more in contracts and 50 or more employees at one location you are required to have an Affirmative Action Plan. MACNY can audit your plan, rewrite it, or create one for you as well as complete your Adverse Impact. If you are interested in receiving a quote or would like additional information please contact Patty Clark, HR Services Manager at 315-474-4201 x 10 or pclark@macny.org.

CPI

Wage/Clerical	August	July	Pt. Chg. (Mo.)	% Chg. (Mo.)	% Chg. (Yr.)
1967=100	713.2	710.8	2.5	0.3%	1.9%
1982-84=100	239.4	238.6	0.8	0.3%	1.9%
Urban					
1967=100	735.5	733.3	2.2	0.3%	1.9%
1982-84=100	245.5	244.8	0.7	0.3%	1.9%
Unemployment Rates					
August - Onondaga County: 4.6; Metropolitan Syracuse Area (MSA): 4.8					