



Creative Ways to Boost Employee Morale During the Holiday Season

As the year is soon to draw to a close, many workplaces are considering ways that they can bring a bit of end-of-year cheer into their routines. It's the perfect time to show appreciation for your team's hard work and create a positive, engaging atmosphere—without breaking the bank. Here are some fun, inclusive ways to boost employee morale this holiday season, while maintaining a professional and welcoming approach for everyone.

1. Give Back with a Charity Drive or Community Volunteering

The end of the year is a great time to give back and doing so as a team can strengthen bonds while supporting a good cause. Organise a charity drive where employees can donate food, clothing, or gifts to a local organisation, or set up a volunteer day where staff can help out at a local community event or charity.

Pro Tip: Engage your team in choosing the cause or charity they'd like to support, whether it's a food bank, animal shelter, or local community initiative. This ensures the activity resonates with everyone and promotes a sense of collective purpose.

2. Host a “Secret Gift” Exchange with a Theme

A classic gift exchange can be a great way to add some fun to the end of the year, but it's important to keep it inclusive. Rather than

centring it around Christmas, you could try a broader theme like “summer gifts,” “something that makes you smile,” or “Kiwi favourites.” This allows for a wide range of creative and thoughtful gift options while being mindful of diverse cultural and personal beliefs.

Pro Tip: Make participation optional so those who may not wish to take part can opt out comfortably. For remote or hybrid teams, consider organising a virtual version where gifts can be delivered directly to participants.

3. Organise a Dress-Up Day or Workspace Decorating Competition

Bring some end-of-year cheer into the workplace with a dress-up day or a workspace decorating contest. Instead of focusing on Christmas-themed attire, you could instead choose to make it more general, like “summer vibes,” “celebrate your culture,” or “bright and cheerful colours.” A desk or workspace decorating competition could follow the same idea, inviting everyone to bring a bit of their personality to their space.

Pro Tip: Offer a small prize for the most creative outfit or workspace, such as a coffee voucher or a day where the winner finishes work an hour early. These gestures are fun but low-pressure.

4. End-of-Year Appreciation Wall

Spread some positive vibes by setting up an appreciation wall where colleagues can write notes of gratitude or share what they’ve appreciated about each other’s contributions over the year. This could be a physical board in the break room or a digital version for remote teams, allowing everyone to participate.

Pro Tip: Consider reading out a few appreciation messages at a team meeting or end-of-year gathering. It's a wonderful way to end the year on a positive note, highlighting the support and connections built among team members.

5. Host a Fun, Inclusive Team-Building Activity

Team-building activities don't have to be traditional. Consider organising a quiz afternoon with fun, general knowledge questions or host a "Summer Games" with light-hearted activities like a trivia contest about New Zealand, a photo competition, or virtual games. The aim is to create a relaxed environment where people can enjoy themselves and strengthen bonds.

Pro Tip: Include questions or activities that reflect a range of cultural traditions and celebrations, ensuring everyone feels welcome. This can make the event more enriching and inclusive for all team members.

6. Themed Potluck Lunch or Morning Tea

A shared meal can bring people together, especially if it's a potluck where everyone can contribute a dish. Consider themes like "Kiwi summer favourites," "recipes from home," or "foods that make you feel good." This way, everyone has a chance to share something meaningful to them and learn more about each other's backgrounds.

Pro Tip: Make sure to accommodate dietary needs and be inclusive of those who may have food restrictions, so everyone can enjoy the event. This also ensures that no one feels left out.

Why It's Worth the Effort

Creating opportunities for your team to connect and celebrate at the end of the year (or any time) can help build morale, foster a

positive workplace culture, and set the stage for a fresh start in the new year. These activities don't have to be expensive or time-consuming but can have a lasting impact on how valued your employees feel.

By putting thought into inclusive, engaging activities, you can make sure that everyone in the team feels appreciated and part of the end-of-year cheer—without adding stress to an already busy time. It's a great way to end the year on a high note and strengthen the sense of camaraderie as you head into 2025.

What other ideas have you tried in your workplace? I would love to hear from you about any you thought worked particularly well – and please let me know if you are OK with me sharing your ideas with others on Tovia Consulting's [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

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