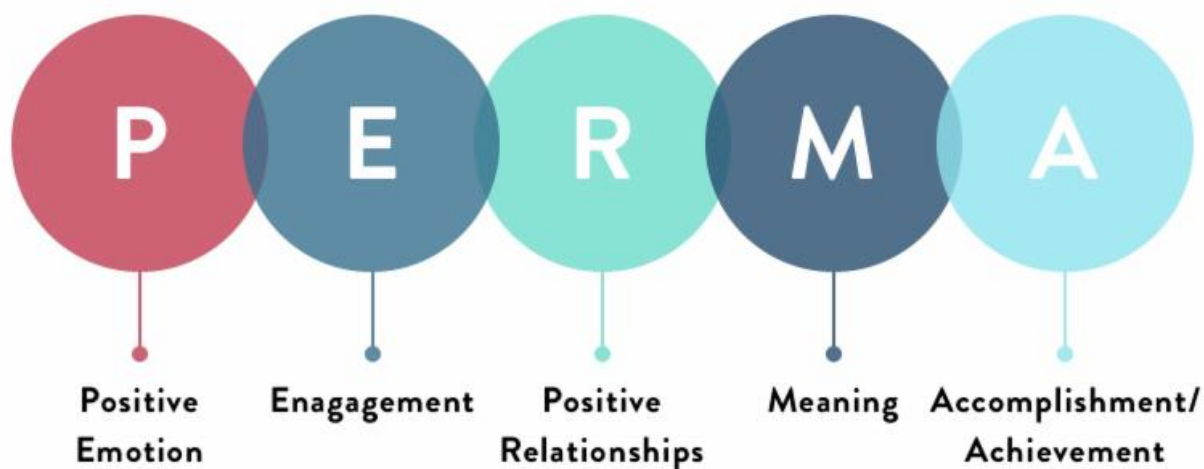


Encouraging Happiness at Work - NEWSLETTER 1



We have to admit that in these times it is difficult to talk about happiness and certainly happiness at work. The priorities are different: We want to survive, keep our jobs, see the end of the isolation and finally come back to normality...

Maybe it's better not to talk about happiness, but about hope.

In "The World Book of Hope" (Bormans, 2015), Leo Bormans quotes the well-known psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, survivor of the Holocaust: "The last freedom one can take away from man is the way he faces circumstances. That is the core of hope. Real hope does not create false expectations but is the source of positive emotions. It shows us new possibilities and makes passive people active again. Hope has a healthy influence on our mental health. Hope stimulates change."

With this message of hope, we want to inform you and give you our first insights about the new Erasmus+ project, [Happiness@work](#).

On 14th and 15th November 2019, the [Happiness@Work project](#) (Partnership for Creative Apprenticeships) was officially launched in Leuven.

[Happiness@Work](#) is a Strategic Partnership project funded by the European Community through the Erasmus+ KA2 programme. Partners:

- Obelisk NV – Belgium (Coordinator),
- CONSORZIO MATERAHUB INDUSTRIE CULTURALI E CREATIVE – Italy,
- Inova Consultancy Ltd - United Kingdom,
- Globalnet – Poland,
- Edit Value Consultoria Empresarial Lda Portugal.



What are the project goals?

The project aims:

- To increase happiness and satisfaction in the workplace by utilising the positive psychology methodology in micro businesses (MB), building a support system for both MB managers and employees.
- To improve the performance, motivation, engagement, resilience to change, conflict resolution skills, teamwork and creative thinking from managers and employees in micro businesses.
- To support managers to become better and happier leaders and employees by engaging in positive relationships at work and creating an overall happy workforce

How?

This will be realised by bringing together Martin Seligman's 5 ingredients of wellbeing into practice and translating them into a context that micro business managers and employees can relate to.

The 5 ingredients of wellbeing are known as PERMA: **Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.**

These elements can help people reach a life of fulfilment, happiness and meaning.

Happiness at work in each partner's country

In **Belgium** the statistics show that the 43% of the employees are very happy in their job and the 31% of the employees experience a lot of stress at work.

In **UK** the workplace management is primarily concerned with wellbeing and mental health, especially resilience. Particular attention is related to the job quality: above average for skills, autonomy and development (7th) and the stability of contracts (8th). Regrettably the UK is almost bottom for work-life balance (24th).

In **Italy**, 75% of people said they would be happier if they had a meaningful job, the 80% of Italians said having free time would make them happier as well as shorter and flexible working hours, the workplace should also be communicative and friendly, breaks are important as is working together. Some companies are starting to improve the level of happiness in the workplace through the support of the career coaching, psychologists and consultant expert in managing conflicts.

In **Poland** only 37% are happy at work, 26% of respondents feel job satisfaction and 40% of respondents positively assess their leader. Only recently, the first conference about happiness at work was organized.

In Portugal, the 7th World Happiness report 2019 done by Helliwell et al. (2019) has found that the country is in the 66th place (from 156 countries) in the ranking of Happiness 2016-2018. Also, recent studies about employer branding and work retention indicates that the most important attributes that are searched by Portuguese employees are attractive salary and benefits; work-life balance; pleasant work atmosphere; job security; and, career progression.



First tip!

It is scientifically proven that positive thoughts have a positive impact on your mental health and happiness: longer life span, better stress management and coping skills, increased physical wellbeing, among others.

Does positive thinking imply that we see the world through rose-colored lenses? Not at all. Positive thinking does not mean that you have to ignore or avoid the bad things. It does mean: 'don't think more negatively than strictly necessary and stay realistic and positive if things don't work out the way you want them to'. (Linda Boiler, Mental Fitness).

Even better: You can learn and train your positive thinking.

How?

You can try this tip...

- Encourage yourself to write down 5 positive things at the end of each day.
- This means that you do not immediately write down every positive experience as it happens.
- By not writing it down immediately, but by remembering it, you stimulate your brain with positive thoughts.
- Before you go to bed, you can finish the day with gratitude and positivity.

