



Session Objectives

- Explain the power of play.
- Identify three benefits of play in the workplace.
- Create a “Plan for Play” in the workplace that can be implemented in your organization.

We all remember play...



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LEARNING VS.
PLAY



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WORK VS. PLAY



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Is play important?
Is it powerful?



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PLAY...

- Allows us to create something new out of what exists
- Allows us to go beyond ourselves
- Helps create social connections
- Decreases feelings of alienation
- Offers the opportunity to form new relationships
- Boosts creativity and innovation
- Builds trust
- Decreases stress levels

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Different PATTERNS of PLAY

- Solitary



- Parallel



- Associative



- Cooperative



- Competitive



- Spectator



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Stages of Complexity of Play

- 1st Stage: Simple Sensory Exploration
 - Manipulation of the play material (scribbling with crayons, pouring water and sand, or ringing a bell)
- 2nd Stage: Symbolic Play
 - Crossing two blocks to make the letter “T” or offering play dough “tortillas” to another child
- 3rd Stage: Substituting Words for Actions and Materials
 - Language proficiency increases, cooperative play begins

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**“You can discover
more about a person
in an hour of play
than in a year of
conversation.”
- Plato**

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When was the last time YOU played?



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**ACTIVITY #1:
THUMB BALL**

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Unengaged Employees



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- o High turnover
- o Absenteeism
- o Disgruntled/complaining/whining employees
- o Time off-task resolving employee problems
- o Employees and managers blaming others
- o Lack of teamwork
- o Lack of performance feedback
- o Lack of learning
- o Difficulty attracting and retaining talent
- o Difficulty developing talent, especially leadership talent
- o Poor product and service quality
- o Customer dissatisfaction
- o Vendor dissatisfaction
- o Low compliance with rules, regulations, and processes
- o Theft, shrinkage, and waste
- o High injury rate and poor safety
- o Lack of innovation and creativity
- o Lack of initiative
- o Lack of trust
- o Lack of recognition and celebration

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- According to Gallup's "[State of The Global Workplace](#)" report, only 13% employees around the world are actively engaged in their jobs, finding satisfaction in their work and focused on creating value for their employer.
- Actively disengaged employees outnumber engaged employees by 2-1.

March 25, 2014 - [Forbes](#)

Real Quotes from Real Employees

- o “It would be great if I had more time to play; I can’t in the demanding climate of real work!”
- o “Play is good. That’s obvious. So what? I’m here to work”
- o “Of course I need to play more. Tell me something I don’t know.
- o Tell the stockholders and my CEO, then maybe I’ll be able to play.”
- o “Play is for people who are retired or have trust funds. Or both.”
- o “Play is for kids.”

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If Play Matters, Why Don’t More Leaders Implement It?

- o Many leaders in charge of organizations do not have the information to understand the true nature of play.
- o Most see work and play as being separate
- o Many believe play is the opposite of work
- o BUT... science has already produced data to show that playful ways of work lead to more creative, adaptable workers and teams!
- o Marian Diamond – “Response of the Brain to Enrichment Work”
 - o Describes how “enriched” environments powerfully shape the cerebral cortex – the area of the brain where the highest cognitive processing takes place
 - o She concludes “there are measurable benefits to enriching an individual’s environment in whatever terms that individual perceives his immediate environment as enriched [i.e., discover practical ways for people to do whatever is playful, joyful to them]”

“There is good evidence that if you allow employees to engage in something they want to do, (which) is playful, there are better outcomes in terms of productivity and motivation.”

- Dr. Stuart Brown, founder of the National Institute for Play

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ACTIVITY #2: TRIVIA

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PLAY in the Workplace...

- Attracts young talent
- Boosts productivity
- Lowers stress levels
- Encourages teamwork
- Boosts optimism
- Increases motivation to move up within the company
- Improves concentration and perseverance
- Engages the creative side of the brain
 - When fully engaged in play psychological barriers are removed and thoughts stop being censored or edited...allowing for Creativity!

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Qualities of top organizations

- Re-defining the workplace through PLAYFULNESS
- Many allow “play time” every week
 - Intuit (Turbo Tax) – Allows 4 hours per week to play with new ideas
 - Banfield – Allows pets at work
 - Google – Allows the pursuit of independent activities during the day to reduce stress - Similar to recess
 - play beach volleyball, go bowling or scale a climbing wall; activities that take place at the search engine’s main campus in California
 - LinkedIn - employees can play foosball or ping-pong when they tire of answering emails
 - Zynga (Farmville) - arcade games in the hallways

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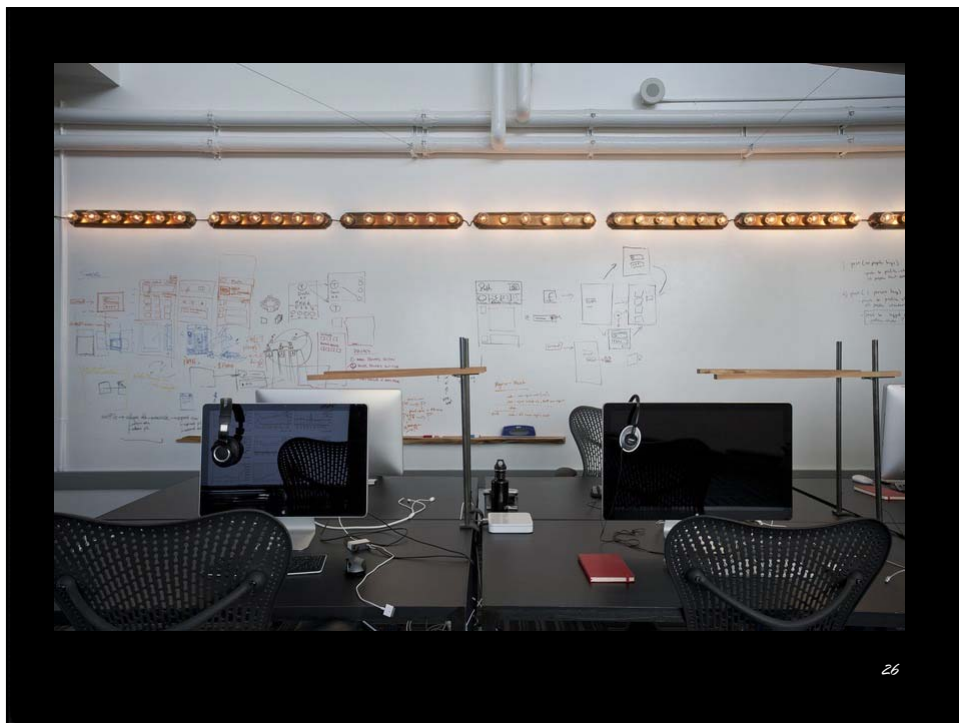
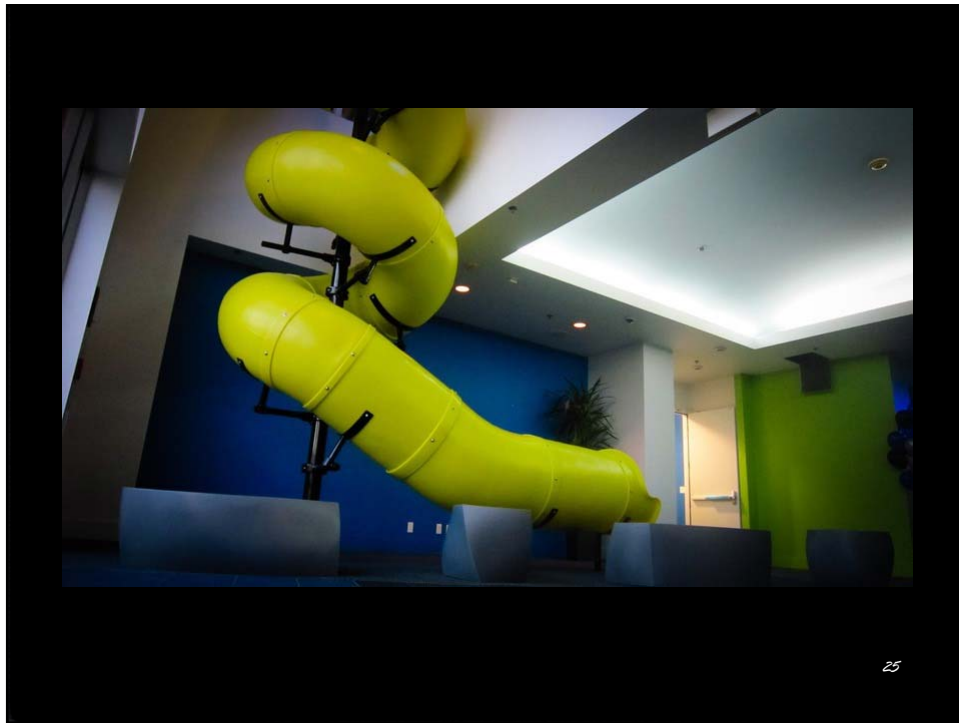
- If you want to re-engage your unengaged employees...
CREATE A PLAN FOR PLAY!

****All Recreation Staff in
Gainesville, FL
Play Facilitators**

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1. Policies and Procedures

- o Activity: Scavenger Hunt
- o Individuals or small teams
- o Hand out a list of items and answers that each team needs to find.
 - o Must be work related

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2. Building Relationships

- o Activity: Get to Know Me!
- o Choose a partner who you do not know or do not know very well.
- o Each of you answer these 3 questions:
 - o 1) name a moment in your work or personal life of which you are very proud
 - o 2) name something that most people do not know about you
 - o 3) name one item from your "bucket list"

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3. Communication & Teamwork

- o Activity: Big Foot
- o Have everyone line up in a straight line
- o Ask participants to close their eyes
- o The goal is for the participants to re-organize themselves according to shoe size **without stating their shoe size to each other**

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4. Team Connections

- o Activity: Spider Web
- o Form a circle
- o Hand a ball of twine to one person
- o Ask that person to share something embarrassing or something they are proud of
- o After they answer – hold the end of the twine and toss the ball to someone across the circle
- o Continue until everyone has had a chance to share

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5. Just for Fun

- o Activity: Kid's Stuff
 - o Place poster board, markers, etc. in the center of the table
 - o Create a board game based on the work your organization conducts
 - o Make cards that are chosen with job-based questions that must be answered in order to move forward
 - o Dice can be used to determine how many spaces to move

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6. Value Sharing

- o Activity: Someone You Admire
- o Have everyone share the name of someone they admire (current or historical figure) and WHY they believe this person is admirable.

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7. Communication Styles & Approaches

- Activity: See What I mean?
- Draw a picture on a piece of paper and hand it to a volunteer
- Have the volunteer stand with their back to the group
- The volunteer must explain how to draw the picture on their paper to the rest of the group using only verbal instructions to describe the shapes
 - Each person needs paper and something to write with
- Ask a second volunteer to do the same thing with a different picture
 - Discuss the differences in communication styles and approaches

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ACTIVITY#3: WORDLES

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Ideas are scary.
They threaten
how things are.



But under the
proper care they
can be beautiful.



So get to work and start
playing!

QUESTIONS?



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