



Alexander Kjerulf

Why every company should have a CHO (Chief Happiness Officer)



I think every company should have a CHO – a Chief Happiness Officer. Here's why.

The CHO title is modelled on all the other CXO titles. The CTO is in charge of technology, the CFO is responsible for the financials, the COO is head of operations, etc.

And once you realize that employee happiness may be the most important success factor for a business today, it becomes essential to have a Chief Happiness Officer, someone who is the main driver in making and keeping the workplace happy.

I see more and more CHOs which is fantastic because this is one of the most important roles in the organization. They may not always be called Chief Happiness Officers – it can be the HR manager, it can be the CEO, it can even be a regular employee. The important thing is that it's a person who sees themselves as responsible for making and keeping the organization happy.

Why do companies appoint CHOs? For one simple reason: Because they are realizing that happy workplaces make more money.

Studies show that happy employees are more productive, more innovative, more motivated, more energetic and more optimistic. They are also less sick, stay with the company longer and make the customers more loyal. For those reasons (and many

others) happy companies make more money.

Also, companies are starting to see that there is an ethical dimension to running a workplace, and that a corporate culture that is toxic and stressful will slowly wear employees down and can ruin their careers, their health and their private lives. This is wrong and more and more leaders understand that a workplace should have a net-positive influence on employees' lives.

So what does a CHO do? The job is both inspirational and practical. First, this person should (of course) be happy him/herself. It should be someone who can inspire happiness in others by their nature, and someone who is fun, likable and has a lot of energy. It should also be a person who genuinely cares about the well-being of people in the workplace.

Secondly, the CHO's job is to spearhead different initiatives to make people happier in the workplace, like celebrations, trainings, events and similar activities in the workplace that help people do great work and see the purpose of what they do.

The important thing is that the CHO has the support of top-level management. They may not require a huge budget but if the CEO does not give a crap about the employees, all the efforts of the CHO will be wasted. Or worse, they may come off as a cynical attempt to keep people content in a toxic culture.

Some people hate the very idea of a CHO – they find it creepy and weird. And there are absolutely some pitfalls. The role is not to be a corporate clown or a happiness enforcer, constantly checking if everyone's happy. That would be horrible.

But having a great CHO, a person somewhere in the organization who has the skills, the knowledge and the passion to help create a happy workplace and who has the unconditional support of top management makes perfect sense. It will not only make employees happier, it will also most likely make the company money.

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Alexander is the founder and Chief Happiness Officer of **Woohoo Inc** and one of the world's leading experts on *happiness at work*. He is an author and speaker, presenting and conducting workshops on happiness at work at businesses and conferences in over 30 countries. His clients include companies like Hilton, Microsoft, LEGO, IKEA, Shell, HP and IBM. Alex is the author of 4 books including the international bestseller **Happy Hour is 9 to 5 – How to Love Your Job, Love Your Life and Kick Butt at Work**.

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