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Working Hyggelig

Hygge is a trend that hardly anyone can get past. Whether furniture store, magazine, or book-case – hygge seems to be everywhere. Especially in the cold season we long for warmth and coziness. The Scandinavians seem to have a little ahead of us. No wonder they know each other with darkness.

But candles and furniture are not my subject. Rather, it is about the non-material things that make working in northern Europe so enjoyable. A feeling of warmth arises not only from fire, but also from the interaction with each other. And in fact, the Scandinavians seem to have the hang of the shot to transfer the feeling of candlelight, warm wool blankets, and cinnamon snails into the world of work.

We also have companies that have recognized that a bad atmosphere is crippling productivity and driving out good people. But this has not yet arrived nationwide. And so they will still exist in some companies that



- Department heads who do not greet anyone they meet in the hallways and who do not really know who actually works in their department,
- Managers who do not even think about stopping a hard-packed employee's door,
- Managers who find it completely OK when employees are afraid of them and maintain a problem-oriented rather than a solution-oriented management style,
- Employees who ask others who walk briefly through the neighboring offices in the morning to wish you a good morning if they have nothing better to do,
- people at all levels of the hierarchy who are hoarding knowledge to gain advantages,
- arrogance and the quest for power,
- culture of personal control.

No one can really afford this in times of skill shortages, and so the term "New Work" has often appeared lately. For us, this may be a whole new working culture, but it has been around for a long time in other countries.

For many decades, Scandinavia has had exactly the working atmosphere that we want to create with "new work" techniques. It is based on quite simple concepts such as trust and appreciation. These words are also used in German companies, but in Scandinavian ones it is not just words.

Here are a few examples of what the northerners are doing better:

- The focus is on people and the assumption that everyone wants to do their best if you leave them. This creates a culture of trust. Personal performance control has no scope in such companies. It is a give and take.
- There are often flexible working hours and places. If you must leave sooner because there are important family things to settle, you don't get a saying from your manager – because he does. The work will, of course, be made up.
- The design of the workplaces is developed together with the workers. Why not ask how they imagine a pleasant workplace? Maybe the team does not want a kicker, but something completely different.
- Those who work overtime are often seen in Scandinavian companies not as super performers, but as disorganized.
- A personal competition at the expense of others is not worthwhile, because people and teams are in the foreground. Arrogance, hierarchy thinking and behavior are just as unprofitable.
- Critical questions are not frowned upon, but desirable. If you want to change something, you must convince others. In this way, topics are well thought out.
- Mistakes are a natural part of the work and are considered in this way. Finally, an error can lead to new discoveries.

All this and more, of course, also affects health at work. Employees who can also be themselves in the office and are appreciated for their individuality are simply happier and less ill. Everyone wins.

Anyone who thinks of emigrating now has my full understanding. I would have liked to have spent my years as an employee in such a working environment. But even if we prefer to stay here, we can do much better from now on. The higher the position in the company, the more opportunities there are. And best of all, creating such a working environment costs no or little money, just a lot of goodwill, the willingness to trust and probably a lot of consistency.

If you want to know more about hygge in the office, you will find many articles, specialist literature and certainly seminar offers on the Internet.

Take advantage of the New Year and make your working environment hyggelig.

Editorial Notes

About the Author

Wiebke Brüssel is a graduate in business administration and managing partner of Strategiebüro (The Strategy Office) in Germany.

We moderate planning processes - including preparation and documentation. From a single question to strategic corporate planning. Our clients are companies and organizations in the private, social, and public sectors, companies at the beginning of their development, and founders.

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