12 Easy Ways to Boost Morale

These ideas were adapted from several sources. Use whatever ideas fit you, your team, or your organizational culture!

1. Go to lunch as a team. This was a Friday "ritual" for one team I know of, and it became a regular time to process the week; shake off some of the work stress; and share lots of friendly conversation. This particular team had their list of favorite "haunts" which included mostly inexpensive eateries with room for the team to merge tables and take over a comfortable area for their group.

2. Schedule fun contest days. Have an "Ugly Tie" or "Ugly Sweater" day (or something similar). Have a judge choose winners and losers and award joke or fun prizes! NOTE: Be sure to take pictures that you can post on a team bulletin board!)

3. Distribute cartoon memos. Next time you send out an e-mail, attach a cartoon or short joke. Just avoid "blue" subjects; bad taste; religion; and politics.

4. Offer lunchtime movies. Show funny TV episodes or movies (in installments) in the break room during lunch.

5. Set up a betting pool. Yes, you can collect bets from your team for special events like the Super Bowl, the Kentucky Derby, the Oscars, etc. and it is perfectly legal as long as all the money you collect is distributed.

6. Meet outside. If you have a comfortable place outside your office where your team can meet during nice weather, consider having your next team meeting there! One executive I know took his team out to the local ice cream store at a nearby park, where an adjacent patio area was the perfect setting for a springtime "touch base" meeting.

7. Create a humor bulletin board. Set aside a place for team members to post their favorite cartoons, jokes, or funny photos. Here's another variation...

8. Create a team "Newsletter Board" where team members can post items each month that publicize what they are doing or experiencing or celebrating. They can post photos, announcements, invitations to events, and other newsy items about their activities. Still another variation...

9. Start a FaceBook page for the team or a Team Page on the organizational share drive that accomplishes the same thing.

10. Post retro pictures of your team. Have team members bring childhood photos of themselves to post on your bulletin board, to create a photographic/visual team roster. NOTE: This could be one of your special fun contest days per item #2—posting everyone's baby picture and challenging the team to figure out who's who, with a "fun" prize (like a giant candy bar or $10 gift certificate) going to the one who correctly identifies the most pictures.

11. Go to Disneyland. Seriously…go to Disneyland, or some other type of "fun" park or theme park in your area. Sometimes you can get group rates and then carpool to keep expenses down. One executive I know rented a local fun park for a half-day of activities for his team, which included miniature golf; batting cages; and go-kart racing. NOTE: You could also have a miniature golf TOURNAMENT with fun prizes (and lots of candid photo-ops for your bulletin board) that would up the ante of fun for your team.

12. Hold a White Elephant Christmas Gift Exchange. It's a corny idea, but a fun one. Everyone brings a "white elephant gift" to exchange. A White Elephant is an item you own that you really don't want or are more than willing to give away. Sometimes it's an item that is old, weird, or funky (something you might even find in a thrift store). But sometimes it's an item that might actually be of practical value or worth to someone. You meet as a group and let each person – one-by-one – open their gift.   When gifts are revealed, other people can "swap" their gift for the newly-opened one. The usual rule is that only 3 swaps are allowed per gift. NOTE: You can also have a gift exchange with REAL gifts by setting a dollar limit for gift values, to keep the event within a comfortable cost for each participant.

And for good measure...add these two to the list:

13. Post thank-you notes on a team bulletin board. Have a spot on your team bulletin board for team members to post thank-you's to other team members, so that EVERYONE on the team can read those words of encouragement. You can also use the space to post thank-you's from customers, clients, executives in the organization, or other departments.

14. Create a space on your bulletin board to post creative ideas for change or improvement. This is the equivalent of the "Suggestion Box" only it creates a public platform that allows the ideas to be read by everyone on the team, not just by a select few. Another variation is the "Wish List" of items—things that your team members "wish" could be addressed, improved, changed, added, or even abolished!