TOOLKIT #5 - CREATING MOTIVATION AND FUN AT WORK

Motivation and Engagement Resources *(For Courts of All Sizes)*

📚 Books (Actionable, leadership-friendly, not overly corporate)

- **"The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups" by Daniel Coyle**
  A fantastic guide on building connection, trust, and belonging inside teams.

- **"Leaders Eat Last" by Simon Sinek**
  Focuses on how strong leadership cultures drive higher engagement and trust.

- **"Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us" by Daniel H. Pink**
  Explains what really motivates people: autonomy, mastery, and purpose (not just paychecks!).

- **"Permission to Screw Up" by Kristen Hadeed**
  A real-world, honest look at creating culture by embracing humanity, trust, and connection.

🌐 Websites & Templates *(Short reads and free resources.)*

- **Gallup Workplace Research** — gallup.com/workplace
  (World-class insights on employee engagement and why connection matters.)

- **TinyPulse** — tinypulse.com
  (Great short articles on employee happiness, feedback, recognition, and team building.)

- **SHRM - Employee Engagement Resources** — shrm.org
  (Free templates and best practices on recognition programs, team communication, and engagement strategies.)

- **MindTools: Building Team Trust** — mindtools.com
  (Checklists and action plans for fostering team connection.)

- **Team Health Surveys** — Simple anonymous surveys asking about communication, workload balance, and morale.

    - Tools: Microsoft Forms, SurveyMonkey (free versions), or Google Forms.

- **Weekly Connection Rituals** — Encourage short "Wins of the Week" huddles where every staff member shares something they're proud of.

- **Peer Recognition Boards** — A simple corkboard or virtual platform (like a Teams Channel or Google Doc) where staff post shout-outs.

- **Quarterly Check-Ins** — Not formal reviews — just casual 20-minute conversations to check how staff are feeling, what's working, and where they need support.

- ***My Year of Saying Yes to Everything* by Shonda Rhimes - TED Talk**
  Rhimes shares her experience of embracing opportunities and the transformative power of play. She highlights how saying "yes" to play revitalized her passion for work.

- ***The Happy Secret to Better Work* by Shawn Achor - TED Talk**
  Achor, a psychologist, explores the connection between happiness and productivity. He suggests that cultivating a positive mindset can lead to improved work performance and satisfaction.

- ***The Puzzle of Motivation* by Dan Pink - TED Talk**
  Pink examines the science behind motivation, revealing that autonomy, mastery, and purpose are more effective than monetary incentives in driving employee performance.

Motivation and Engagement Activities *(For Courts of All Sizes)*

1. Recognition Boards

- Monthly "Wall of Wins" or "Kudos Board" where staff post shout-outs to each other (paper or digital).
- Recognizing small successes motivates everyone.

2. Random Surprise Days

- Surprise "Popcorn Bar Day," "Ice Cream in the Breakroom," or "Bagel Morning" — announced only on the day of!
- Unexpected treats = instant smiles and higher morale.

3. Traveling Trophy

- Create a fun traveling trophy (gold gavel, funny hat, superhero cape) that gets awarded weekly to someone who went above and beyond.

4. Desk Drop Gifts

- Leadership or peers can leave small notes, candy bars, or fun office supplies on desks as "thank you" surprises.

5. Motivation Monday Emails

- Leadership sends a short, uplifting, or funny email to kick off the week — quote, meme, story, or shout-out.

6. Themed Dress-Up Days

- Fun casual themes: Favorite Sports Team Day, Crazy Socks Day, Pajama Friday (if court schedule allows lighter dress).

7. Trivia Challenges

- Monthly trivia contest with small prizes (Starbucks card, office bragging rights).
- Trivia can be work-related ("Court Facts") or fun ("Name That '90s Song").

8. "Guess Who?" Game

- Collect funny or unknown facts about team members ahead of time and hold a contest to guess who matches each fact.

9. Lunch & Learns

- Casual sessions during lunch on fun, non-work topics: "How to Grow a Garden," "Travel Tips," "Holiday Cooking Hacks."
- Staff members could even *lead* some sessions!

10. Goal-Setting Celebrations

- After major goals (like case backlogs cleared, program launches), celebrate with a pizza party, group outing, or team awards.

11. Team Passion Projects

- Give staff 1–2 hours a quarter to work on a passion project that benefits the court (suggest a new process, redesign a form, create a customer service guide).

12. Community Connection Days

- Attend city volunteer events together (animal shelter, food drives) — it builds pride and deeper bonds.

13. Court Spirit Week

- A full week of small themed days (games, dress-up, potlucks) capped off with a group lunch or awards ceremony.

🎯 Best Practice Tips for Building Connection

- **Consistency matters more than extravagance.** Small, regular moments of appreciation and check-ins, once-a-year parties.
- **Leaders set the tone.** If leaders model kindness, vulnerability, and positivity, teams will follow.
- **Mix formal and informal connection.** Training + birthday lunches + spontaneous donut days = healthy team engagement.
- **Recognition must be specific.** “Good job” is okay. “Good job leading the docket this morning even when the schedule was tight” is much better!

Tip: Fun Doesn't Mean Unprofessional — Motivation and fun can live inside a culture of professionalism. Teams that *enjoy* their work environment treat the court, each other, and the public with more energy, creativity, and care.