



Mineral



Question of the Week

MARCH 29, 2023

Question

Should we encourage our employees to be friends at work?

ANSWER

It's great to create a workplace where people have the opportunity to form friendships, but don't worry if not everyone shows interest in befriending their coworkers.

Friendships at work can be a way for employees to feel connected and that they belong in the organization. A [Gallup poll from 2022](#) found that having a best friend at work provides essential emotional and social support that people need and ties strongly to key business outcomes.

You can encourage friendships in the workplace by scheduling time during the workday for employees to get to know each other. Team lunches, game rooms, and coffee outings are popular options. Video chats—just to connect, without an agenda—are common in remote organizations. Another way to encourage friendships is to make it clear that employees are allowed to share about their personal lives as they feel comfortable, such as encouraging employees to decorate their office space with personal items or leaders sharing about their lives.

Even with the benefits of having friends in the office, it's important to remember not everyone wants to make friends at work. Some employees would prefer not to socialize much with their coworkers,

and they can be just as productive and engaged. Don't exclude or marginalize employees who don't participate in the social activities, and don't inquire as to *why* they don't. In general, while encouraging employees to form friendships can have many benefits, you need to do so in a way that respects all employees' preferences.

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.