

Coffee Culture: How is it impacting the workplace?

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What do you do when you come to the office and start working or when you are not able to concentrate at work or need a break? The answer is coffee, but it is not just coffee, the culture associated with it. So, how is this coffee culture affecting workplaces?

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Highlights

- Coffee culture indicates that the organisation has its finger on the pulse and is in sync with the needs of its people
- Coffee culture started as an unwritten rule at the workplace and has since then culminated into a phenomenon



A research by DeskTime shows 43 per cent of office workers believe that coffee increases their productivity, 89 per cent say that a good cup of coffee makes their day better at work and 19 per cent say that brainstorms are better around a coffee machine.

One thing which all of us like about the office is coffee and the small area in the office where chit chats happen over a cup of coffee. At workplaces, coffee doesn't just act as a stimulant for wakefulness, alleviates fatigue and improves concentration and focus, but it is also a stimulant for determining culture and connections among employees.

With the new workforce preferring work-life balance and a healthy workplace to work in, amenities like premium quality coffee are becoming a factor for employee retention.

According to a survey done by Nespresso, 65 per cent of employees expect high-quality coffee in the workplace, 77 per cent of employees agree that morning coffee breaks are important and 92 per cent of employees want to have a social space (coffee/lunch spaces) in the office.

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Amid increasing consumption of coffee and the need for coffee breaks, a coffee culture has been set up in organisations. To get a better understanding of the prevalence of the coffee culture, ETHRWorld interacted with HR professionals for expert insights into its impact on employee productivity.

What and how prevalent is coffee culture?

Research by DeskTime highlights that 78 per cent of executives drink coffee and 26 per cent of them drink three or more cups a day. Urvi Aradhya, CHRO, K Raheja Corp, says that coffee is a popular drink in workplaces and coffee culture is a common part of the workplace to make new relationships and discussions.

She says, "Coffee is the warm embrace of inspiration in a cup. A drink that one could enjoy in solitude, but also spark meaningful conversations at work. Coffee has traditionally been a very popular local drink in South India, gaining more popularity over the last two decades across India, especially so with the café culture boom, further fuelled by the pandemic."

She adds, "It is a prevalent practice and one that is increasingly gaining popularity. The coffee machine is no longer just a place to fill that cup. It's a place where new office relationships are made, ideas are cracked, and discussions are had. Basically, a lot at the workplace can happen over a cup of coffee."

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Emphasising how coffee is no more a luxury at the workplace, Aradhya says coffee culture is a sign of employee culture of an organisation.

"Caffeine has been an established favourite amongst office goers. With evolving refined tastes of the new-age workforce, coffee is hardly an optional luxury, it is more a basic given. A key part of a business setting, coffee culture indicates that the organisation has its finger on the pulse and is in sync with the needs of its people," adds Aradhya.

Similarly, Umanath Nayak, Head of HR, Wakefit.co, emphasises that coffee culture is a form of catalyst in establishing relationships among employees and it has existed for a long time at workplaces.

“It is an excellent way to connect with colleagues and initiate interesting conversations about the workplace and beyond while savouring the much-needed ‘cup of joe.’ Coffee culture started as an unwritten rule at the workplace and has since then culminated into a phenomenon. It has been known to induce greater motivation, spark creativity, boost morale and build camaraderie among co-workers,” says Nayak.

The impact of coffee culture

Consumption of coffee triggers the adrenal gland as a result of which a flight or fight response is generated in the body which takes the body into survival mode, hence giving an instant energy boost.

The research by DeskTime also shows that 43 per cent of office workers believe that coffee increases their productivity, 89 per cent say that a good cup of coffee makes their day better at work and 19 per cent say that brainstorming is better around a coffee machine.

Highlighting how coffee can increase employee productivity at the workplace, Nayak says, “Coffee is one of the most preferred beverages at work, and drinking coffee in moderation has been known to increase endorphin production and consequently improve one’s mood and productivity at the workplace.”

Moreover, Nayak says that coffee culture is a driving factor for different forms of communication.

He says, “Coffee culture can encourage open communication by providing a comfortable environment for employees to interact with each other. While conversations may range from quick brainstorming sessions to discussing global affairs, to even lighter topics, this practice leads to a resultant increase in productivity and higher levels of creativity.”

Also, Nayak adds about how coffee culture can give a chance to break from work. He says, “Bringing people together through this practice creates a space to share, listen, and be heard without the need for any agenda, letting conversations flow freely. At a larger level, coffee culture brings in the need for employees to take breaks every now and then and break the monotony of sitting in one place.”

Sharing about the similar context of coffee culture increasing productivity, Aradhya says that coffee culture helps to create happy workplaces and build trust among employees.

Aradhya says, “Building relationships with colleagues is not just crucial to productivity at the workplace, but also to create a happier working environment. Whether you're discussing fresh ideas or working on a project together, a relaxed environment enables interactions and meaningful discussions. Coffee breaks are also known to establish trust and understanding which works wonders during times of conflict.”

Scientific research has indicated that moderate consumption of caffeine has been effective in increasing productivity at work. Coffee culture, especially after the pandemic, can act as a tool to restore the human touch in workplaces.