



## APPLYING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY TO INCREASE HAPPINESS IN WORKING FOR EMPLOYEES: A CASE STUDY OF EMPLOYEES AT ABC CO., LTD

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### Abstract

The study of applying Appreciative Inquiry to increase happiness in working for employees at ABC Co.,Ltd. aimed to find positive experiences, employee's impression which make them work happily using Appreciative Inquiry to be used for the development to happiness organization (Happy Workplace) The interview was used for this study to collect qualitative data and find Convergences and Divergences including SOAR Analysis to design project which is related to the concept of Happy 8 organization. Then

the happiness levels of employee were measured by HAPPINOMETER before and after project's implementation to determine the outcome. The result showed the guideline to increase happiness for employees which 8 projects were proposed as follows; 1) "Outing & Team Building Trip" 2) "Telling a good story" 3) "Little note, Life changed" 4) "Employee of the Month" 5) "Happy birthday to our beloved" 6) "Moral organization" 7) "Happy Family" and 8) "Sport Day". After project implemented, it was found that the working environment is better, employees look happier, more interaction, all employees participate this project together and turnover rate is also decreased. In the first month of starting the project, happiness levels of employees were measured by HAPPINOMETER which is the initial happiness and after remaining 5 projects were continuously implemented; happiness levels of employees were again measured and found that it is increased and organization analyze by PERMA Model have element of happiness complete. The research results show when increases level of happiness the employees an organization fully happiness and have elements of happiness to make the work had been completed on schedule, and customer appreciation increased which correlates to project goals.

**Keywords:** Appreciative Inquiry, Happiness, Happy Workplace, HAPPINOMETER, SOAR Analysis, PERMA Model

## Introduction

Happiness are experience of pleasure and meaning. People who have positive emotions that life itself is replete with meaning, happiness was associated with exposure to positive mood today concerning the benefits that would have been present. The meaning that comes from having a purpose in life are of benefit to be received in the future. [1]Happiness can call “Subjective of Well-Being Satisfaction [2] and happiness can measure by 5 elements of happiness; PERMA consist of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment they make to life well-being. [3]

Employees are a resource that is highly important to the organization. The success of organization to be achieved and sustainably grown concludes a part from skillful employees and collaboration in the organization effectively, having the right attitude in line with the organization toward aimed goals.

The effective performance of employees comes when the employees are satisfied, engaged and have faith in an organization which makes employees happy at work and ready to dedicate their energies in working for the organization. The workers are happy and organization fully happiness or Happy Workplace, the good results will come after. [4]

In 2015, Thailand is stepping into ASEAN Free Trade or Association of Southeast Asian Nations: ASEAN), resulting in changes in the economic, social and political aspects. For economy, every business has to be prepared to cope with the changes that will occur. Those with the ability will be profitably advantage. It has to adapt in order to survive and grow constantly. The liberalization of services, foreign providers are able to open offices in ASEAN freely for legal, tourism, health service which were lacked in 4 new countries including Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia and Myanmar. [5] The expansion and changes occur to accommodate the needs of health services for private sector as well as the policy of economics, society, politics of the government, resulting in the business of medical equipment directly.

ABC Co.,Ltd. is one of medical equipment company which policy was modified to be in accordance with the situation in order to prepare to survive and grow constantly in changing condition. The goals were set to all departments such as increasing sales volume, achievement, increasing efficiency of after-sales service, etc. The performances are also measured by Key Performance Indicators: KPI) with clear direction and supporting documents.

Increasing target and process modification of employees in various department effects on employees such as stress, pressure from target received. Working environment starts to be stressful, employees have less interaction and unhappy. They are ready to quit and risky for damage to business, image and reputation of organization, resulting in resignation trends of employees rising. Cost of operation from recruiting new employees is higher and work was needed to expedite to meet the goals. When employee’s level of happiness decrease, wok efficiency decrease too.

As ABC Co.,Ltd. was facing those problems, it is challenging and there is the opportunities to study and solve the problems by applying Appreciative Inquiry to discover the positive experiences, impression and what makes employees happy in order to find ways to increase happiness and improve the organization to be “The organization of happiness” or Happy



Workplace, also lead the organization to success and cope with the changes coming for the survival of the business, stable growth and sustainability.

Appreciative Inquiry assumption that in every organization have a good experience or strengths of the organization. Then use the search process together, find the best in a person or organization. The positive experience through questioning positive, good story from the organization will be a great inspiration. In the organization to overcome obstacles. And achieve goals that have dreamed or imagined success[6]

### **Objectives**

1. To find positive experiences, impression and what makes employees happy at work by Appreciative Inquiry.
2. To prepare the projects and development guideline to be the organization of happiness (Happy Workplace)

### **Methodology**

The study beginning asking about positive experiences, impression and what makes employees happy at work applying Appreciative Inquiry including 4 D Cycle as follows: Step 1 Discovery: interview to discover the best experience and impression in work. Then, Convergences and Divergences were analyzed and happiness levels were prior measured by HAPPINOMETER before starting the project. Step 2 Dream: Convergences and Divergences from interview of positive experiences and impression were used to expand their influence to create the happiness in work based on the concept of creating Happy Workplace. Step 3 Design: analyzing Convergences and Divergences from Discover and Dream step to determine strength and opportunity by SOAR Analysis to prepare the projects which make people happy to work project related which concept of Happy Workplace. Step 4 Destiny: Implementation designed to the practice was escalated to the executive to assign to all employees participate together. Projects were monitored by observation and evaluated by HAPPINOMETER and PERMA Model after 4 month, 8 months and 12 months.

### **Scope of study Population and Sample**

Samples were selected purposively from interviews with employees to find positive experiences and impression which make them work happily. The samples use 25 people (Operational level with working in companies at least 1 year)

### **Instrumentation**

SOAR Analysis and Appreciative Inquiry were used in this study by in-depth interview between the interviewer and the interviewee.

## Data collection

In this study, Primary and Secondary data were used as follows:

1. Primary Data: Observation and semi-structured interview were used and planned in advance in the interview process with the aim of finding an impression and experience in working with the positive questions.
2. Secondary Data: Data collection came from research, Theory and related literature in the library and electronics resource to analyze, synthesize and compare with the primary data collected.

Once the interview is complete, the data were analyzed to cycle of Appreciative Inquiry.

## Results

1. To find positive experiences, impression and what makes employees happy at work applying Appreciative Inquiry.

### Question 1: What is your impression when you are working here?

#### Convergences

1. friendly colleagues
2. Good teamwork and shared experiences
3. Freedom to work
4. Appropriate compensation and bonus
5. Good coordination between teams
6. Good support from colleagues

#### Divergences

1. Good coaching from Supervisors
2. Opportunity to Development training of employees
3. Opinions were open listened
4. Opportunity to improve English skill
5. Responsibility of colleagues
6. Welfare and benefits cares

### Question 2: Which experiences make you the most happy? Please kindly explain.

#### Convergences

1. Support from colleagues
2. Acceptance and acknowledgement from colleagues
3. Helps from colleagues

#### Divergences

1. Reliability earned from customers
2. Reliability from an organization



3. Opportunity to improve skills from an organization
4. Good welfare and benefits from an organization

2. To prepare the projects and development guideline to be the organization of happiness

### SOAR Analysis

#### 1. Strengths

- 1) The company has good corporate culture in terms of teamwork, good experiences were shared to all colleague to good accomplishment.
- 2) Friendly colleagues and Supervisors to care for their counterparts in team as a family
- 3) The company provides compensation and benefits appropriately if compared to the same business which exactly motivates for working to achieve the goals set.
- 4) Training and Development budget was available for employees to earn more knowledge and confidence in work that will bring the success.

#### 2. Opportunities

- 1) The management give the precedence in increasing happiness to all employees which is great opportunity to lead to Happy Workplace.
- 2) The company offers Training to all employees in order to have a better standing about the products by the Application Specialists in monthly meeting which is good for employees to develop their skills.
- 3) Meeting activities were conducted for all department on a monthly basis to make employees more intimate and as a result of good coordination between different departments.

#### 3. Aspirations

- 1) Employees work happily in all 8 aspects of happiness and contribute to the great and effective results.
- 2) Employees collaborate more effectively and make customers receive a good service and be impressed.
- 3) To be organization that has grown steadily and sustainably.

#### 4. Result

- 1) Happiness of employees is increased and leads to the effective performance.
- 2) The turnover rate is decreased. Employee engagement is increased which make good employees have more loyalty in company, training budget for new staffs is not necessary.
- 3) Provide the best service exceeding the expectation of the customers, resulting the good reputation of the organization

After the analysis of Strength and Opportunity, it supports the project to increase the happiness and development to the organization of happiness for ABC Co.,Ltd. aimed to make employees work happily in all 8 aspects of Happiness (Happy Workplace) as below,

**Project**

- 1) Outing & Team Building Trip (Respond Happy Relax and go to be Happy Body)
- 2) Telling a good story (Respond Happy Brain)
- 3) Little note, Life changed (Respond Happy Brain and go to be Happy Money)
- 4) Employee of the Month (Respond Happy Society)
- 5) Happy birthday to our beloved (Respond Happy Hearth)
- 6) Moral organization (Respond Soul and go to be Happy Relax)
- 7) Happy Family (Respond Happy Family)
- 8) Sport Day (Respond Happy Body and go to be Happy Relax)

Before start project testing employees to known begin level of happiness with HAPPYNOMETER and test every 4 month (project time 12 month), After five initial projects already period from February to May 2015 result as below;

	Before	After
Happy Body	59.80	60.00
Happy Heart	60.29	61.40
Happy Relax	48.00	51.60
Happy Brain	52.33	52.67
Happy Soul	58.10	58.30
Happy Family	60.00	61.00
Happy Money	54.25	54.70
Happy society	54.53	57.36
Summary	55.65	57.28

When analyzing elements of happiness in organization after project period from February to May 2015 with PERMA Model result as below;

- Positive emotion employees enjoy and voice of employee complain decrease.
- Engagement employees work with fun and creativity tend to work more challenge.
- Relationships communication between departments better and reduce error.
- Meaning proud and make important to work tend to make good things more.
- Accomplishment work completed on time, complain decrease.

**Conclusion**

The study found that what makes a happy employee is a good corporate culture, working with a great team, Attentive support among colleagues and supervisors to care for his team, the acceptance, compliments from colleagues or from chief executives including appropriate compensation. This will result in employees working happily. When employees are happy, Organization have fully elements of happiness and become an organization of happiness or Happy Workplace the outcome will be effective and meet the target. As a result, the organization has grown steadily and sustainably.



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