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A PartnerComm  
Publication  
Spring 2021

Powering your communication story

## SURPRISE & DELIGHT

Awe-inspiring ideas for every budget.

### Women in the lead

HOW KAREN LISI  
IS REINVENTING  
WELLNESS AT  
MEMORIAL SLOAN  
KETTERING CANCER  
CENTER (MSK)

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### Your company culture

WILL IT SURVIVE, LET  
ALONE THRIVE?

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### How to create a benefits website

5 TIPS TO KEEP EMPLOYEES  
COMING BACK





Many years ago, my 23-year-old-self entered the workforce, eager to share my “vast” knowledge as a newly minted communication consultant.

I enthusiastically embraced my first assignment (enrollment materials, of course), coming up with a theme I was sure would impress — Nacho Man! A character that had a nacho body with cute little arms and legs. He was here to tell you all about your benefits in a fun, casual voice with a beer in hand!

My boss listened to my idea and then gently explained this might be a bit much. Benefits were more serious. Communication more formal. “There’s no storytelling,” he kindly informed me. “Let’s just get the facts straight and the client will be happy.”

For several years I followed the straight and narrow. But, slowly things did change. Innovative marketing messaging gradually snuck into the benefits world and, to be relevant, HR leaders began to follow the same rules of engagement as our advertising counterparts.

Today, I’m so thrilled with the innovation HR regularly delivers. At PartnerComm, our success is based on delivering the extraordinary — and this magazine gives you a peek at how we consistently serve up current and meaningful communication. You may not find Nacho Man in here, but I feel certain you will be surprised and delighted.

Laurie Korinek, Creative Director

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Shaping a sense of purpose and community



# OUR TOP 5 WAYS TO SURPRISE & DELIGHT IN 2021

Like a surprise birthday party can be more meaningful than just the standard cake and candle routine, communicating to employees through unanticipated, positive moments shows them they are cared for and appreciated.

Plus, that WOW factor is the perfect way to engage your employees in a high-priority topic. Here are some innovative ways you can treat your employees with something unexpectedly wonderful and still get your message across.

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

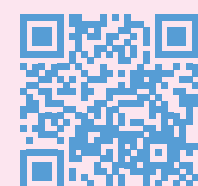
### The Video Reel

Spark emotion and engagement with a combination of video clips, interactive polls and employee stories.

**What it is:** A true interactive video experience for employees. It builds on the experience of clicking through content on services like Instagram Stories and TikTok, but unlike those platforms, it offers greater interactivity and learning. The reel is comprised of stock video clips, interactive clips and employee-generated content — focused on a central topic or campaign.

**Why we like it:** It builds on the positive features of current social sharing sites to engage employees in meaningful topics. It also helps employees connect with each other and build organizational community at a time when it is most at risk.

Check it out!



## HEALTH ENTHUSIASTS

### Wellness Field Day

Healthy people, happy business! Show off your culture of wellbeing by creating a day just to celebrate being healthy.

**What it is:** A wellness “field day” for employees featuring on-site fitness classes throughout the day, cooking demos, chair massages, an expert speaker, benefits jeopardy and hourly giveaways.

**Why we like it:** This adult-version of field day is just plain fun, but it also does wonders for building the value story around wellness at your organization.

But wait — there's more!





# SURPRISE & DELIGHT

Give Your Employees the Warm Fuzzies

## MOST VERSATILE

### Timely Podcasts

Great voices sharing awesome content is pretty powerful stuff. Internal podcasts give you a medium to educate, inspire, develop and build culture — all while your employees are on the move.

**What it is:** A friendly and informal medium for internal communication. Companies around the world are using internal podcasts to share values, tell stories, aid in learning and development work, onboard new employees, communicate important company policies and sometimes just to have a conversation with a cool colleague.

**Why we like it:** Podcasts offer a non-screen-based medium to create employee engagement in a variety of topics and they appeal to both young and older audiences. They're cheaper than video and a typical 10-minute episode allows employees to gain a deeper understanding of a topic.

#### Check it out!



## PERSONALIZED

### The Mint Experience

Give your employees the communication they want, how they want it and when they want it.

**What it is:** A custom application designed to help employees focus on the benefit topics that matter most for their needs and life stage. Employees answer a short questionnaire that helps zero in on benefit topics they care about. Then, the app pushes personalized content and programs to the user through their preferred medium (email, text reminders, app notifications) at the cadence that seems right for them (once a week, once a month, etc.).

#### Why we like it:

Communication is most effective when it's relevant to the employee and helps nudge them toward behaviors that will help them live healthy, happy and secure. By sending focused messages, your employees will be more engaged and are more likely to use the plans and programs you have in place.

#### Check it out!



## GET A LAUGH

### Actually Funny Benefit Videos

Videos are a tried-and-true media for communication (hello, YouTube). But to be effective for internal communication, they need to be done well and sometimes they need a little bit of humor.

**What it is:** Let's face it, benefits can seem complicated (and sometimes boring) to a lot of people, including your employees. If your goal is to engage and educate, you may need to take a different approach to your video scripting. Infuse a little comic relief into your benefit videos and we guarantee you'll see that play button hit more often.

**Why we like it:** Our brains respond to video fast — better than text. A three-minute or less video that employees actually engage with is a powerful way to get your message across. Send it in an email, post it on your website or even send a text with a Vimeo link.

#### Check it out!





WOMEN IN THE LEAD

HOW  
KAREN LISI  
IS REINVENTING  
WELLNESS AT MSK



Corporate wellness programs have been around for a long time. They’re kind of like that familiar pair of jeans you pull on every Saturday morning — we’re comfortable in them, okay with how we look wearing them, and not quite ready to try a new pair.

When it comes to wellness, many organizations have become content with the status quo. The programs and resource offerings may vary slightly, but they usually include perks (such as free services from vendors like the Employee Assistance Program) or healthy eating and fitness options provided by the company.

For Karen Lisi, Vice President of Total Rewards at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK), following wellness norms wasn’t enough. She knew MSK offered lots of “stuff” — probably even more than most — but not many employees were engaging and benefiting from the programs and resources surrounding them.

**KAREN LISI** is Vice President of Total Rewards at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) in New York City and employee wellness has been her long-time passion.

“

*It’s kind of like those apartment complexes that have everything from climbing walls to rooftop running tracks. You look around and the place is empty. **People love the idea of access to amenities, but they just don’t use them!***

— KAREN LISI

Lisi was determined that she and her team were going to make a difference. So they embarked on a journey to reinvent wellness at MSK. That journey is currently in progress. The wheels are turning and a strategic direction has been set based on these guiding principles:

1 Be realistic.

MSK is a cancer treatment and research institution, so many employees are healthcare workers. Lisi realizes that the stress physicians and other healthcare workers experience day in and day out won’t be solved for with a wellness program. BUT — you can still make a positive impact. How? **Make healthy the easy choice for those who want it.** The wellness offerings themselves aren’t going to directly solve for burnout (a very real problem within the healthcare workforce today). However, they can help the movable middle — those who are interested in changing a habit or two and just need a nudge. And the research is clear here — practicing healthy lifestyle behaviors and building resilience make a big difference in how individuals perceive both work and personal stress.



# WOMEN IN THE LEAD

How Karen Lisi is Reinventing Wellness at MSK

## 2 Be relevant.

Healthcare workers simply don't have time for things that aren't a priority. It's one of the significant roadblocks with standard vendor platforms. A little customization is allowed, but not nearly enough to make the impact Lisi wanted and her employees need. So her team opted to **build a new wellness platform from the ground up — a completely custom site with content that matters to and is tailored for physicians, nurses and other healthcare workers.** For example, it could include a program on how to approach disrupted sleep schedules or ways to fit more movement into an incredibly busy day in the hospital. But it wasn't just the content Lisi wanted to revamp — she also wanted smart functionality that would let a user opt in to receive information about the topics most relevant to them. She put the user in charge by building a platform that included:

- A series of questions during registration that lets the user choose a wellbeing focus area for the year.
- The ability to set a custom, personalized wellbeing goal.
- Targeted programs and recommended resources based on the user's focus area and goal.
- A quiz that assigns each user a wellness persona based on their answers. Throughout the year, users receive personalized wellbeing tips related to their wellness persona.

## 3 Make it simple.

No one uses wellness platforms that are hard to access or complicated to navigate. If the design and information architecture isn't easy to use, you won't have user engagement or retention. Lisi worked closely with PartnerComm to implement functionality that would allow the user to access the new wellness platform directly from MSK's existing benefits site. Once authenticated, **a user can easily view recommended programs and resources from their dashboard** (designed with UX best practices in mind), which will be routinely updated when new programs become available within their focus area.

## 4 Use science-backed content.

As a world-class hospital and the world's oldest and largest private cancer center, MSK has unique access to the best and brightest when it comes to health behaviors and research. As a result, Lisi enlisted key staffers and PartnerComm's behavioral scientist to **develop custom programs for the wellness platform that they saw as critical and meaningful and that would address the needs of the employee population.**

## 5 Focus on small changes.

It's hard to move the needle, especially when it comes to our health. We all want immediate gratification and big results. And when we don't get it, it's easy to give up. So the philosophy of encouraging tiny changes is threaded throughout the site's messaging and directives. **Instead of an "all-or-nothing" mindset, it's about consistency and helping people implement small changes over time** to realize sustained movement toward their goals.



***We want to provide people with relevant support that's easy to access. It's about making wellness a part of our culture, not an incentive program.***

— KAREN LISI

**This year, Lisi and her team will roll out the new wellness platform, collect initial data and refine the functionality and content based on their findings.**

In the end, they hope to create something bigger than another one-size-fits-all wellness program filled with lots of "resources," few of which actually get used. Lisi is ready to make an impact. And, do good for all those who do so much for us.





# WHAT'S YOUR EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION STYLE?

We all communicate in different ways. But understanding your own communication style can give you insight into how to be heard (and even how to listen).

Jot down your responses to find out where you land.

## 1 Your go-to communication vehicle is:

- A Podcasts
- B Town halls
- C Employee stories
- D Emails

## 2 You feel most like yourself when you're wearing:

- A The latest styles
- B Athleisure
- C Business casual
- D A suit

## 3 Your colleagues think you're:

- A Up for anything
- B Super sincere
- C An amazing listener
- D No-nonsense

## 4 Your communication strategies are always:

- A Innovative
- B Heartfelt
- C People-focused
- D Grounded in facts

## 5 You most admire:

- A Elon Musk
- B Sheryl Sandberg
- C Mark Cuban
- D Bill Gates

## 6 You draw inspiration from:

- A Advertising
- B Ted Talks
- C Collaboration
- D Case studies

### MOSTLY A's

#### You're a Risk Taker

You can't win if you don't play — and you're here to play. You love to try out new tactics and aren't afraid to experiment. "We've never tried that before" is music to your ears. You're willing to give new ideas a go and are open to sharing messages in lots of different ways.

### MOSTLY B's

#### You're an Open Book

In your world, authenticity is king. You thrive with an ask-me-anything vibe because you genuinely believe in transparent, honest communication. You're careful to explain the why behind every decision and you're willing to share as much detail as employees will need to get behind your message.

### MOSTLY C's

#### You're an Amplifier

Why say something yourself when your employees can say it for you? You have no problem letting employees take center stage and spread the news through their own experiences. You try to collect their feedback and let their needs drive your decisions. You believe in giving employees lots of places to be seen and heard.

### MOSTLY D's

#### You're Matter-of-Fact

You're a fanatic for facts and semi-obsessed with stats. Your communication is designed to meet specific objectives and you love diving into data to improve your strategies. You tell it like it is and you don't shy away from the tough stuff.



# Your Company Culture

**WILL IT SURVIVE, LET ALONE THRIVE?**

As dust settles on office spaces around the world, many of us wonder what will happen to the culture many organizations have worked so hard to create.

But what is culture? And does it rely on employees being physically close? A recent Gartner CFO study suggests 74% plan on transitioning employees to permanent remote work positions in the months ahead.<sup>1</sup> But organizations have had offices in multiple locations for decades...does that mean culture didn't exist until the click of the first "Send" button on an email?

**Start at the top**

**Learn two new words**

## DEFINING CORPORATE CULTURE

Corporate culture is simply defined as the way work gets done within an organization. It's the behaviors and beliefs shared by your employees that create community.

A strong corporate culture can benefit organizations through improved employee engagement, increased productivity and higher profit margins. And it's one of the main reasons, aside from compensation, that employees come to or leave an organization. In fact, a study in 2018<sup>2</sup> revealed employees who rate their corporate culture negatively are 24% more likely to leave their organization. On the flip side, 32% of job seekers said they would take a pay cut if it meant finding a position in an organization where the corporate culture and work align more closely with their goals.<sup>3</sup>

So how do you create a corporate culture that represents your organization's mission, vision and values, and also inspires your employees to feel a part of something bigger?

## The building blocks of culture

We've identified five key areas to focus your attention when it comes to developing and strengthening your organization's culture.

**Plain and simple, your culture is a reflection of your leadership.**

Leaders who are visible and who "walk the talk" are key drivers of culture in your organization. And now that we're reliant on technology to keep us close together, this is especially true. Encourage leaders to hold live web chats with employees and to go on camera when speaking at employee meetings. Employees connect better to leaders who aren't just sitting in the virtual boardroom, but who also have kids interrupting their video calls.

For years, we've heard companies tout words like "innovative" and "flexible" when it comes to describing their corporate culture. **Try also incorporating words like "grace" and "empathy."** A recent Forbes study found 96% of participants believe showing empathy is an important way to advance employee retention.<sup>4</sup> You may not always understand what others are going through, especially during a global pandemic. We don't expect you to. But this is where grace comes in. Simply being nice goes a long way and nurtures a culture of respect and support.

1 Gartner CFO Survey Reveals 74% Intend to Shift Some Employees to Remote Work Permanently Gartner (April 2020)  
2 Employee Retention Report TINYpulse (2018)  
3 Job Seeker Nation Study: Researching the Candidate-Recruiter Relationship Jobvite (2018)  
4 10 Timely Statistics About The Connection Between Employee Engagement And Wellness Naz Beheshti Forbes.com (January 2019)



# YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

Will it survive, let alone thrive?

Celebrate  
your  
people

Employees who don't feel appreciated for going above and beyond are twice as likely to leave their current job.<sup>1</sup> **Publicly recognizing employees strengthens engagement and makes them feel valued.** Conventional appreciation tactics like award ceremonies may be more difficult these days, but there are still creative ways you can show appreciation from a distance. Encourage leadership to send emails recognizing employees for their contributions. Save time for shout-outs on team calls. Throw a virtual employee appreciation week with small surprises each day. Or have a good old fashioned phone call with an employee to share praise.

Think  
outside  
the box

Right now, we're finding that employers want to do whatever they can to keep work feeling normal. But it's not normal. So next time you find yourself thinking, "I guess we can do it virtually...", stop and think about your goals. Is eight hours of web meetings the best way to onboard new hires? **Are there other ways you could approach the situation to help employees avoid the urge to multi-task?** Get creative with how you handle collaboration and education opportunities. For example, rethink your new hire onboarding process to make it more interactive and engaging using a website. Or consider a new approach to training that incorporates gamification and trivia.

Go  
grassroots

If you're considering implementing a new vendor program, consider the employee experience. Does it truly fit your culture? Will it feel like it's a part of your organization? **You'll find you get better engagement in programs when they're created "by the people, for the people."**

## Looking ahead

The idea of corporate culture has evolved dramatically over the past two decades and shows no signs of slowing down. Organizations should continually reflect on their culture and make necessary adjustments to make sure who they say they are is truly the same as who they actually are.

<sup>1</sup> 10 Timely Statistics About The Connection Between Employee Engagement And Wellness Naz Beheshti Forbes.com (January 2019)



# HOW TO BUILD A BENEFITS WEBSITE

Your youngest needs braces. But how much will your dental plan cover?

Questions about benefits come up all the time, and employees need a way to find answers quickly.

## Enter the benefits website.

When it's well-crafted and well-executed, a benefits website can make all the difference — getting your people the answers they need, connecting them to solutions and helping them see the true value of their benefits.

It all comes down to some simple principles of benefits website design.





## HOW TO BUILD A BENEFITS WEBSITE

# THE BIG 5

These elements  
will have your  
employees coming  
back for more.

### AN INSIDE LOOK

## Companies doing it right.



### Make it easy.

You don't want users hunting and pecking for info. **Start with the content you know they're looking for** — like holiday calendars and links to benefit administrators. Then build an intuitive information architecture (basically a map of all the pages on your site) that addresses those needs. Add a powerful search tool that gets them straight to the details they want and scannable web page designs with lots of white space, and you've got the right foundation in place.



### Make it mobile.

More and more employees are looking for benefit answers on the go (think about those 20 minutes in the orthodontist's waiting room). **You'll want to build with a mobile-first mentality, optimizing for access anywhere, anytime.**



### Make it valuable.

Yes, your site will need comprehensive content about the benefits you offer. But how else can you add value? Where do your employees struggle the most? Should your site feature a rates tool to help people see what they'll pay for healthcare coverage? A medical plan modeler to help them choose the right plan? Maybe your call center is fielding lots of calls about leaves of absence or retirement and employees need a custom tool for that. **Valuable resources that address hot-button issues drive traffic to your site and solve real problems for your people.**



### Make it relevant.

**The benefits content on your site should be clear, concise and highly relevant.** Whenever possible, target content to specific employee audiences (like executives with access to a deferred compensation plan or employees in a specific region with unique benefits). We also recommend giving your homepage a life event focus — with curated content from across HR and benefits for specific moments that matter like getting married or welcoming a new child.



### Make it dynamic.

If you want employees coming back to your site regularly, you need to make it worth their while. **Dynamic content (like news articles and a shared event calendar) helps.** So does a social component with employee-generated content. You wouldn't believe how many employees will share their experience with benefits and, especially, with wellbeing solutions!

#### Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK)

MSK has really doubled down on "Make it valuable." Their site is filled with custom, interactive experiences to address key employee needs. Thousands of employees regularly visit the site for the comprehensive life events checklists as well as the new hire walking tour, leave of absence tool and retirement planning tool.

#### Iron Mountain

One of Iron Mountain's core values is: "We protect ourselves and each other from harm." In launching their benefits website last year, Iron Mountain empowered employees to find benefits information quickly, easily and on the go. From recruitment to retirement, employees can learn about benefits designed to enhance their daily lives and support them at every stage.

#### DHL

The North American benefits team is committed to continuous improvement in the way employees experience wellness. "Delivering more" is the mantra that inspires DHL to build out new resources on their benefits website each year — moving employees and HR toward a more personalized, media-rich, online experience that helps build DHL's culture of wellness.

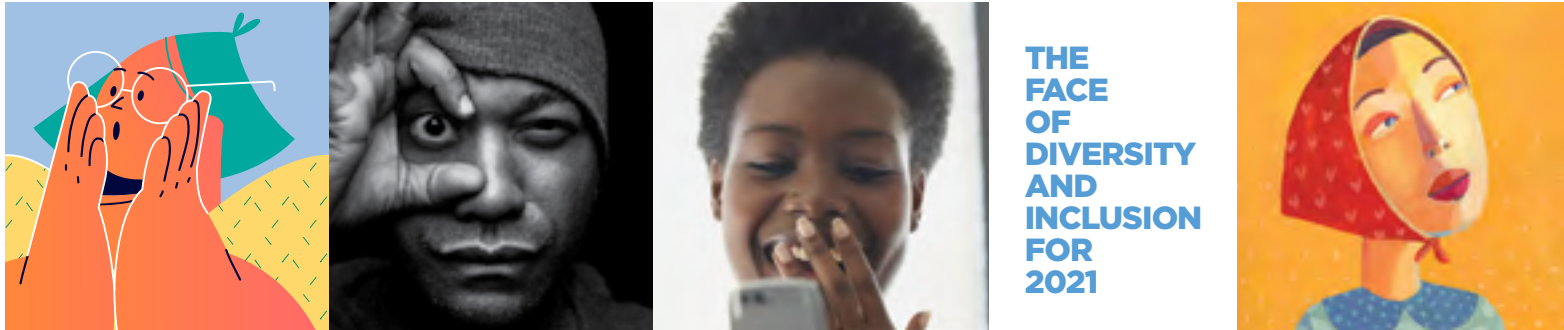
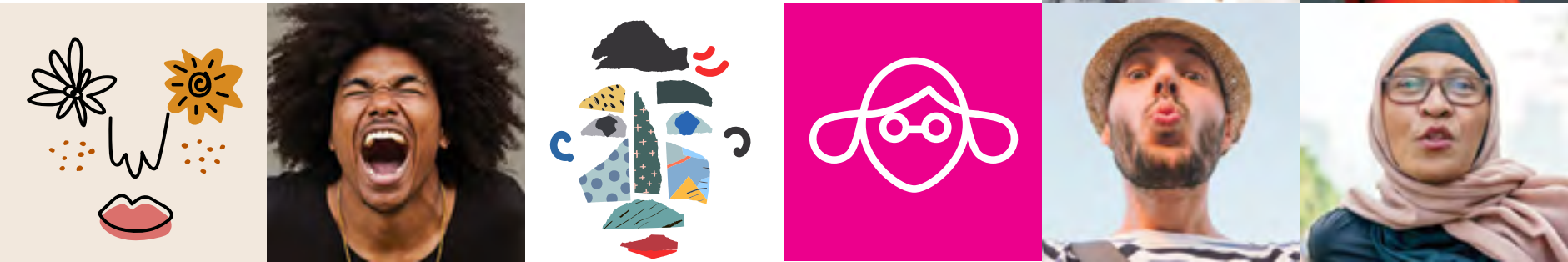


IT'S ALL ABOUT BELONGING

Hiring diverse talent isn't enough — it's the workplace experience that shapes a sense of purpose, belonging and community.

As HR leaders, we need to recognize that D&I is more than just a topic to be communicated. Rather, it's a thread of DNA that's woven through the organization — it lives and breathes in everything the company does and stands for.

By seeing D&I as part of your corporate culture, you create a strategy that's much more meaningful and comprehensive. And the communication around that strategy becomes bigger than simply a D&I campaign or showcasing diversity within your organization.



Did you know?

The benefits of a strong D&I effort go beyond a better employee experience. Research from McKinsey (2019) found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile.

In other words, does your communication walk reflect your talk? Ask yourself these questions to see the importance of D&I in your company's DNA:

- 1 Do you rely on diverse photography to be your primary communication tactic for illustrating your commitment to D&I? You're not alone if your answer is yes. Diverse photography is a good thing, but it's simply not enough. Your brand itself should reflect differences in thought, cultural norms, color and design.
- 2 Does your leadership support the company's D&I efforts? Company leaders should be at the heart of your D&I effort. Leadership support is critical to making sure employees feel and believe D&I is a company value.
- 3 Do you cultivate belonging with employee resource groups and manager commitment? Employees are motivated and productive when they feel they can be their true self at work. Managers should be committed to building connections with their team members, and employee resource groups should be a norm.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

IT'S ALL ABOUT BELONGING

THE FACE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOR 2021



How to take bold action on D&I



- 1 Get employee feedback.**  
If you want to build a culture of inclusion, a great place to start is with your people. Find out what they have to say about openness and belonging at the company.
- 2 Show leadership support.**  
For real change to happen, you must have leadership buy-in to the value of D&I, and it needs to be communicated authentically. Use real people and real stories.
- 3 Train your managers.**  
Integrate D&I principles into your organization by providing training for your managers. Use digital toolkits, videos and best-practice sharing to deliver consistent training and cohesive messaging.
- 4 Celebrate diversity with events.**  
Create company experiences that recognize and celebrate diversity. Company events are one of the best ways to build community and reinforce the value story behind D&I.

Lift the mood!

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