

## Watch the World Cups with your staff

This is a big year for South African sport. Both the Proteas Cricket team and the Springbok Rugby team are strong contenders to lift their respective World Cups this year. But what does this mean for companies and their employees?



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The events will, no doubt, have South Africans glued to their TV screens, iPads, laptops and any other communication device that will allow them to follow the action live. But what does this mean for companies and their employees?

The Cricket World Cup started 14 February and the Rugby World Cup begins later this year on 18 September. For many companies, these events will come with their own challenges. Some will find employees becoming distracted from their work and employers may even see an increase in employee absenteeism.

Office design firm Paragon Interiors has suggestions on how this particular problem could be addressed. Bill Helyar, Operations Director of Paragon Interiors, said: "The World Cup and other sporting events act as major binding factors for our country. Why can we not allow them to do the same for our companies?"

"We suggest that instead of companies dealing with employee absenteeism and their lack of engagement, rather engage with the events. Allow your employees to watch big games together, create camaraderie within your office and use it to even improve productivity," he said.

### Happiness and morale

Jenny Seddon, Partner of Paragon Interiors agreed: "Creating communal environments in your office where employees can mix and mingle helps increase both employee happiness and morale. Utilising sporting fixtures to enhance this has many benefits."

Friendship is one of the most powerful drivers in high-performance organisations. People make friends at work, they become part of a team, and don't want to let their friends down. Having a space where people can build these strong relationships is critical to business success, for both relaxation and meetings.

Staff feeling that senior management is sincerely interested in employee well-being is the top driver of engagement globally across generations with obvious spin-offs for productivity and reducing absenteeism.

"Showing your employees that you care by allowing them to watch certain games at the office may seem trivial, but just watch and see the benefits," said Helyar.

### Recreation space

Many companies design their offices without keeping in mind how they may like to use the space for non-work-related activities. "When we design offices for our clients we try to ensure, as far as possible, that we include a space like a canteen where there is a TV and various forms of seating that can be used for such occasions, or for staff briefings and events," said Seddon.

"We also try to ensure that this space opens up to an outdoor patio and that it is close to training areas or the boardroom, that the whole area can be opened up for large events."

While building camaraderie and friendships among staff may be at the bottom of the list for some corporates, the business benefits are clear. Corporates that focus on building strong culture will always do better than those who just focus on profit.

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