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From the Phoenix Business Journal:

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How games in the office might improve employee morale and office culture

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Would you invest \$10,000 in games for your employees?

Eric Palmer, chief marketing officer for Broker's Alliance in Fountain Hills, says yes.

The office recently underwent the expensive renovation to double the current size of the company's game room. With an office equipped with a Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation, vintage Pac-Man arcade game, pinball and other arcade or video game systems, it's a wonder how anything gets done around the office.

But Palmer insists the gaming upgrades have improved employee morale, encouraged team building and increased participation in company culture.

"It started out with an old ping pong table," Palmer said. What seemed like a small addition to the office soon encouraged employees to use their two breaks and hour-long lunch to engage with coworkers and participate in fun tournaments.

Since the initial installation of the ping pong table in early 2014, the game culture at Broker's Alliance has snowballed into the massive investment the company has made this year.

Palmer said the gaming room has helped in particular with employees who deal with a turbulent finance market and frustrating customer service.

Additionally, he said he manages more than one company and with new employees from different places, video game tournaments and break-time game sessions have helped bring old and new employees together.



The game room at Broker's Alliance in Fountain Hills.

While studies have shown video games can improve memory and cognitive function, Palmer said it's really about making employees happy.

So what does Palmer recommend companies do to implement their own gaming culture?

First, he said, move the area away from "productivity zones" so noise and distractions are far enough away from employees who have to work.

Next, Palmer recommended employers emphasize games for free time only, and to respect work hours.

Finally, he suggests companies start small and take feedback from employees.

"We heard that a lot of people in the office enjoyed golf, so we installed a putting green," he said.

Overall, Palmer said the increased participation rate and engagement from employees has exceeded the company's investment in games.

"I don't see a ceiling for how much we will spend any time soon," he said.

Cassidy Trowbridge
Editorial Intern
Phoenix Business Journal

