

How to Battle Office FOMO

February 19, 2018 Posted by [Shea Drake](#)



• [Share](#)

Swapping weekend stories with work friends is a good investment in your social game. Then again, you might think twice when you hear [the boss](#) praising an employee who spent that time finishing an amazing PowerPoint presentation — or when you learn that a co-worker used their Twitter account to attract fifty new customers.

A serious case of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) can descend as you try to answer questions like:

- When does being on social media cross the line between work and play?
- Should you build workplace friendships or put that energy into impressing your supervisor?
- If you are a supervisor, should you encourage social opportunities?

To weigh the correct balance of time spent on any one focus, it's worth reviewing some positives and negatives.

The Pros

Friendships form naturally at work because [humans are hardwired](#) to connect with one another.

“The modern workplace has become a community center, or a ‘home away from home’ where people get many of their social needs met . . . We spend so much of our time at work, that it’s natural that we develop relationships in the workplace,” says Dr. Maynard Brusman, a consulting psychologist and executive coach.

The benefits of social interaction in the workplace don’t just enrich individual experiences. Strong connections to team members impact business too. Brusman notes that socializing creates opportunities to develop emotional intelligence, and these friendships play a role in employees working toward common goals.

Gallup’s [State of the American Workplace](#) report found that people who lacked close work relationships were more likely to disengage from or quit their jobs, but having a best friend at work increased productivity and profit.

[7 Ways To Create Beneficial Alliances At Work](#)

The Cons

On the flip side, time spent chatting with friends or surfing online can eat into the hours you should be working. The subsequent drop in productivity [creates personal anxiety](#) and diminishes the confidence that other employees and your supervisor have in your abilities.

Social relationships have the potential to [create resentment among co-workers](#), who are likely to think they're carrying a heavier workload when they see you chatting a lot. If you aren't keeping up your end of work on a team project, then they're doing more.

Ways to Battle Office FOMO

What should you keep in mind when trying to reap the benefits of concentrating on work and socializing on the job?

Keep Productivity Paramount

If you think it's possible to juggle conversations and work tasks at the same time, think again. Toggling back and forth between tasks means asking your brain to shift its focus repeatedly, which the American Psychological Agency reports can consume up to [40 percent of your time](#). It slows your performance and increases the likelihood of errors.

[Use time limits](#) to stay on track. The next time a friend drops by your desk, chat for five minutes, then get back to work. Even better, schedule your day ahead of time or use a checklist for the tasks you need to finish each day. Knowing just how much you need to do will help you decide if you have any time to spare for your friends.

[11 Employees Share Their Best Work Productivity Hacks](#)

Limit Social Media

Use the same planning technique around Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites. Reading updates and posts takes time, but [slow connection and download speeds](#) add to the time spent away from work tasks. A study by

SanDisk found that slow connection speeds ate up nearly five days' worth of productive time each year.

Don't forget to turn off notifications on your cell phone, either, which can trigger FOMO in your personal life and keep you distracted at work.

Chat About Work

Casual conversations can turn into [opportunities for brainstorming](#) around business needs and building stronger relationships with people in other departments. A laid-back form of communication is also a great tool for orienting new employees because it puts them at ease.

Don't Establish Cliques

No one likes feeling excluded. Make a point of [being inclusive in team projects](#) rather than just involving your circle of friends. Other people will have valuable ideas to contribute and can offer a different perspective. These individuals might turn into more than just social acquaintances, but if they don't, they still deserve your respect and consideration for work tasks.

Choose Smart Social Activities

Know the environments where you shine — and where you don't. For example, if you have a habit of overindulging at the bar, it might not be a good idea to join office pals on Friday for Happy Hour. When your inhibitions are lowered, your professionalism can slip, and the [damage to your credibility](#) could be substantial.

Good choices for everyone include office birthday celebrations or team activities such as a company scavenger hunt — fun ways to build rapport between departments that typically don't work together.

Respect the Office Hierarchy

Tread carefully when socializing with supervisors or subordinates. Friends want to share information with one another, and that aspect of office friendships might not be proper in such situations.

You don't want to create an [environment \(or appearance\) of favoritism](#), either. Other employees may accuse you of letting your friend get away with things you wouldn't tolerate from others, such as turning in projects past deadlines. In fact, having one of your staff members as a friend can put you in a very uncomfortable situation if they truly aren't pulling their weight.

Employees throughout the company might also worry that you're [sharing private information](#) with your friend, eroding their confidence in you. No matter the working relationship, avoid gossip and hearsay.

[How to Get Noticed By Leadership \(Without Sucking Up\)](#)

There are ways to appease your office FOMO without overdoing it and risking your job. Use these guidelines to enhance your work and your friendships, and you might be the one to receive the [boss's praise](#) next time.