

## Thank god it's Friday! The pinoy working attitude

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Ten years ago, many Filipinos were coming to Taiwan for work. Most of their jobs required physically demanding labor work as many of them worked as caretakers or house helpers, factory workers, and fishermen. As breadwinners in the family, many Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) are seen all over the world with works ranging from hotel receptionist in Singapore to waitress in Caribbean cruise ship. Foreign currency remittances from OFW helped the national economy stay afloat.

But times are different now. With the growing economy, many Filipinos choose to stay and work in the Philippines, especially with the transfer of many BPO companies from India to the Philippines- now the largest BPO base in Asia. A visit in business districts like Makati or BGC will show commercial buildings that are full of office workers and are lighted all throughout the night.

As you may already know, Filipinos love to be happy and live at the moment. This is also reflected on their working attitude. You may see a department store sales lady singing at work when she feels happy, or jeepney driver loudly playing classic western love songs while plying his route. To a visitor, it may not seem proper, as we are used to seeing serious and rigorous attitude to work; but to Filipinos, such somber work atmosphere is not fun at all. Life is so boring like that.

My colleague told me many times:

“Can you smile? You look so stressed.”

Actually I just want to focus on my work, but that doesn't mean I don't like it or I feel stressed. Aside from that, Filipinos will stop everything around 3 o'clock in the afternoon for a break. They will buy some snacks like coffee, donuts or fried banana for refreshments of the day. If you notice, vendors outside office buildings are busy on preparing snacks after lunch.

After tea break, they may already plan how to unwind after work. Filipinos don't like

to work overtime and are not known for being punctual. But when it is time to get off from work, they are very prompt. If it's a payday or a Friday, they usually celebrate somewhere like in restaurants, karaoke, and shopping malls. They really know how to party and unwind!

There are many public holidays in the Philippines. There is one almost every other month. Holy week and Christmas are the biggest holidays. When I was new to the country, I asked my colleagues:

“Why do many retail shops play Christmas songs and sell Christmas gifts in early September?”

“Who doesn't like celebrations? We love to celebrate!” , my colleagues answered.

Happy Filipinos don't mean they don't work hard. They do. In big cities like Manila or Cebu, people change jobs frequently as there are more job opportunities. However, in provinces, people stay with their job and build loyal relationship and trust with their employers. In one time that I visited one of the oldest restaurants in Cebu, I noticed that all waiters are aged, which is unusual as most restaurants often employ younger people. I asked and was told that they had been with the restaurant since they were young. They grew old with the restaurant and have remained very loyal to this day.