

WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Watch the [video](#) titled “What Makes Employees Happy at Work” by TedX .

1 WARM UP

Task 1: Rank the following office perks in order of desirability.

Games room	Free coffee	Physiotherapy	Employee discounts
On-site gym	Free lunch	No dress code	Half day on Fridays

1. _____.
2. _____.
3. _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.
6. _____.
7. _____.
8. _____.

Task 2: Discuss the following as a class:

- Describe the office perks that are offered at your workplace.
- Do you agree that office perks encourage employees to work harder?
- Do you consider the office environment when deciding whether to accept a job?



2 WORKPLACE: SPEAKING EXERCISE

Task 1: Read each of the following statements.

a. "Job insecurity encourages people to work harder".

b. "Workers can't manage themselves, so they need firm management from above."

c. "Employees need constant encouragement to ensure they don't slack off."

d. Getting recognition from their peers means more to employees than getting recognition from management."

e. "Paying people who are at the same level at a company differently will encourage competitiveness which will raise productivity."

f. "People want to feel their job is important."

Task 2: Decide if you agree or disagree with each statement.

- Explain your reasoning for each decision.
- Give a real-life example from your professional life to support your answer.



3 WORKPLACE: VOCABULARY

Task 1: Complete the sentences using the words from the box.

Tenure Incentives	Employee turnover Intrinsic / Extrinsic	Proficiency Bottom line
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- Maria's impressive **tenure of** over a decade with the company is a testament to her dedication and loyalty.
- The company's efforts to address **employee turnover** include comprehensive onboarding and career development programs.
- Mark's **proficiency** in coding languages allowed him to quickly resolve complex technical issues, boosting the team's efficiency.
- Companies should offer rewards that speak to an employee's **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** motivations as this will create an effective workforce.
- The sales team's morale was boosted by the introduction of lucrative **incentives** for if they achieve their quarterly targets.
- The successful launch of the new product significantly improved the company's **bottom line** for the fiscal year.

Task 2: Practice using the words by discussing the following questions as a class.

- How does a long-**tenured** employee's deep understanding of the company's values contribute to shaping and maintaining a strong workplace culture?
- What role does **employee turnover** play in shaping the dynamics and values of a company's workplace culture?
- In what ways does a workforce with high **proficiency** levels enhance the overall productivity and effectiveness of a company's workplace culture?
- How do well-designed **incentive** programs contribute to creating a motivating workplace culture that encourages employees to go above and beyond their roles?
- Give examples of **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** motivations related to the workplace.
- Can you explain and give examples of how a positive workplace culture can directly influence a company's **bottom line**?



4 VIDEO ANALYSIS

Task 1: Complete the quotes taken from the [video](#).

Billion	Percent	Perks	Stock market	Revenue
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1. There's three billion working people in the world. And about 40 **percent** of them would say they're happy at work. That means about 1.8 **billion**, or almost two billion people, are not happy at work.
2. What does that do, both to those people and the organisations that they work in? Well, let's talk about money. Organisations that have a lot of happy employees have three times the **revenue** growth, compared to organisations where that's not true.
3. They outperform the **stock market** by a factor of three. And if you look at employee turnover, it's half that of organisations that have a lot of unhappy employees.
4. The miracle thing is, you don't have to spend more money to make this happen. It's not about ping-pong tables ,massages and pet walking. It's not about the **perks**. It's all about how they're treated by their leaders and by the people that they work with.

Task 2: Discuss the following questions as a class.

1. Discuss the possible reasons why 1.8 billion people aren't happy at work.
2. Describe a time you were unhappy at a specific job.
3. Discuss the possible reasons why people are happy at work.
4. Describe a time you were happy at a specific job.
5. Why do you think companies with happy employees perform better?
6. Do office perks serve a benefit or are they a tactic companies use to avoid pay rises?



5 VIDEO ANALYSIS: QUOTES

Analyse the ideas from the [video](#) about what employees need to be happy at work.

1. Trust and Respect

"In organisations where employees are happy, what you find is two things are present: trust and respect. Leaders often say, "We trust our employees. We **enable** our employees." And then when an employee needs a laptop -- and this is a true example -- 15 people have to approve that laptop. So what can an organisation do to have a high level of trust? The first organisation that **occurs to me** is Four Seasons. They have **fantastic** properties all around the world. And their employees are told, "Do whatever you think is right when servicing the customer." **To give** that trust to your employees to do whatever they think is right makes the employees feel great. And this is why they're known for delivering some of the best service in the world."

1. Work as a class to think of synonyms for the underlined words and phrases.
2. In your own words, why are trust and respect important at work?
3. Give examples of times when an employer has shown and not shown trust.

2. Fairness

calculated

erodes

tenure

proficiency

The thing that **erodes** trust in an organisation faster than anything else is when employees feel that they're being treated unfairly. Employees want to be treated the same, regardless of their rank or their **tenure** or their age or their experience or their job category, compared to anyone else. When I think about great organisations who get fairness right, the first organisation that comes to mind is Salesforce. They found that men and women working in the same job with the same level of **proficiency** were making different amounts of money. So immediately, they **calculated** the difference, and they invested three million dollars to try and balance things out.

1. Complete the paragraph using the words in the box.
2. How does fairness create a positive workplace environment?
3. Give examples of when you have experienced fairness and unfairness at work.

3. Listening

To be a listener who connects with all types of people, we have to unlearn a few things. We've all been taught about **active** listening and eye contact, an intense stare and a **compassionate** look. That's not listening. Repeating what the person says - that's not listening. Being humble and always hunting and searching for the best idea possible - that's what listening is. And employees can feel whether you're doing that or not. They want to know, when they talk to you and **share** an idea, did you consider it when you **made** a decision? The one thing that everybody appreciates and wants when they're speaking is to know that what they say matters so much you might actually change your mind. Otherwise, what's the point of the conversation?

1. Choose the correct words, which are underlined.
2. How does good listening create a good workplace environment?
3. Give examples of when your boss has and hasn't listened to your opinion.



6 HOW TO INCENTIVISE EMPLOYEES

Task 1: Read and discuss the quotes below.

“In a Soviet nail factory, leaders wanted to improve the performance of workers. When they paid workers for the total weight of nails produced, all nails became bigger. When they paid workers for the number of nails produced, all nails became smaller.”

“Do rewards motivate people? Absolutely. They motivate people to get the rewards.”

1. Discuss what each of the quotes says about reward systems.
2. Are the quotes critical or supportive of reward systems?
3. Do you agree with the sentiment of both quotes?

Task 2: Analyse the six rules for incentives.

Don't promise rewards in advance. Give rewards at unexpected times so that people don't change their intentions and focus on the reward.

Keep anticipated rewards small. You can't always prevent people from anticipating rewards. But this may be harmless when the rewards are small.

Reward continuously, not just once. Every day can be a day to celebrate something. Every day is an opportunity for a reward.

Reward publicly, not privately. Everyone should know what work is appreciated and why. A regular public reminder works better than a private one.

Reward behaviours, not only outcomes. Outcomes can often be achieved through shortcuts, while behaviour is about hard work and effort.

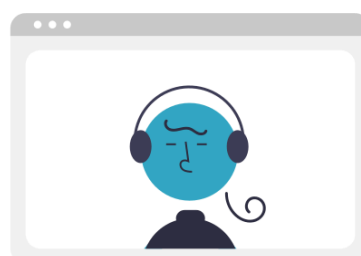
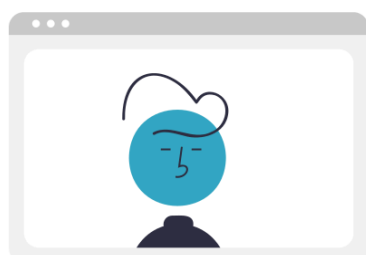
Reward peers, not just subordinates. Peers often know better than managers which of their colleagues deserve a compliment.

- a. Which of the rules do you find most useful?
- b. Which of the rules do you find least useful?
- c. Describe how your work uses each of the rules.
- d. Describe the incentive programmes at your workplace.
- e. How could your company improve its reward system? What does it do well?

7 WOULD YOU RATHER?

Task 1: Let's finish the class with a fun speaking task.

1. Would you rather have a casual dress code every day or a formal dress code with "casual Fridays"?
2. Would you rather work in an open office layout with no designated spaces or in a cubicle-style layout with more privacy?
3. Would you rather have unlimited free snacks and beverages or a subsidised gym membership?
4. Would you rather have flexible work hours with occasional weekend work or a strict 9-to-5 schedule with every weekend off?
5. Would you rather have a pet-friendly office environment or a designated quiet zone for focused work?
6. Would you rather attend regular team-building activities or have a larger budget for professional development opportunities?
7. Would you rather have a fully stocked game room for breaks or an on-site meditation and relaxation room?
8. Would you rather work in an office with vibrant and bold colours or one with neutral and calming tones?
9. Would you rather work for a company that hosts monthly themed parties or one that organises regular volunteer opportunities?
10. Would you rather have a company that focuses on sustainability and eco-friendly practices or one that prioritises cutting-edge technology and innovation?
11. Would you rather have a workplace with designated nap rooms or one with a well-equipped recreational area?
12. Would you rather have a company that encourages employees to pursue side projects or one that expects employees to focus solely on their primary role?



HOMEWORK

1 HOW TO CREATE A HAPPY WORK ENVIRONMENT

Task 1: Read the following text, then complete the question on the next page.

Creating a happy work environment is essential for fostering employee well-being, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. A positive atmosphere contributes to better collaboration, increased creativity, and reduced stress levels. Here are four key tips to help you cultivate a joyful and harmonious workplace:

Open Communication and Respect: Establishing transparent and open lines of communication is crucial. Encourage employees to express their thoughts, ideas, and concerns freely. When individuals feel heard and valued, they become more engaged in their work. Foster a culture of respect where differences of opinion are embraced, and constructive feedback is welcomed. Regular team meetings, one-on-one check-ins, and anonymous suggestion boxes can provide platforms for effective communication.

Work-Life Balance: Recognize the importance of work-life balance and support your employees in maintaining it. Encourage flexible working arrangements when feasible, allowing individuals to manage personal and professional commitments. Offering remote work options, flexible hours, and wellness programs can help reduce burnout and stress. When employees feel they can attend to their personal needs without sacrificing their professional responsibilities, their overall happiness and job satisfaction improve.

Recognition and Appreciation: Acknowledging and celebrating employees' achievements can significantly boost morale. Recognize their efforts publicly, whether through emails, announcements, or team meetings. Implement an employee recognition program that rewards outstanding performance or milestones reached. Simple acts of appreciation, such as a heartfelt thank-you note or a small token of recognition, can go a long way in creating a positive and motivating atmosphere.

Professional Growth Opportunities: Invest in your employees' professional development by providing opportunities for skill enhancement and career growth. Offering training workshops, seminars, and mentorship programs not only enhances their skills but also shows that you are invested in their long-term success. When employees feel they have room to learn, grow, and advance within the organisation, they are more likely to remain motivated and committed to their roles.

In conclusion, a happy work environment is built upon a foundation of open communication, mutual respect, work-life balance, recognition, and opportunities for growth. By implementing these four key tips, you can create a workplace where employees thrive, collaborate effectively, and contribute positively to the organisation's success. Remember that fostering happiness at work is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort and adaptation to the changing needs of your workforce.

Task 2: Research different synonyms for the following words.

1. burnout.
2. morale.
3. mentorship.
4. joyful.
5. harmonious.
6. feasible.
7. to thrive.



Task 3: Write a series of sentences or a short story using each word listed above.

Task 4: Write detailed answers to the following questions.

1. How does open communication impact employee engagement and how can employers encourage it?
2. Discuss the benefits of work-life balance and ways to achieve it through flexible arrangements.
3. How does employee recognition boost morale and what methods are effective?
4. How can organisations promote professional growth and why is it essential for a positive workplace?
5. What challenges might diverse workplaces face in implementing open communication and respect?
6. Share your thoughts on the balance between recognising individual achievements and promoting teamwork.
7. Describe the pros and cons of remote work for employee happiness and connection.
8. Without a recognition program, how might employees' job satisfaction be affected?
9. What are some effective strategies for managers to support professional development and mentorship?
10. How can organisations adapt and maintain a joyful work environment that is continuously changing?

