

Business studies

- 1 Work with a partner. Think of someone you know who has a job. Look at the photos and decide which one represents their workplace best. What do you think motivates them at work?
- 2 Write down four motivational ideas from your discussion in exercise 1. Quickly read the text and see if they are mentioned in the text.



How do businesses motivate employees?

Business leaders understand that part of making a company successful is ensuring their employees are motivated at work. A motivated workforce will want to work hard and therefore increase their productivity. They will also take pride in their work, thereby improving quality. Morale will be high and so staff will not want to take unnecessary days off or seek new employment. This means the expense of regular recruitment is kept to a minimum. But how do businesses motivate their employees?

One of the most obvious ways to motivate the workforce is by offering a fair wage. Staff need to feel that they are paid fairly, both in relation to their colleagues and in comparison to other companies in the same industry. Some bosses like to offer an annual pay rise or bonus, particularly when staff have gone over and above what they are paid to do. Other managers introduce performance-related pay, where the staff get a bonus if they meet a target. This is similar to a tactic often used in the sales industry, where staff are paid extra, depending on how many items they sell. This is called commission. Some businesses also try to incentivise their employees by offering staff discounts or other perks, such as a company car or health insurance.

However, money isn't everything and employers use many non-financial methods to motivate staff. Daily working life can get dull so managers sometimes offer job rotation. Staff can switch between tasks to reduce monotony. Bosses can also delegate some of their decision-making to their employees, thereby empowering them and giving them a sense of involvement and control. Some forward-thinking businesses try to enrich their staff's daily life by giving them more interesting and challenging tasks. Ben Wallace, a marketing executive at Google, states, "It's really important as a company that we allow employees freedom to explore. Not only the work they do day to day but also the kind of ideas they think are really cool around that. 10% of our staff's time can be spent on really crazy stuff which maybe doesn't succeed, but which could also be the next huge thing."

Managers are often trained in how to encourage their staff, drawing inspiration from motivational theories. Two well-used examples are the Taylorism and Maslow theories. The Taylorism theory argues that employees do not enjoy work and are only motivated by threats and pay.



Managers motivate staff by organising employees' work and paying by results. An example of this is piece rate pay, where payment is given per item produced. Maslow's theory suggests there are five 'levels of need' that explain why people work. Staff first want to meet their survival needs by earning a good wage. Safety needs such as job security then become important, followed by social, self-esteem and self-fulfillment needs. Moving staff up a Maslow level is considered motivational.

Many business leaders and governments believe that these motivational factors ensure a happy and productive workforce. What do you think? 😊



3 Read the text again and find two examples for each of the following categories:

- benefits of having a motivated workforce for employers

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- financial motivational techniques

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- non-financial motivational techniques

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- motivational theories

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4 Find the words in the text that have a similar meaning to the words below.

- 1 find a different job
- 2 cost of finding new staff
- 3 do more than expected
- 4 modern and innovative companies
- 5 pressure and fear
- 6 fulfil basic practical requirements for life
- 7 knowing your position at work is safe
- 8 a contented and hard-working group of employees

5 Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Think back to your answers from exercises 1 and 2. Which of the motivational ideas from the text and your discussion would work for you? Which ones wouldn't?
- 2 Discuss more ways that businesses can motivate their employees.

?? DID YOU KNOW?

Many innovative companies around the world have been truly inspired when it comes to motivating their staff. However, according to Fortune Magazine, it's Google that is considered the best. They have been voted 'Best Company in the World to Work For' over five times. To motivate and inspire their 50,000 staff worldwide, they have unusual meeting rooms; free food and drink, nap rooms, where you can sleep at work, giant slides and climbing walls (see photo on page 1), and even a bowling alley in one of their offices!

PROJECT

- 1 Work with a partner. Choose one of the two motivational theories mentioned in the text and find out more about it. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this theory? What kind of businesses adopt this theory and why?
- 2 In groups, imagine you are setting up your own company. Decide which motivational theory to follow and what financial and non-financial incentives to offer your staff.
- 3 In your group, prepare a presentation to explain your choices to the rest of the class.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

- annual [adj]:** something that happens once a year
- bonus [n]:** extra, additional money
- colleague [n]:** someone you work with
- dull [adj]:** boring
- empower [v]:** giving strength and control to someone
- enrich [v]:** improve, deepen
- incentivise [v]:** encourage with a reward for success
- monotony [n]:** boredom
- morale [n]:** the amount of enthusiasm a person/people feel for a situation at a particular time
- motivate [v]:** inspire, encourage
- perk [n]:** additional advantage to having a salary
- productivity [n]:** output, the amount you produce
- switch [v]:** change
- target [n]:** level, something to aim for
- tactic [n]:** method