



## Employee Motivation Report 2018

Living  
to  
work

MOTIVATES



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# Introduction

**It's not hard to identify a motivated workforce. Just look around, and you should be able to quickly and easily tell if the team is full of motivated employees.**

Motivated employees are engaged, have a positive outlook, they're energetic and excited about what they're doing, and they know that they're investing their time into something they consider worthwhile. **In short, motivated people enjoy their jobs, are happier and perform well.**

Employees who are not motivated will have low productivity, lack energy and are often sombre or apathetic. While it is impossible for every employee to be motivated every day, what is clear is that it only takes one employee who is not motivated to have a negative impact on the entire organisation. As soon as a group of employees motivation levels drop, it can quickly spread, permeating the whole department or office. In fact, experts estimate that the costs of a disengaged workforce can run into millions of pounds.

Each year UK organisations invest heavily in rewards and recognition to motivate their employees. It is estimated that industry average spend on reward and recognition is between one and two per cent of total remuneration.\* In spite of this, new research conducted by Motivates Inc. Ltd\*\* reveals that employee motivation in the UK is in fact on a slippery downhill slope. **Almost a third of employees (29%) said they were not motivated at work in 2017.**

While this means 71% were motivated at work, when we compare the statistics to 2016's motivation results the outlook isn't as positive as it first appears. Only one-fifth (18%) of employees were not motivated at work in 2016.

That's a big 11% increase in the number of employees who were not motivated in their job in 2017 versus 2016, or a 61% rise in the number of employees who were not motivated in just a year.

This report looks in detail at the current motivational landscape in the UK, the latest trends in the motivation marketplace and explores why we are seeing a decline in employee motivation. It also aims to discover what UK employers need to do to support their employees and keep them motivated.

What is clear from this year's report is motivation in the workplace is in need of disruption. To put it more simply, employers need to understand what drives employee motivation and to adopt a more considered approach, with consistent rewards and continuous effort. The good news is, that while it can't be fixed instantaneously, it can be fixed. This is important because when you cease trying to motivate employees or think the job is done, you'll soon see employees steadily become disengaged, unmotivated and subsequently less productive. So how do you keep your employees motivated and how do you reap the rewards?

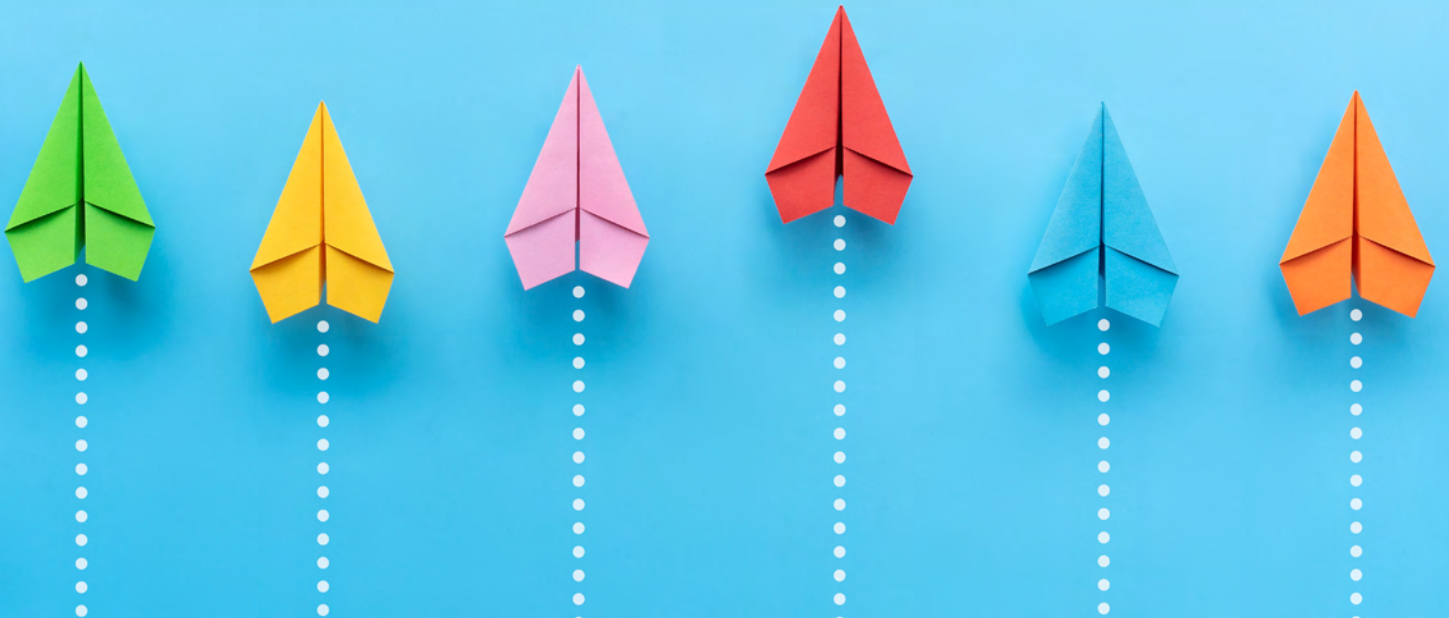
## Employees want their jobs to be a source of satisfaction and add meaning to their lives

\* [Trends in Employee Recognition by World at Work.](#)

\*\* 2000 UK employees in full-time employment were surveyed for Motivates Inc. Ltd latest employee motivation research. For more information see back page.



Motivation needs  
a considered approach,  
consistent rewards and  
continuous effort



# The motivational landscape

What does employee motivation in the workplace look like today?

The way we work, the roles we perform and our main motivating factors for working have changed dramatically over the last 20 years.

Several combined factors have drastically impacted motivation levels...

The rise of technology

The need for flexible working

The ageing workforce

plus

Longer commuting distances

Increased stress

The struggle to juggle family and work commitments

Add to this employers who are continually dealing with budget constraints and you soon find employees aren't working in an environment that helps them perform at their best. And employers are unintentionally adding to the pressure put on employees.

With the strain on employees to perform, coupled with the need for businesses to improve productivity and increase profit margins, the biggest gain for employers is to focus on keeping their employees motivated and engaged, **ensuring their most valuable asset, their employees, are valued and able to flourish.**

Understanding what motivates and engages employees should be the first and most crucial step to creating a productive and happy working environment. Keep in mind that typically, **employees who are motivated, work with passion and often drive innovation, take more initiative and deliver higher quality work and at a faster pace.**

On the other hand, disengaged employees can be detrimental to your organisation, slowing down productivity and increasing employee turnover. Identifying what motivates, and more importantly what demotivates employees and how to address the causes is critical for future success.

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We asked 2000 employees if they were motivated at work last year...

Almost a third (29%) of employees were *not* motivated in 2017

*11% increase* of employees not motivated in 2017 compared to 2016

...that's 22 employees in an organisation of 200 *not feeling good* about their job


.....

# What motivates

What factors attributed to an increase in low motivation levels?

The starting point for employers to address motivation in the workplace is to understand **why employees are not motivated**. Only then can you create an informed strategy that works for both the employee and the business.

We now know what the split looks like between motivated and not motivated employees, but let's discover why employees felt like they did.

 We asked...

Tell us about the things that motivate you at work?

Top **5** things that motivate





We asked...

## What things didn't motivate you at work?

25%

I have no career progression

25%

Senior management communicate poorly

24%

Company doesn't give regular rewards or recognition

21%

I don't have a good work life balance

18%

Work doesn't challenge me

Tellingly, it's not just the tangible things keeping employees happy and engaged at work. Employees are getting satisfaction from things that are more personal to them, such as a **good work-life balance, working with great peers, and doing well in their career**. Regular rewards and recognition do come up high in the list of challenges, yet interestingly it seems a **simple "thank you" from a manager** – which costs nothing - is vital to keep motivating a team.

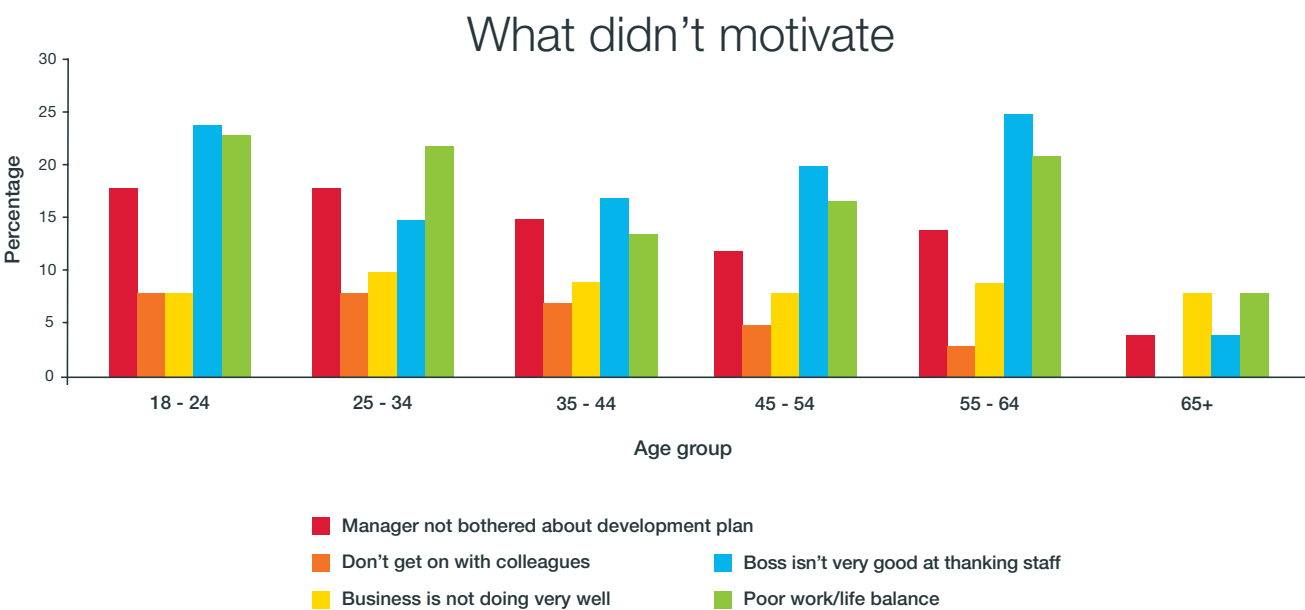
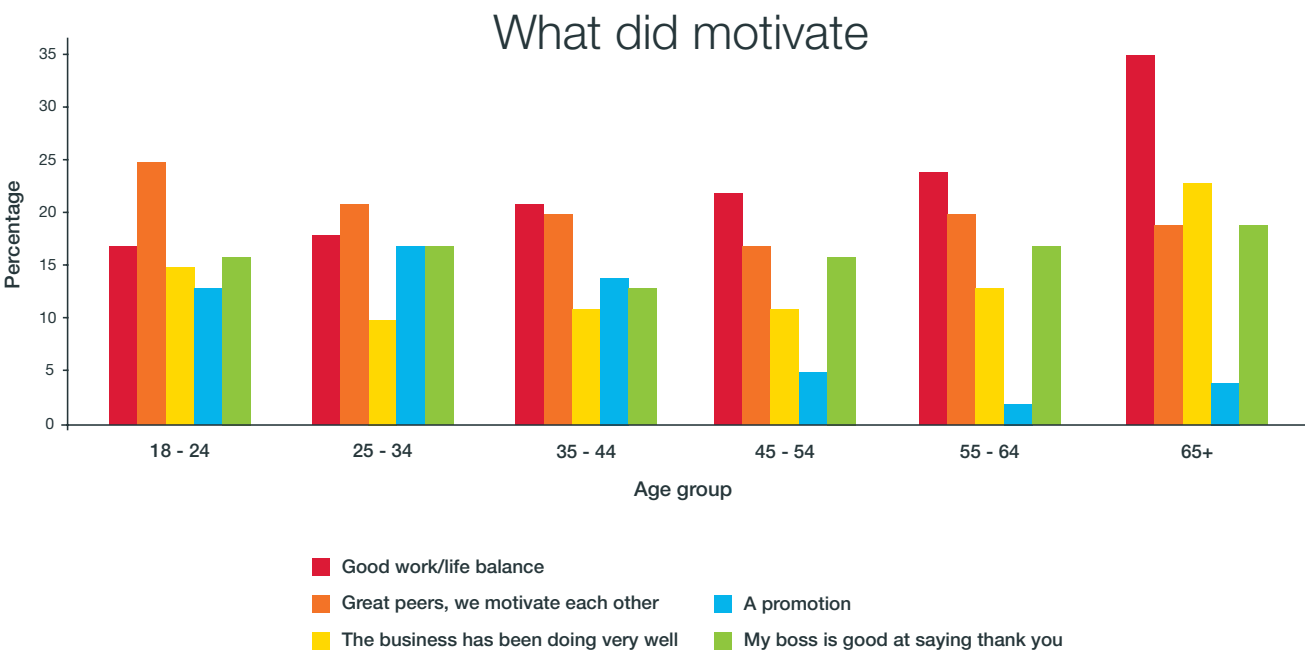
This leads us to challenge whether there are more effective ways for employers to motivate their workforce which will benefit the business over the longer term? What is clear from our research is the growing demand for employees to be in job roles and environments that offer more than just a good paycheck. **Today's employees are looking to work for organisations that enable them and help them support their personal approach, work goals and lifestyle choices.**



# Motivation by age groups

## Top 5 things that did and didn't motivate

Looking at trends from different age groups can help us define what elements at work are keeping our employees upbeat and what factors are counteracting our motivation efforts.







Having a good work life balance plays a considerable part in retaining energy levels

## Key insights

### Peer power

**Every age group said their peers kept them motivated.**

Having a good work life balance also played a considerable part in retaining energy levels. This is not surprising as people's approaches to maintaining their overall professional and personal well-being have changed. This includes their attitudes to work and how they balance their commitments both at home and professionally.

It's easy to think throwing money at employees is what will keep them happy; however, results show it's the personable things that motivate an individual – no matter what age you are.

When employers create an environment that shows appreciation, respects the need for flexibility and encourages autonomy, learning and progression they have significantly more engaged employees than those that don't.

### A simple thanks

**Having a manager that says thank you also has a significant impact on how someone feels.**

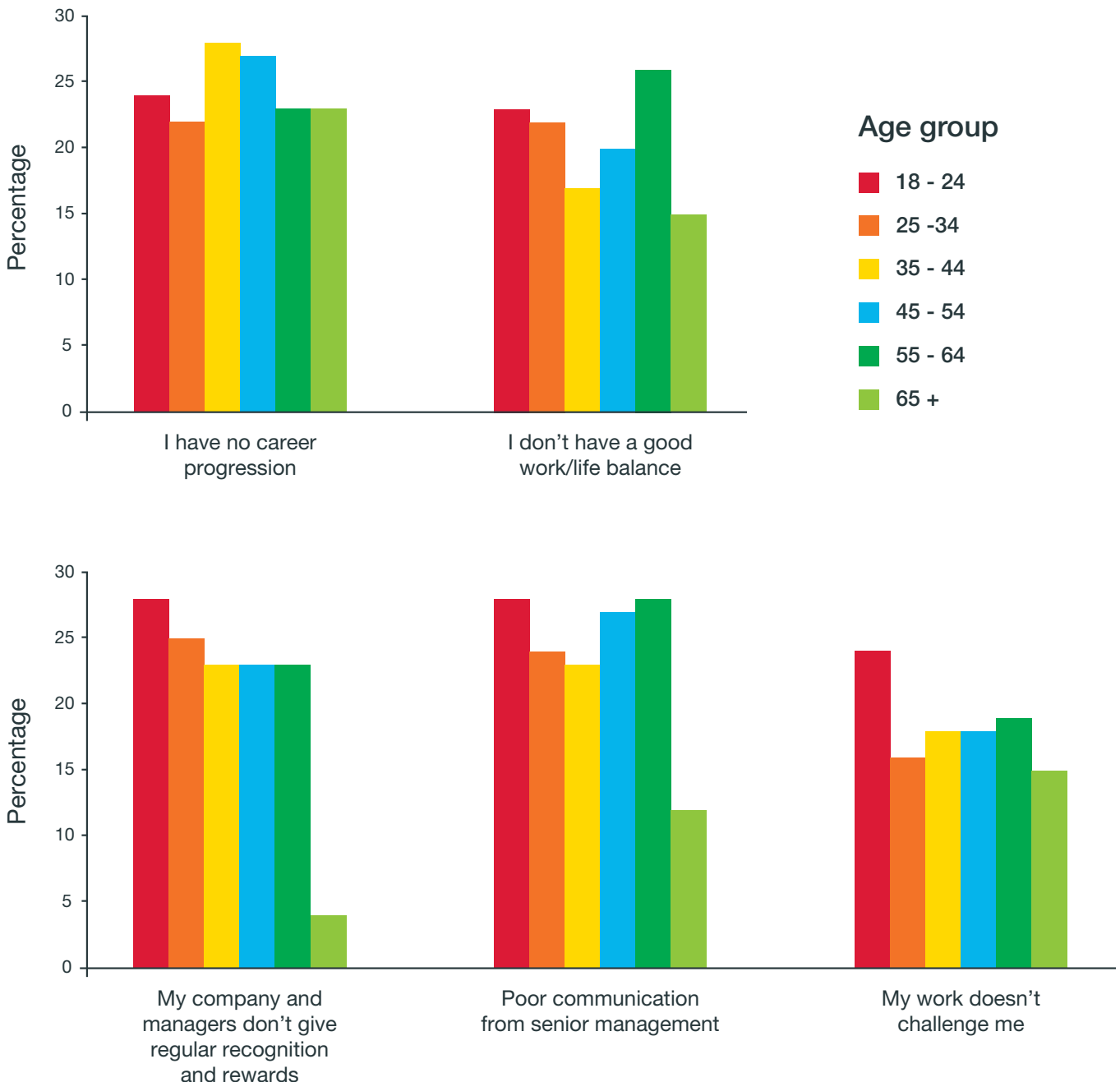
The age groups that didn't have this in their top three had "I got a promotion" instead. This could be interpreted as a thank you; these employees were rewarded and recognised with the next step up after working hard in their role.

## Motivation by age groups

When we asked each age group about the challenges they had to overcome to stay motivated **“poor communication from senior management”** and **“my company and managers didn’t give regular rewards or recognition”** appeared in the top three motivational woes for every age category ranging from 18 to 65 and above.

**“I had no career progression”** also appeared in the top three for every age group, apart from 25-34-year-olds who opted for **“I didn’t have a good work life balance”** over this.

### The challenges employees face to stay motivated





## Key insights

### Poor communication

#### Are employers missing a vital step?

While every business faces financial and administrative pressures, senior management **has no excuse** when it comes to **poor communication**. Although these needs may be critical - and may not necessarily appear to have a direct impact on the workplace - the results show that when managers get caught up in issues at their level; and fail to keep colleagues in the loop, frustrations in the workplace multiply at a rapid rate. The statistics quite clearly show that poor communication has a fundamental impact on motivation levels.

**The statistics clearly show that poor communication has a fundamental impact on motivation levels**

### Appreciation goes a long way

Our research shows that as well as the need for senior management to change their approach to how they communicate with employees, **many are missing a trick when it comes to rewards and recognition, and the role recognition plays in keeping motivation levels high.**

Employers must not underestimate the impact of appreciation to make employees feel valued and have the confidence to carry on with the job at hand.

# Other motivational influences

To identify other factors that could affect motivation levels we asked employees what their most significant workplace concerns were.



## Key insights

### Uncertainty in the workplace

The current affairs landscape has obviously impacted people more than employers may think with almost a third (29%) worrying about financial security and a quarter (26%) worrying about job security.

### Health and well-being matters

Companies that think health and well-being are for trendy organisations need to reconsider their approach drastically. Today's workforce is taking more of an interest in their health and mental and emotional well-being. The nation has become more aware and open to talking about stress and mental health issues; this trend needs to filter down into the workplace. Show employees you care about them inside and outside of the office, and they'll feel valued and appreciated.



## Challenge me

Staying challenged and progressing in a career is important to employees. Employers shouldn't assume their employees feel thankful for having a 'job'. Employees want more from their jobs. They want to succeed, learn and be challenged. Dead-end jobs need to be a thing of the past.

When it comes to challenging employees, businesses need to be careful that extra work or working on new projects doesn't result in employees working more extended hours - this will have a negative impact on their motivation levels. A fifth of employees (22%) said they didn't feel motivated in 2017 because they worked a considerable amount of overtime and felt exhausted.

### Suggestions for appropriate challenges...

Set the employee a new task

Encourage them to spend time with another team, or help out a colleague on a different project

All in all, giving employees the opportunity to think differently and explore new areas of the business is more motivating than just having a huge workload that requires them to stay in the office longer.

Challenge employees by giving them the opportunity to think differently – not stay in the office longer



# Living to work

The merge between work and personal life

A job shapes your employees most important life decisions: where they live, the time they spend with their family, and to a degree their lifestyle choices and friends



What stands out from our research is the need for employers to adjust their approach to motivation in the workplace to ensure positive results for both employees and the business. It's clear that whilst employers cannot be wholly responsible for their employees motivational levels and attitude in the workplace, **they cannot ignore its direct link to increased performance, productivity and bottom line profit.**

More and more the stats are proving that jobs are very personal to us and have more significance to us than they used to. We no longer 'just have a job', it's not all about the 9-5 daily grind – **Today, our jobs define our lives inside and outside of the office.** More and more employees want their jobs to be a source of **satisfaction and to be a meaningful addition to their lives.**

Employers need to have a vested interest in actively supporting their employees and putting strategies in place to monitor and maintain motivation levels. There is a very real imperative for employers to ensure they provide a work environment conducive to **creating, nurturing and maintaining a motivated workforce.** Training senior management on the art of motivation, creating opportunities for career progression, recognising the need for consistent recognition and reward, encouraging a good work life balance and understanding what motivates the modern day employee are critical to success.

Employees want to work for organisations that broaden their horizons, in roles that are rewarding and fulfilling. Furthermore, they want job roles that move their careers forward in new and exciting ways. And they want managers that appreciate them. Employers need to recognise this and help provide the relevant avenues for employees to mould themselves to who and where they want to be.

Employers and the job roles they offer need to be less about providing a means to survive and more about a way to shape an employee's future. This is the best way for employers to attract and retain the top talent.



48% of employees are more invested in their jobs than they were five years ago. This number is only going to increase as many of us now base life satisfaction on how well we're doing and how happy we are at work – not just at home



## The merge between work and personal life

Not only are we invested and more emotionally attached to our work but our jobs make us feel worthy too.

Three quarters of employees (74%) agreed or strongly agreed that success in the workplace enhanced their sense of self-worth.

Does success in the workplace enhance our sense of self worth?

74% Agreed / Strongly Agreed

22% Felt Neutral

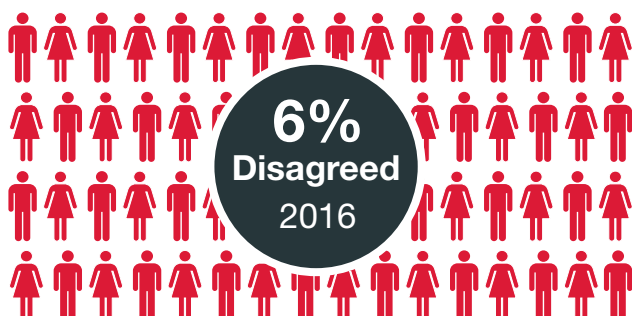
4% Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed



We asked employees if they chose their jobs based on the salaries they receive. A third (31%) said they felt neutral towards the comment, while 19% disagreed with the statement - making it clear that employees have moved away from the adage of working to live. **It seems employees are demanding more and people are now living to work.**

## ‘Employees chose their jobs based on salaries’

In 2017, three times as many people (19%) Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed with this statement compared to only 6% in 2016.





**?** We asked...

What would motivate  
you more than your  
basic salary?

**1**

**40%**

A feeling  
of satisfaction



**39%**

General work  
enjoyment

**2**

**3**

**34%**

Job security



**32%**

Incentives  
and rewards

**4**

**5**

**27%**

Working as  
part of a team



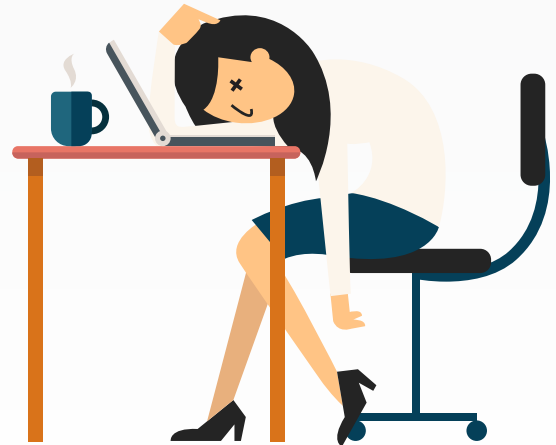
## Why motivate

While the results demonstrate that motivation levels are decreasing, employers might still be hesitant to invest time and money into turning these figures around. It's understandable when other essential business matters need attending to first.

However, if you look carefully at what employees say happens when they are motivated at work you'll discover employees said they were more efficient, focused and confident in the workplace when they're motivated. The statistics should be enough to encourage employers to find the budget to bring motivating employees back onto the business agenda.

? We asked...

How do you feel when you're not motivated at work?



What happens when you feel more motivated at work?



**40%**  
**Frustrated**

**39%**  
Lack of energy  
and willingness to  
get the job done

**38%**  
More stress  
and under  
pressure

**33%**  
Negative about  
my workplace  
and job role

**36%**  
**Struggle  
to focus**

**21%**  
Less willing  
to help others

**48%**  
I get the job done  
more efficiently

**42%**  
I feel more  
focused

**42%**  
I'm more positive  
about my workplace  
and job role

**37%**  
I'm proud  
of my  
achievements



There's no more  
definitive statement than  
**'I get the job done  
more efficiently'**  
to confirm why we need to  
make an effort to motivate  
our employees.

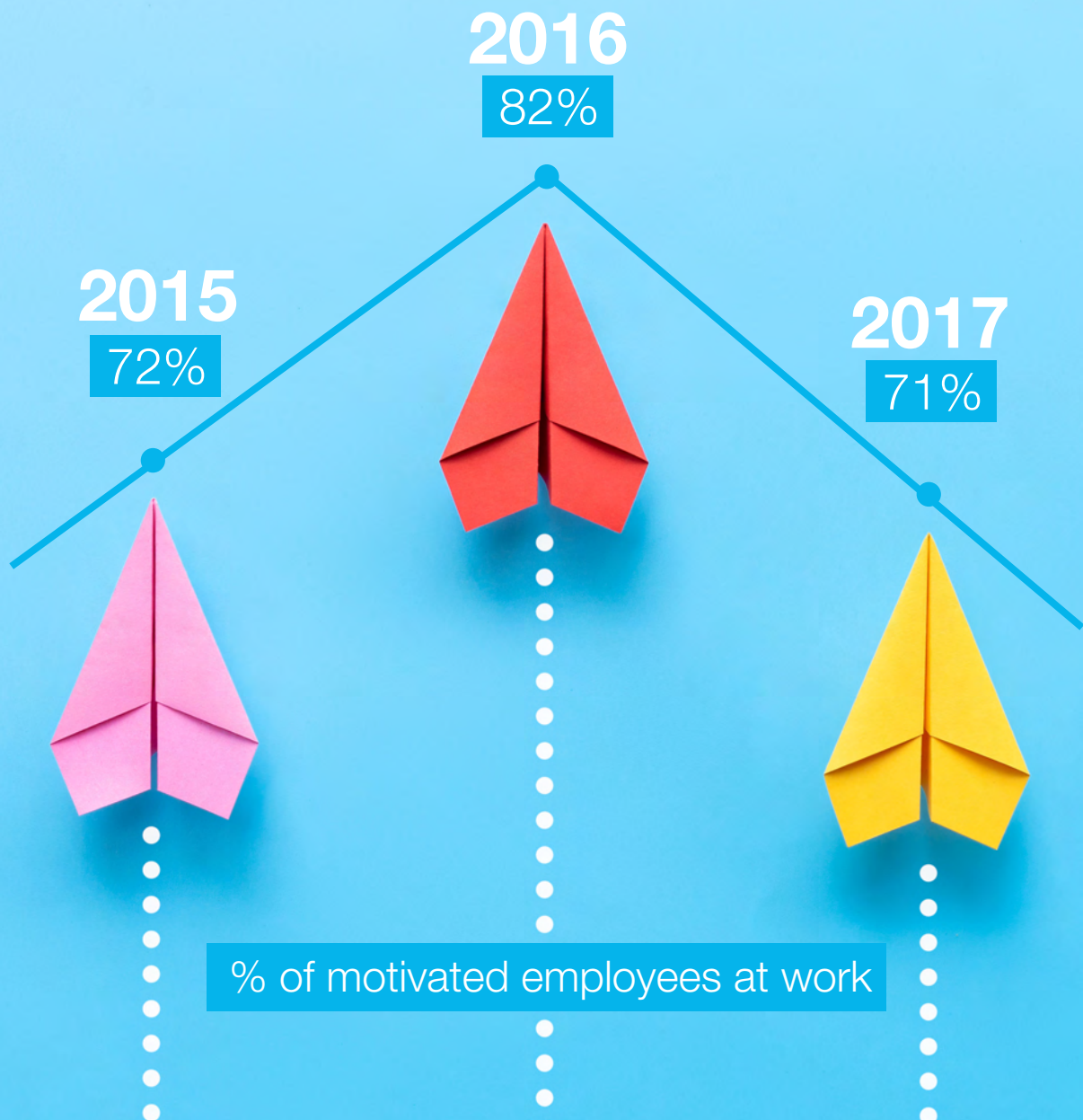
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# Conclusion

The research shows that **many employees are motivated in the workplace**. However, it also shows us that the number of employees that are **not motivated is increasing**. It appears the UK was going in the right direction with employee motivation in 2016, so why the sudden decline?

One theory could be that businesses realised they needed to focus on the subject, gave it their all, started to see results, and then the issue fell off the business agenda as they felt the job was complete. **This is where many motivation programmes fail.**

## Motivational landscape over the last three years

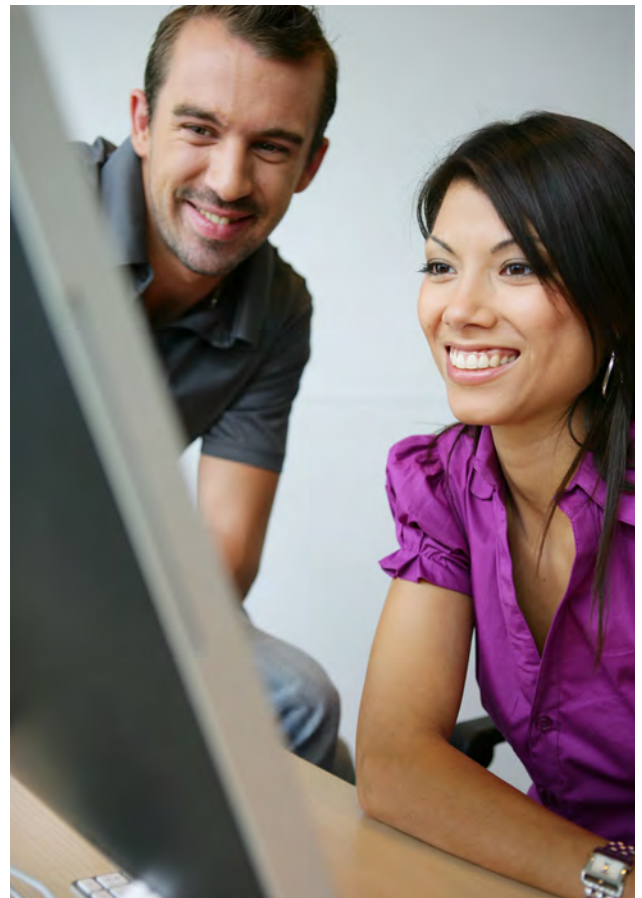




**Employers need to keep plugging away at motivating employees, and run programmes continually alongside other recognition schemes, all year round, again and again, and again.**

The results remind us that throwing a **cash bonus at our employees will not instantly motivate them**. Employees see the value in benefits that are going to make a change in how they feel - not a change to their bank balance. Challenge them, notice them and allow them a good amount of personal time outside the office, so they don't burn out. We know hard-working employees are likely to work overtime on specific projects throughout the year. Recognise when this is happening and make sure you give small benefits to provide employees with the lift they need to keep going – but also to feel motivated and happy to keep giving more.

**You want to make employees feel like their hard work is always noticed.** If it's not, then it's only a matter of time before their motivation levels drop and they up and move on.



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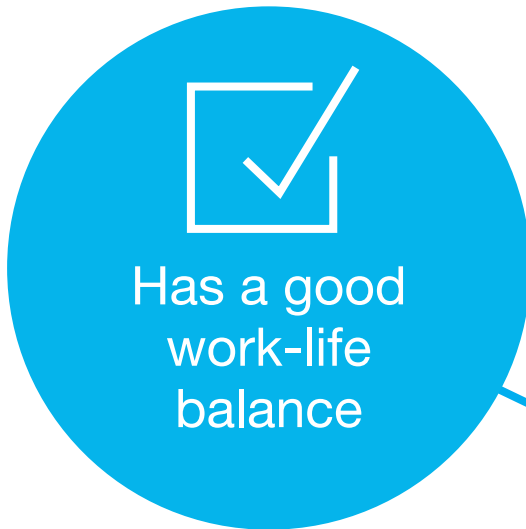
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reports and get  
to grips with key  
industry issues**

**Career plans are crucial.** You don't want employees to feel like a number in the company. You want them to feel part of your team and your company. This can be very tricky to do in a large organisation. However, giving employees challenges to complete means not only are you, the business, getting more out of them, but the employee will feel achievement and self-worth too.

Finally, there's a saying that says **"treat others how you would want to be treated"**. This applies to the workplace too. Be a considerate manager who says thank you when it's due, and notice your team become more attentive and thankful.

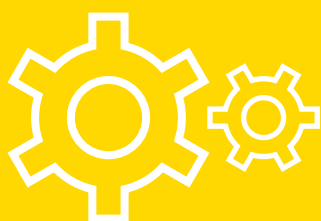
Also, don't forget to communicate. **Frustrations can easily be solved just by talking more.**

# What does a motivated employee look like?





Receives regular  
recognition



Is challenged

#### About the research

This research was conducted among 2000 UK employees in April 2018. An independent research agency ran the survey.

To request copies or find out more about the survey contact Karen Newton  
[marketing@motivates.co.uk](mailto:marketing@motivates.co.uk)

#### About us

Motivates Inc. Ltd deliver imaginative motivation, reward, recognition, incentive, customer loyalty, events and travel solutions. **Everything we do is designed to help you show the great people in your world just how much you value them.**

Using our leading and trusted products, high street vouchers, online point schemes, scratch card campaigns, and on-pack promotions we bring your motivation strategy to life.

At Motivates we create bespoke campaigns that offer a variety of choice and flexibility tailored to align with your business goals and drive performance.



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