

# THE ART OF MOTIVATION:

Inspiring today's workforce

MOTIVATES



October 2017

# Introduction

In today's economic climate there is more and more pressure on businesses to motivate and look after employees to retain talent and gain an advantage over competitors. However, with **tough targets** to meet and **time and money** being the enemy, **'motivating and making staff happy' tends to slip to the bottom of the to-do list.**

Some companies, like Google, have hit the mark when it comes to looking after its employees – it has a great office environment, promotes healthy living, offers flexible working as well as a bundle of attractive perks. It was also named the “Best Company to Work For” in 2017 by the Great Place to Work Institute and Fortune Magazine. In fact, Google has ranked first place on the list eight times in 11 years!

In reality, not all businesses have a large team and budget like Google to manage motivational programmes and splash out on huge benefits packages. **Because of this, we were keen to find out what really makes employees happy and motivated in the workplace and discover whether a whopping budget is the answer.**

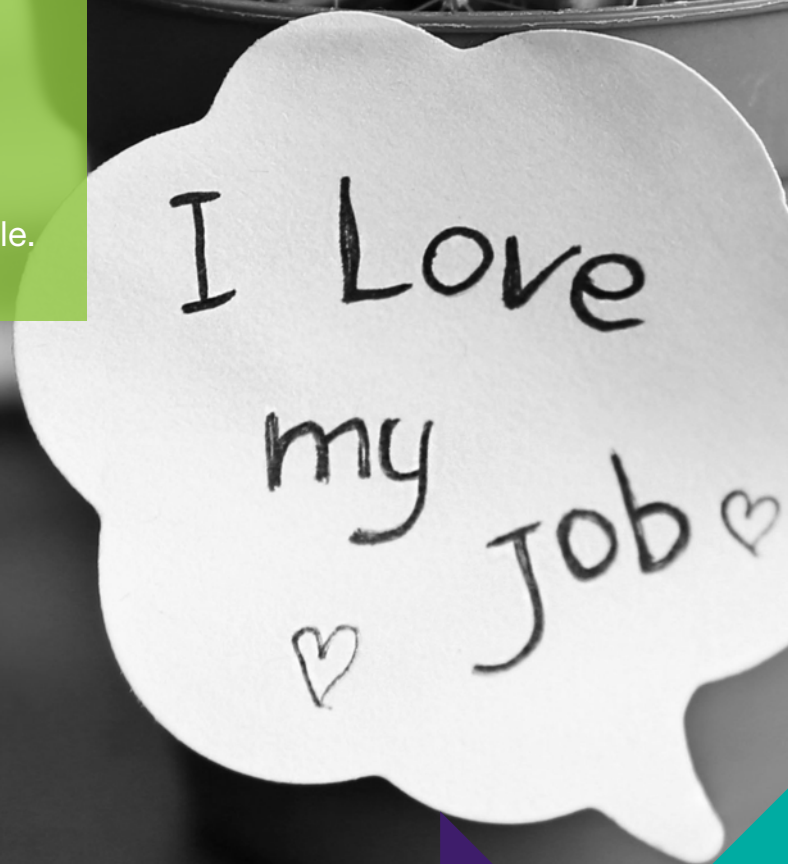


We have worked with 2,001 UK employees to discover what makes them tick. This report outlines the areas we have explored such as office relationships, management impact, rewards and recognition, as well as delving into what these employees told us makes them feel driven.

The findings have proven that **there isn't a quick fix for motivating the people in your workplace,** and understanding what motivates them is not always an easy answer. Numerous factors impact how your employees feel. Using our research, we have developed a simple to use checklist to help guide you through your motivational programme. Follow this checklist and you could be setting your sights on following the same mantra as Google itself.

**“It’s less about the aspiration to be No. 1 in the world, and more that we want our employees and future employees to love it here, because that’s what’s going to make us successful.”**

Vice President of People Development, Google.



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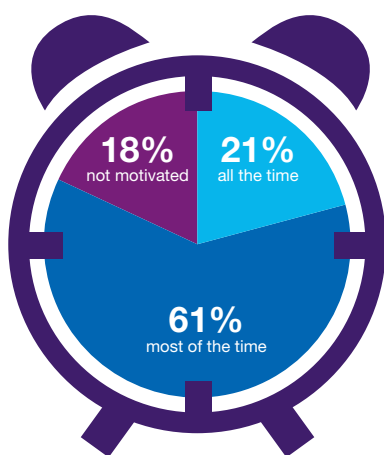
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# How motivated are UK employees?

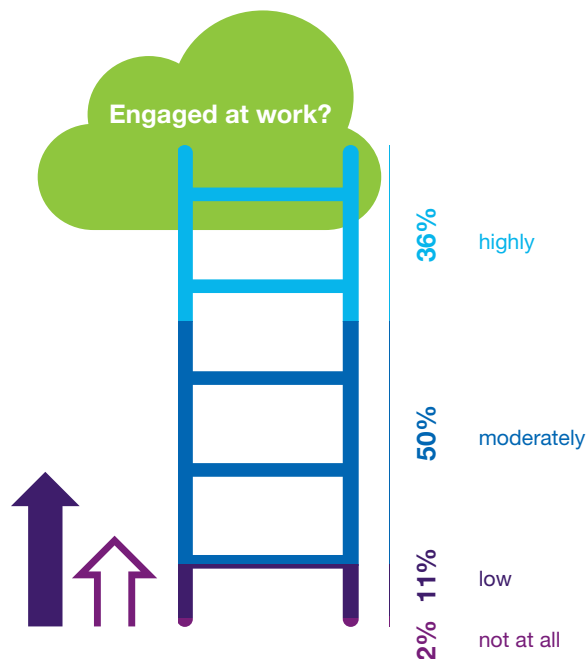
The simple answer is, we, the UK, are doing ok when it comes to motivating our workforce. However, as always there is room for improvement.

## Employees motivated at work



A large proportion of the 2,001 UK employees who took part in our research confirmed they were either motivated at work all the time or most of the time. The employees who did not feel motivated were in the minority.

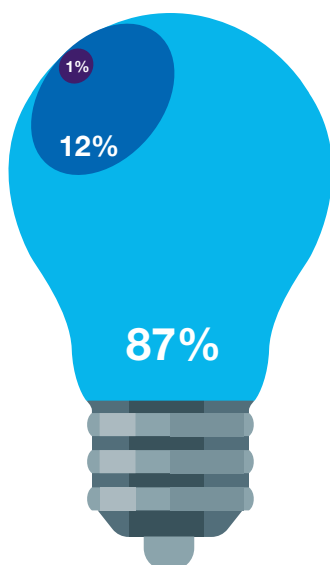
## Employees engaged at work



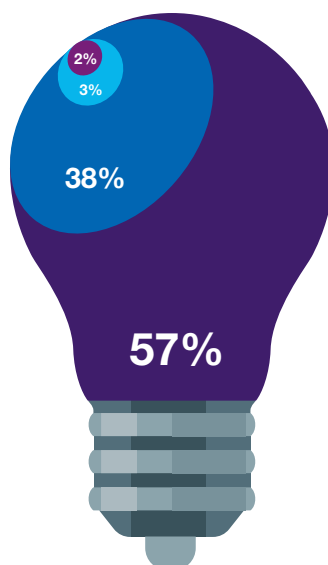
Employee engagement continues to be a buzz word in the workplace and is no doubt linked to motivation, we asked the same group if they were engaged at work. **The results more or less mirrored the motivated statistics.** The majority of employees felt highly engaged or moderately engaged.

## Motivation vs Engagement - one follows the other

Motivated employees (21%)  
confirmed to be/have:



Demotivated employees (15%)  
confirmed to be/have:



### Key

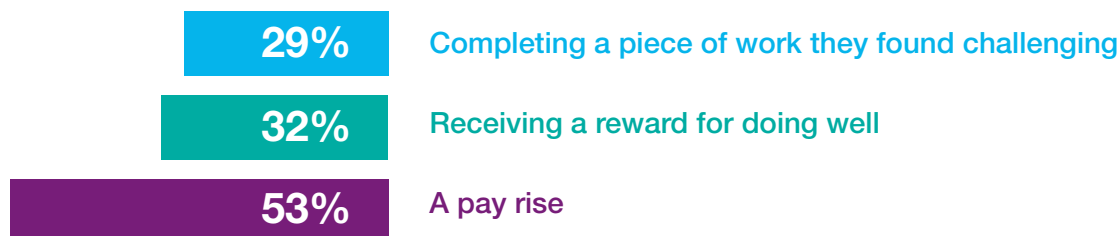
- highly engaged
- moderately engaged
- low engagement
- not engaged at all

It's not rocket science that **a motivated employee is an engaged employee.** However, the stats prove that if you successfully motivate your employee then you're more likely to have an engaged employee. Both are vital for every company to strive to achieve, regardless of the market you operate in or the services you offer.

# What employees say about motivation

Hands up who has dangled a cash bonus in front of employees to motivate them? Don't worry if your hand is in the air. Probably every other business is guilty of this too.

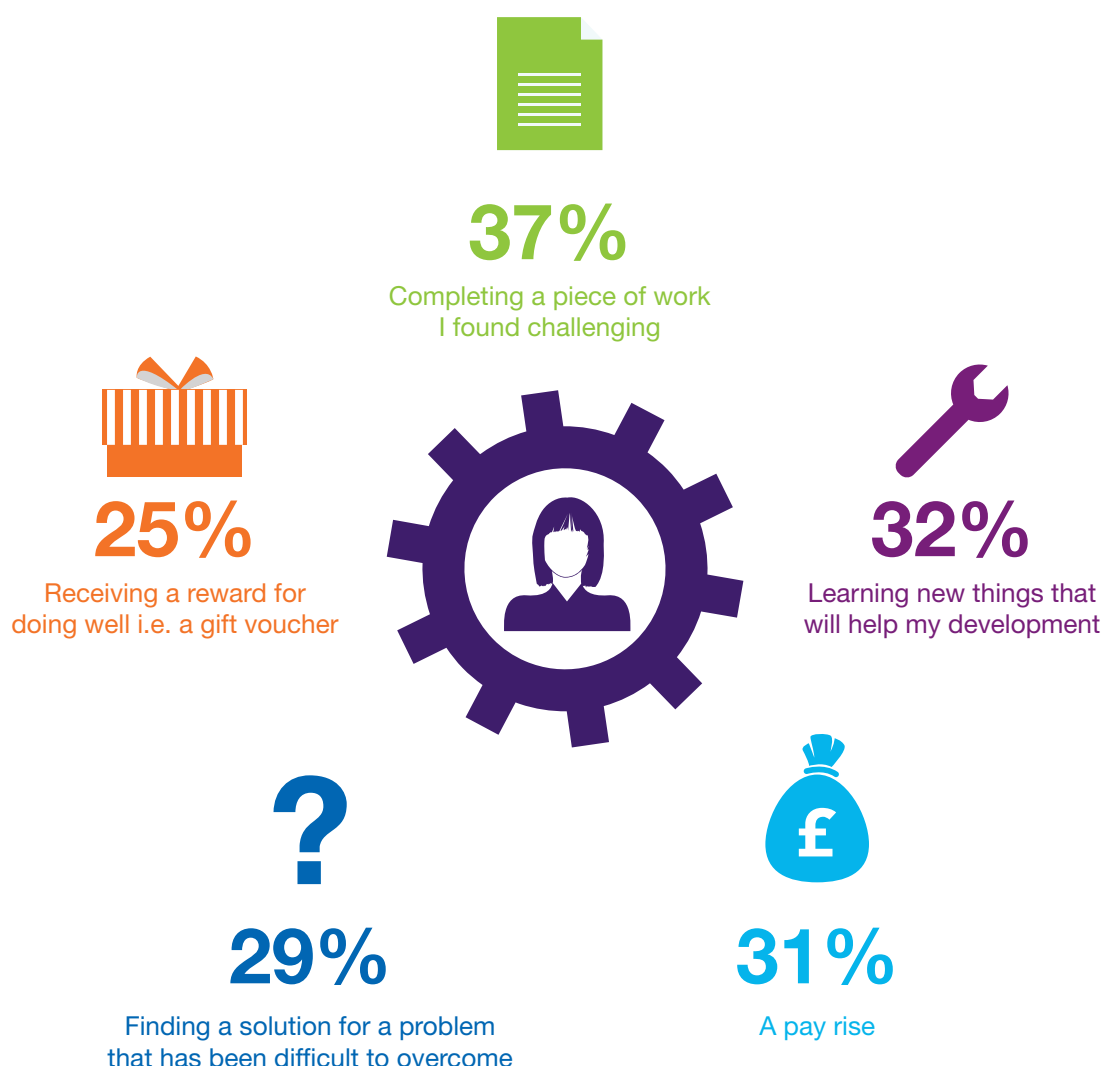
We asked 2,001 UK employees to name the top three things that currently motivate them in their job.



You will be forgiven if these statistics make you immediately think, "See, cash does work." However, when you look at what the motivated employees said they find motivating at work, the answers are very different...

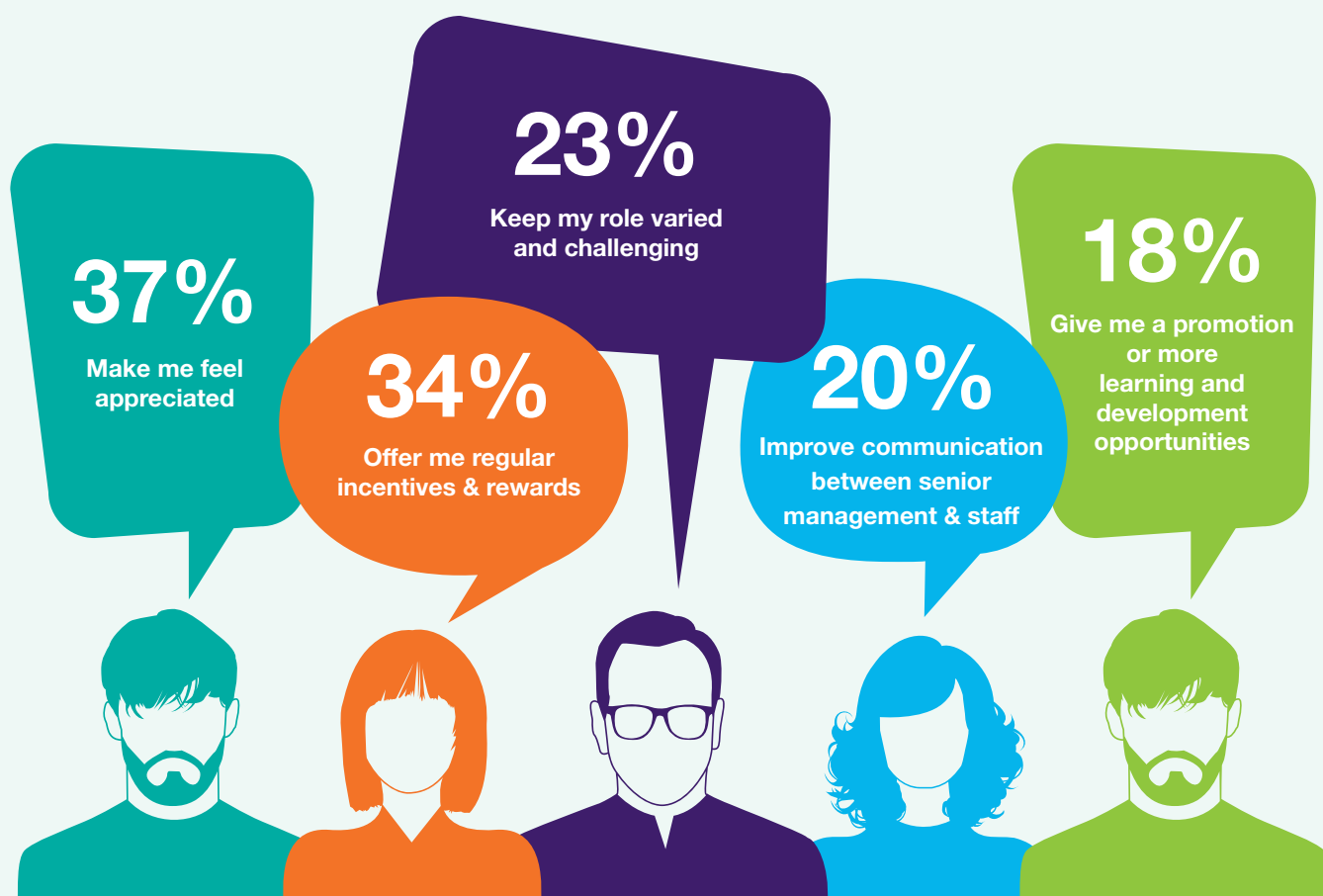
## Top five things motivated employees said currently motivated them at work

Motivated employees confirmed being challenged and learning new skills are what currently motivate them - a pay rise was third on the list



We also asked all employees – motivated and not - what they felt their employer could do better to motivate them in their current role.

Employees want to feel appreciated and have a varied role that challenges them.



What employees feel their employer could do better to motivate them

The results show we need to [think outside the box](#) when it comes to motivating our employees. Motivation techniques do not need to be tangible, for example, 'make me feel appreciated' could be as simple as a [verbal thank you](#) from a senior manager, and 'keep my role varied and challenging' means [staying on top of employees' personal development](#) to ensure they're not getting bored.



# Office relationships vs motivation

Now when we say relationships we don't mean office romances, we're talking about office friendships.

It might seem odd to consider friendships in the workplace when looking at how to motivate employees, but when we explored different factors that had positive effects on **motivated employees a vast majority of them said they worked on projects with friends (87%)**.

The phrase "teamwork makes the dream work" doesn't seem too cheesy when you look at the statistics we discovered around working with companions.

We asked all employees whether they have colleagues whom they regard as friends. **The majority (62%) said they did. A large percentage (68%) of employees said that they regularly work on projects with these friends and when they do they feel just as, if not more, productive.**

We looked at whether these percentages differed for our group of motivated employees (21%). **Interestingly all results positively increased for employees who were motivated at work.**



## Employees are more motivated and more productive when working on projects with friends

Do you have colleagues whom you regard as friends?

2,001 polled UK employees

Motivated employees

72% 28%

81% 19%



Do you regularly work on specific projects with these friends?

2,001 polled UK employees

Motivated employees

68% 32%

87% 13%

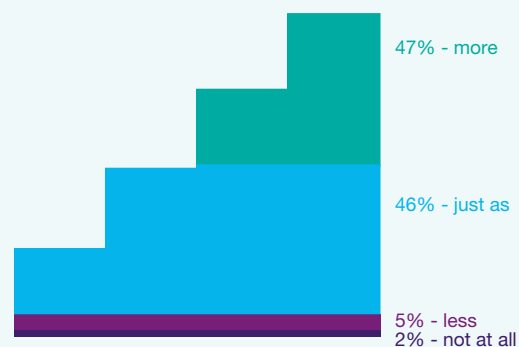
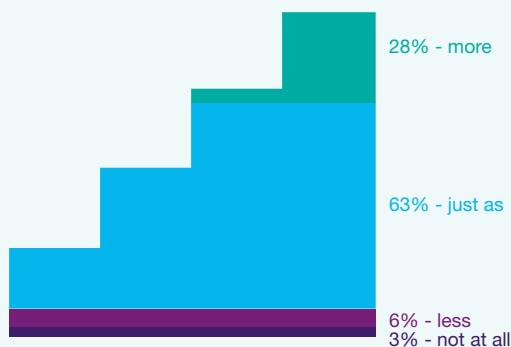


● Yes  
● No

Do you feel more or less productive when you work with friends?

2,001 polled UK employees

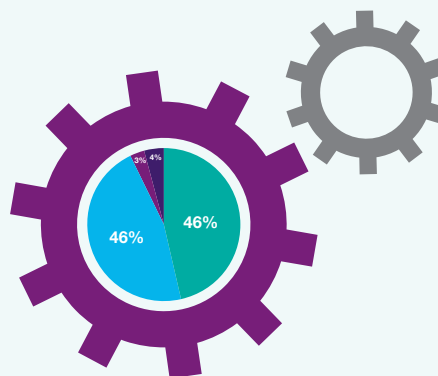
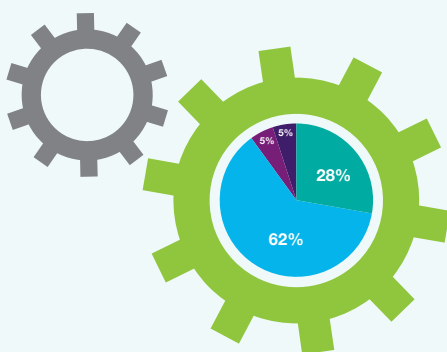
Motivated employees



Do you believe your company would work more or less efficiently if you were actively encouraged to collaborate with team members you regarded as friends?

2,001 polled UK employees

Motivated employees



**Key**  
 ● More  
 ● Just as  
 ● Less  
 ● We wouldn't get any work done

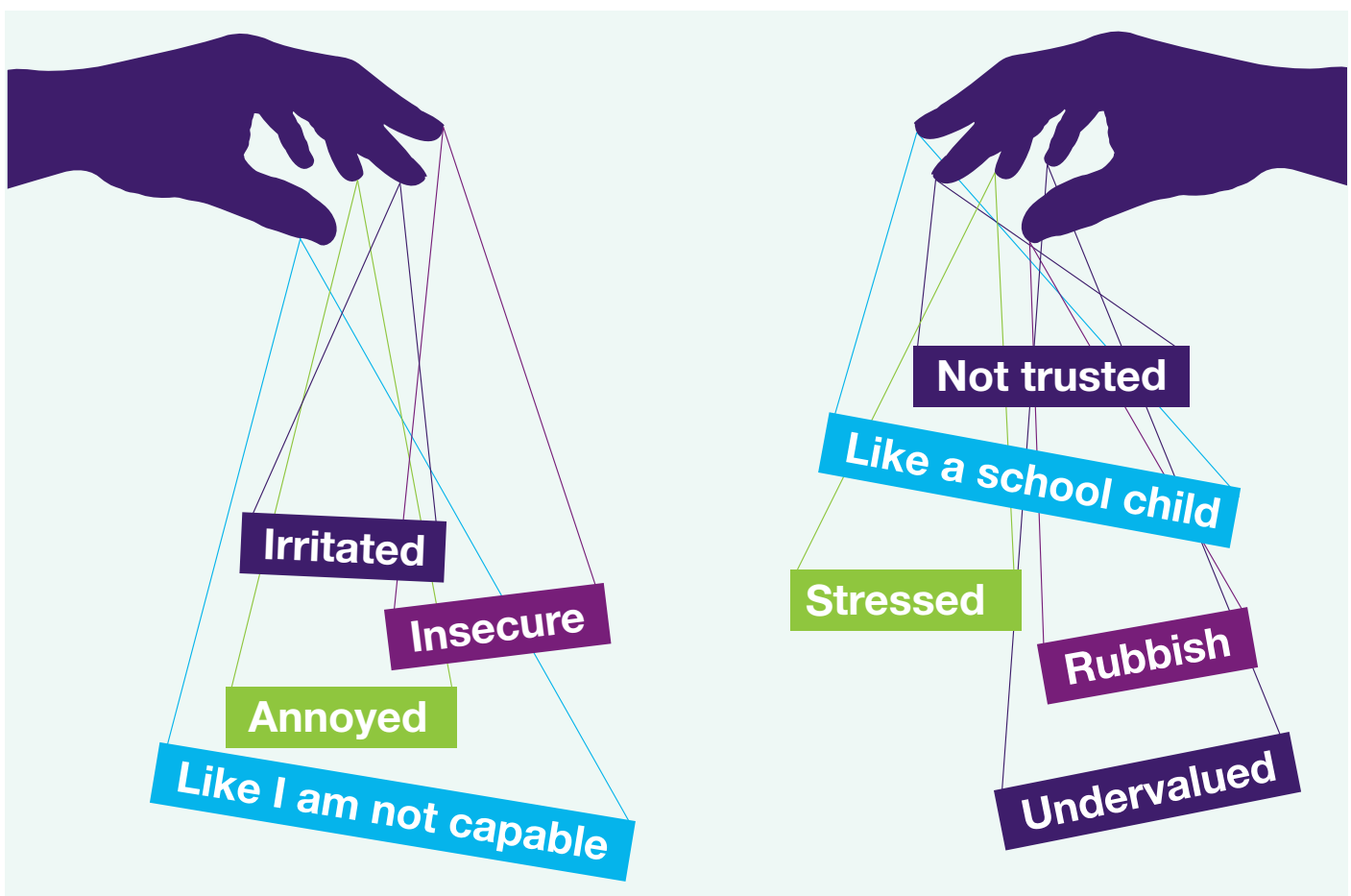
So, before you decide to scrap the idea of team building for the fear of the concept being outdated, think again. The more you can encourage teams to bond and create friendships, the more likely you are to motivate them to succeed and work collaboratively with colleagues/friends to achieve great things.

# A manager's impact on motivation

Just as friendly colleagues are important to create a positive working environment, good managers are too.

Many job roles today tend to focus on learning on the job, therefore when promotions take place and an employee suddenly finds himself/herself in charge of a team, training this employee to be a good manager can very easily be forgotten. A lot of managers will tell you that no one has ever taught them how to run a team, they've learnt from experience and what works for them as an individual. However, there really is an art to being a good manager and it's an area that businesses should not overlook.

We've all heard about micromanagers and we all know the negative effect they can have on a team. **We asked 2,001 UK employees whether they are micromanaged at work - a quarter (23%) said they are.** We asked the group who are micromanaged to write down in their own words how this made them feel. Some of the top, and most alarming, comments were:



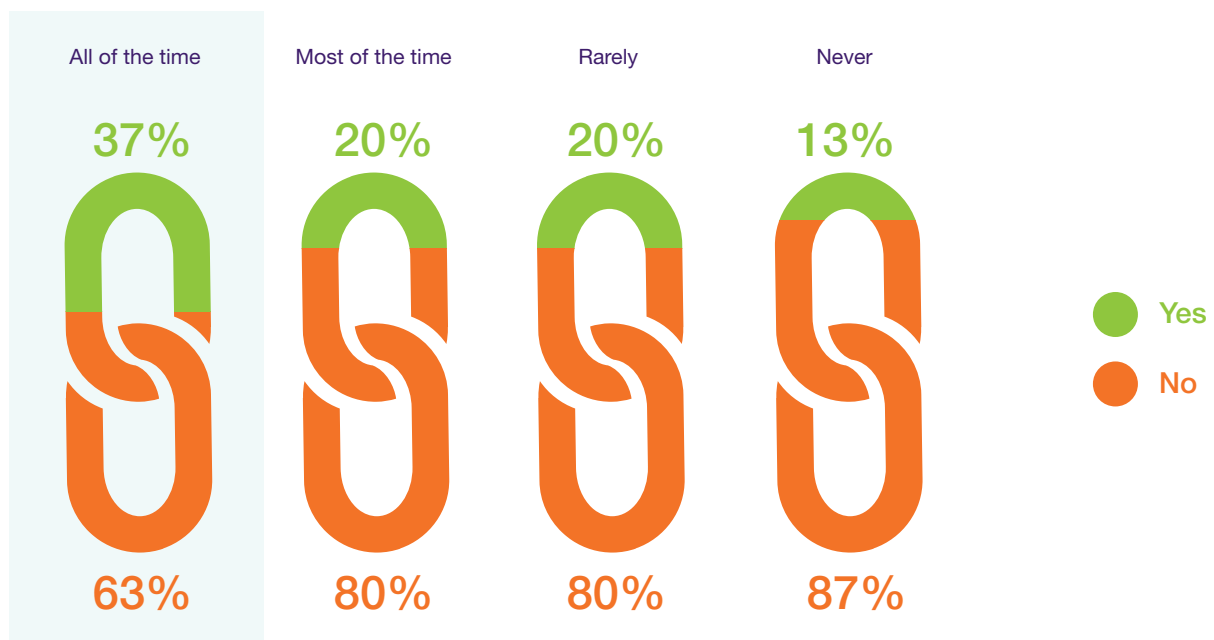
As this report is focused on motivation we then explored whether our group of motivated employees were micromanaged. We assumed the more motivated an employee was, the less they said they were being micromanaged. However, interestingly it seems the more motivated an employee is, the more they feel like they're being micromanaged. **In fact, 37% of employees who said they were motivated all the time said they were micromanged.**

"How odd," we hear you say. Yes, well we thought so too. But considering the subject further, our conclusion is a motivated employee is very much an ambitious employee, therefore, has the confidence to and would prefer to, proceed with a task on their own. Not with someone looking over their shoulder.

It confirms how managing is an art form – the motivated employees need to be given even more space. The less motivated employees need to be given some space but also need to be reassured along their journey to give them the confidence to know they're doing a good job.

## Does your manager micromanage your work?

Motivated employees...



So, what can you, as a manager, do to motivate your motivated and your demotivated employees?



### MOTIVATED EMPLOYEES

Said the most motivating thing their manager could do is:

- Let me get on with my job **38%**
- Trust me with difficult tasks **31%**
- Say thank you when I have done well **27%**
- Understand my work/life pressures and offer support when needed **25%**
- Take an interest in my development **25%**



### DEMOTIVATED EMPLOYEES

Said the most motivating thing their manager could do is:

- Let me get on with my job **57%**
- Say thank you when I have done well **44%**
- Understand my work/life pressures and offer support when needed **35%**
- Be flexible with my hours **28%**
- Trust me with difficult tasks **23%**

# Motivating rewards

## Why carrot dangling is not the answer

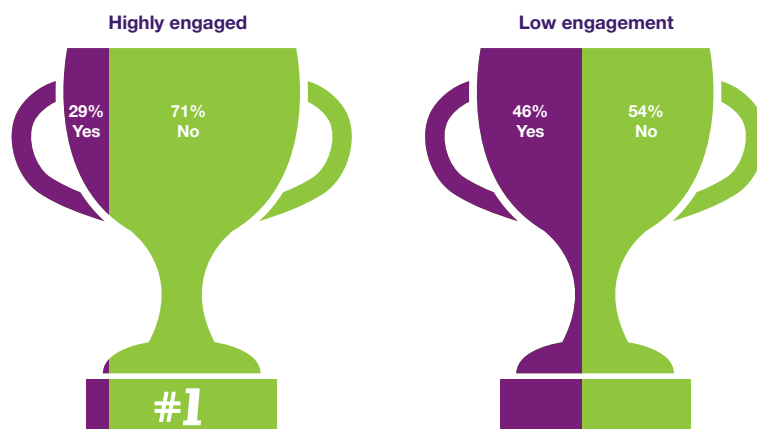
The final element we need to explore for motivating employees is rewards. Despite the research showing us that rewards are not the top priority for making our employees feel driven, “showing appreciation” and “offer me regular incentives and rewards” have appeared in some of the top five lists for what employees want.

The word ‘reward’ tends to be thought of as something tangible for example cash, a bottle of wine or gift vouchers. However, what is important to note is that, while tangible rewards are important, it’s the sentiment that matters most. It must be authentic for it to be truly motivational. Rewards do not – and should not – always be tangible things. Use your rewards, like team events, gift vouchers, incentive travel and long service awards at appropriate times to build a strong, successful motivation strategy.

We asked 2,001 UK employees whether they would lose interest in a task when there is not a tangible reward up for grabs. A third (32%) said ‘yes’, compared to the majority (68%) who said ‘no’.

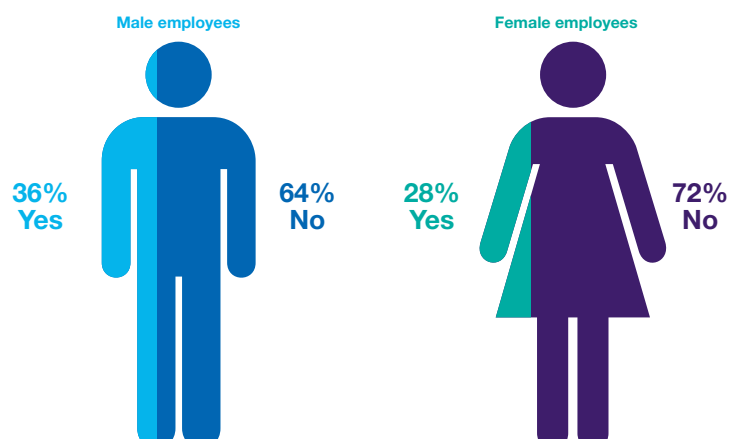
What is interesting to note is that the ‘no’ percentage increased as the employee’s engagement level increased.

## Do you lose interest in a task when there is no tangible reward up for grabs?



The results also showed us that we should take gender into account when considering the best way to recognise employees:

## Do you lose interest in a task when there is no tangible reward up for grabs?





So, if we don't offer tangible gifts as a reward, what else can we offer?

Well, we know from the results revealed in this report so far that a motivated employee likes to be challenged, given an opportunity to learn, and is shown trust to get on with their job. We also know that all employees said they want managers to understand their work/life pressures and be more flexible with their working hours.

Therefore, when a tangible reward just doesn't suit – think outside the box for other ways to recognise your staff.

Here are just some suggestions:

- Reward a staff member who is performing with a **challenge** to take on the next new project coming up. Trust them to manage and run it.
- Reward parents who are missing picking their children up from school with **flexibility**. Allow them to leave the office early for a week to give them the opportunity to do this.
- Reward a team by **understanding** what they enjoy in their life. For example, if there's a high profile football game on that you know they'd like to see, let your team leave early to watch it down the pub.
- Reward employees showing dedication to their role by giving them new opportunities to **learn**. Send them on an interesting seminar or course. Throw in dinner too which will encourage these employees to bond and build relationships with peers.



# Results wrapped up

In a nutshell, we can see that **motivating employees isn't as simple as giving a little extra cash**. It's in fact quite a complex task that requires thought, personalisation and an authentic approach that seeks to reward all employees not just the top performers. However, the positive to take from our results is that **it is NOT impossible**. All the elements that surround a motivated employee are **more than do-able** to implement, whatever size your business may be. What's more, implementing a motivational programme does not need to cost the world.

Remember to think outside the box for motivational ideas, and where possible, take each employee as an individual to make sure you're meeting their professional and personal needs.

Leadership and senior managers buy-in is critical to success. A culture of motivation only manifests when it is actionable and encouraged from the top down. **Managers are a vital building block. Train managers to be open, trust staff, take an interest in their employees and say thank you where it's due.**

Sell the Google mantra to the Board and get them championing this ethos throughout the company.

To make things even easier for you, we have developed a printable 'Motivation Checklist' for you and your management team to follow. Enable your employees to experience and feel everything on this checklist and watch the motivation levels soar.

Good luck!





# Motivation checklist

Print off this checklist and keep it as your motivation bible.

**M**ore flexibility

Give employees the flexibility to complete their job, rather than work to specific hours.

**O**pen

Be open so employees feel they can tell you about their work/life pressures and then support where possible.

**T**rust

Trust employees to get on with their job. Don't micromanage.

**I**nform

Communicate everything to your team. Don't ever let them feel they are in the dark.

**V**alue

Regularly show appreciation and say thank you with tangible and non-tangible rewards.

**A**utonomy

Let staff be free. Allow them to run projects and tasks on their own and with a team.

**T**est

Challenge. Give employees a purpose and allow them to feel achievement.

**E**mployee relationships

Team building and bonding are vital. Make sure you encourage it.

**S**tudy

Give employees an opportunity to learn and develop. Never let them sit still – they'll get bored.



## About the survey

The survey was conducted among 2,001 UK employees in July 2017 and was run by an independent research agency.

To find out more about the survey please contact: [enquiries@motivates.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@motivates.co.uk)

## About Motivates

Motivates has a team of expert Motivation Consultants to build recognition and reward strategies specifically tailored to fit client business goals, whether that is through a memorable event, engaging experience, incentive solution, or customer loyalty programme.

For more information visit [www.motivates.co.uk](http://www.motivates.co.uk)



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