

WHAT'S **KILLING** UK PRODUCTIVITY?



Employee productivity: The hygiene factors affecting the UK workforce

According to Office for National Statistics figures, in 2015 UK workforces are 31% less productive than those of the US and 17% less productive than the rest of the G7 countries. This is despite workers in the UK working similar hours to elsewhere.

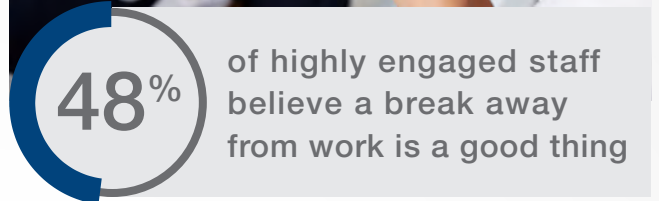
This report aims to find out if the UK's productivity woes are down to workers wasting time in the workplace.

WHAT ARE THE **TIME WASTING** TASKS?

This survey identified both personal and office tasks that respondents felt wasted time, and compared them to the level of engagement among staff.

The impact of personal tasks

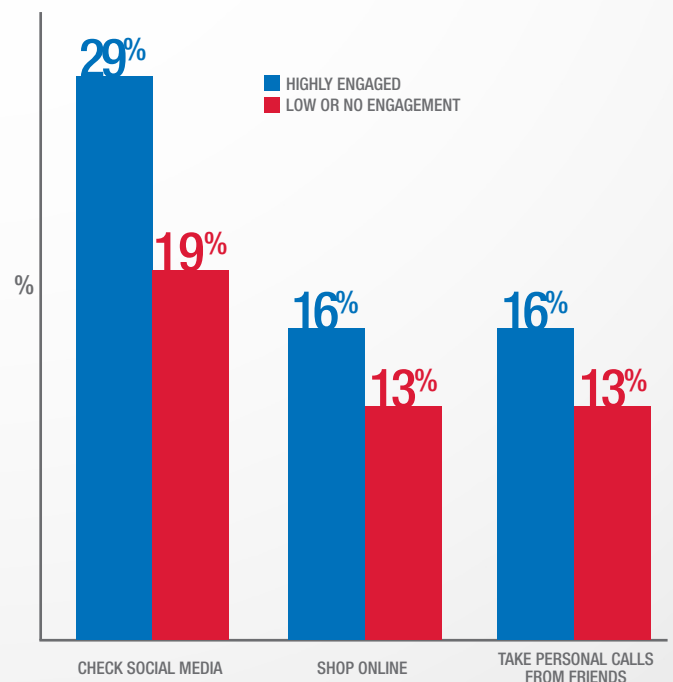
Doing the team tea round or catching up on last night's telly are a well established social norm in UK workplaces. Surfing the net and checking personal emails have also become common workplace practices in over the past couple of decades.



This research shows, counter intuitively, that highly engaged staff spend slightly more time at work on personal tasks than staff with low engagement levels. Why? 48% of highly engaged staff said they perform personal tasks because they believe a break away from their work every now and then is a good thing.

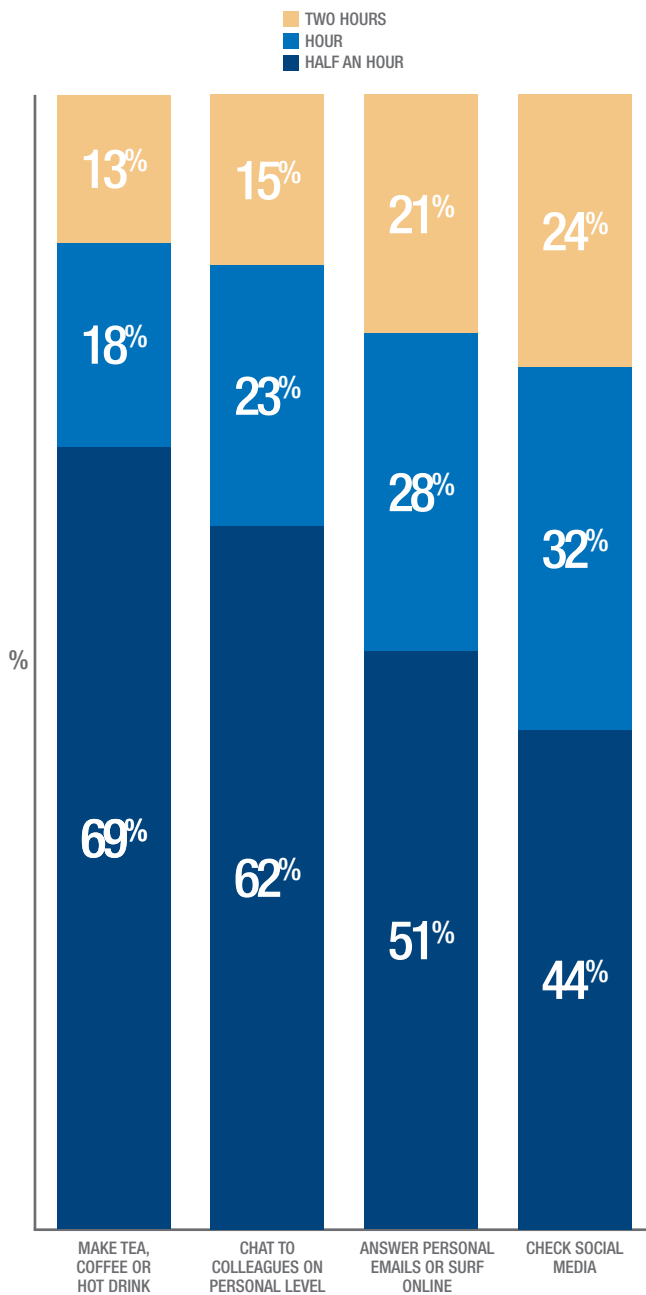
1.2

HIGHLY ENGAGED STAFF ARE MORE LIKELY (VERSUS THOSE WITH VERY LOW ENGAGEMENT) TO:



WHAT ARE THE **TIME WASTING** TASKS?

1.3



TIME SPENT ON PERSONAL TASKS EACH DAY

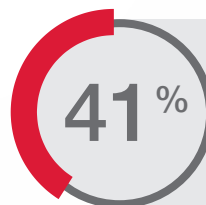
Employers should not eliminate time spent on personal tasks and instead encourage staff to take regular breaks. Give staff freedom to switch from office tasks to personal time and it will have a motivating impact on a workforce. Flexibility to carry out personal errands, have a conversation with colleagues and check social media accounts, is linked to higher engagement.

The impact of office tasks

Meetings, admin and work emails are the bane of modern office life. The irritation varies little regardless of whether someone has high or low engagement. The exceptions are:

‘People management is more of an irritant to highly engaged staff (19%) than those with very low engagement (11%)’

‘Micro managing bosses are more of an irritant to those with low engagement (18%) than with high engagement (14%)’



of employees waste at least half a day a week on unproductive office tasks

1.4



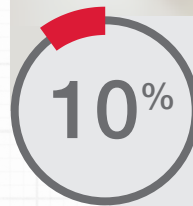
DOES IT MATTER **WHEN** WE WORK?

This research shows that while people like to work to their own rhythms, patterns quickly emerge showing when different people believe they are most productive. It is clear that by not being too rigid about conventional Monday to Friday, nine to five working hours, employers could improve productivity among their workforces.

What's the best day of the working week?

First thing Monday morning is the most productive time of the working week for most people. While Thursday is the day most people say they are least productive.

- **31% of highly engaged people** say they are most productive at work on a Monday while just **8%** say Thursday is their best day.
- **24% of people with very low engagement** say they are most productive at work on a Friday, while just **14%** say a Thursday is their best day.



use weekends to get work done because they're more productive then

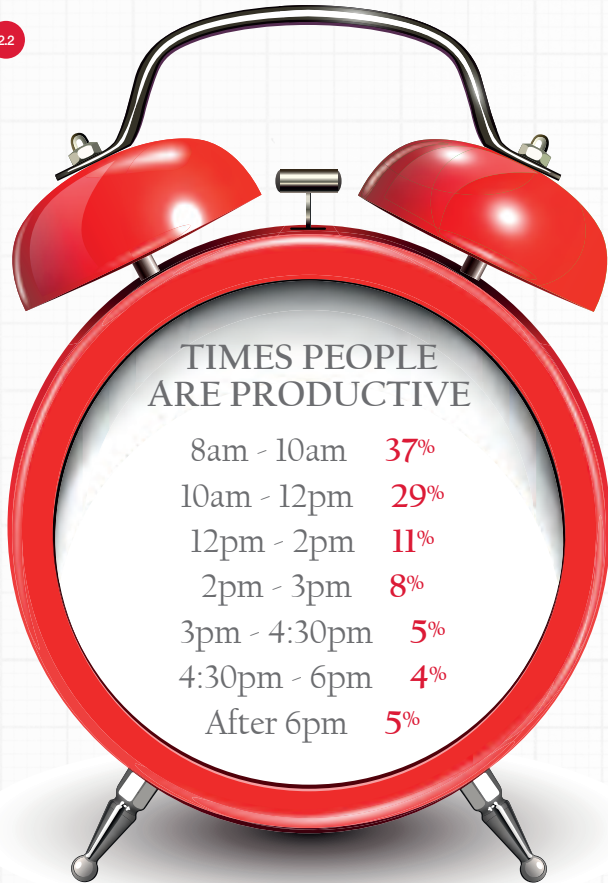
Working 9 to 5 is a bad idea

Most people say they are most productive in the morning, with just one in ten saying lunchtime is the best time. A small minority are most productive in the afternoon, with one in twenty saying they are most productive after conventional working hours.

'Levels of engagement have little impact on the time when people are most productive, although a marginally higher proportion of people with low engagement (8%) prefer to work after hours compared to those with high engagement (5%)'

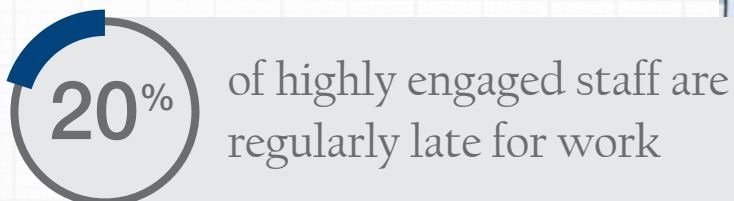
DOES IT MATTER **WHEN** WE WORK?

2.2



Employers should not get too hung up on employees' time keeping. Highly engaged staff are far more likely to arrive late for work than those with low or no engagement.

- **As many as 20%** (one in five) of highly engaged staff **arrive late for work up to fifty-percent of the time**. Just **8%** of those with low engagement are so tardy.
- **That said, 66%** of all respondents said they **never arrive late to work** and this climbs to **76%** among those who have low or very low engagement.

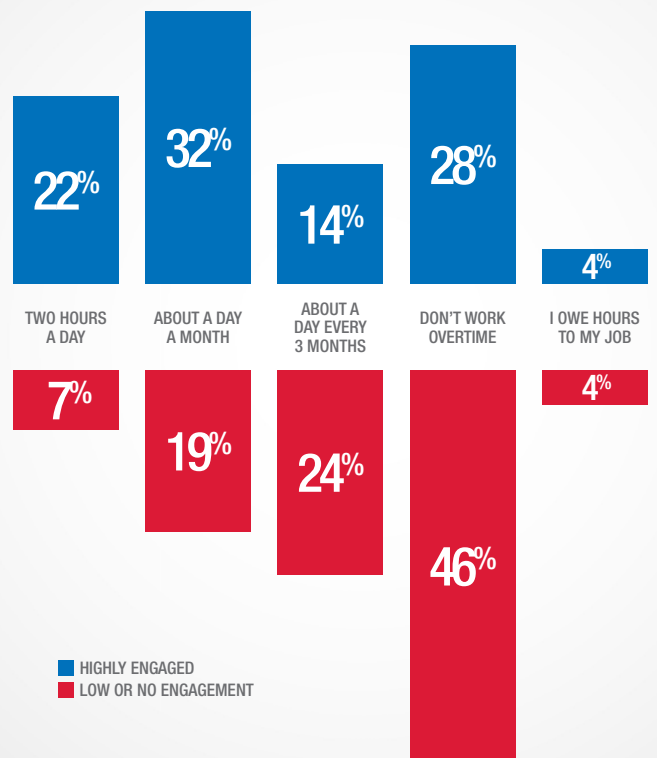


The impact of overtime

While highly engaged staff are more likely to arrive late in the morning for work, they are also significantly more likely to work late into the evening doing overtime.

This flexibility about time keeping among highly engaged staff benefits employers.

2.3 HOW MUCH OVERTIME STAFF WORK



DOES IT MATTER **WHERE** WE WORK?

Technology has opened up where employees can work. But many employers are loathe to allow staff to work from home due to fears that time will be wasted if staff get distracted away from work.

This research shows there is nothing to worry about. British staff generally work harder when at home.

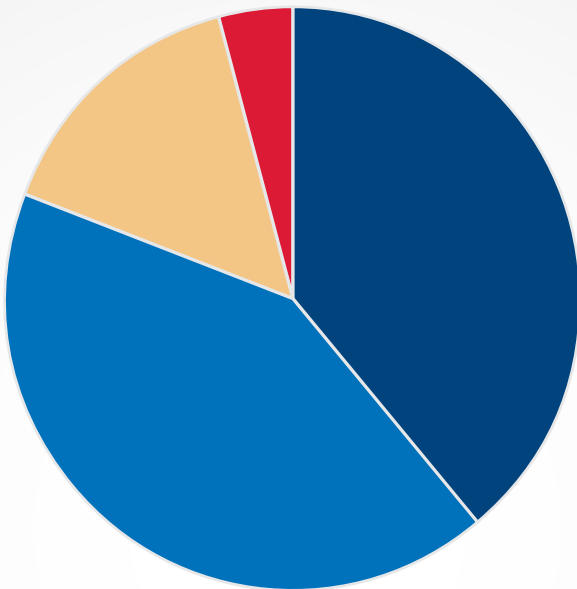
Although a higher proportion (26%) of highly engaged staff work more than 10 hours a day when working at home, compared to 13% of staff with low engagement.

So there is an opportunity for employers to give staff, even those with low engagement, more autonomy to work at home. By trusting them to get on with their work, employers may be pleasantly surprised.

Just as with allowing flexibility over when staff work, employers should also be more flexible on where staff work if they want to increase productivity.

3.1

OUT OF THE 57% OF EMPLOYEES WHO MAY WORK FROM HOME:



39% are more productive compared to being in the office

42% are just as productive as when they're in the office

15% are less productive compared to working in the office

4% say they are not productive at all when working at home



43%

British staff are not allowed to work from home

66%

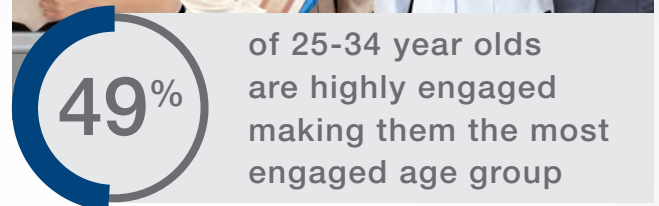
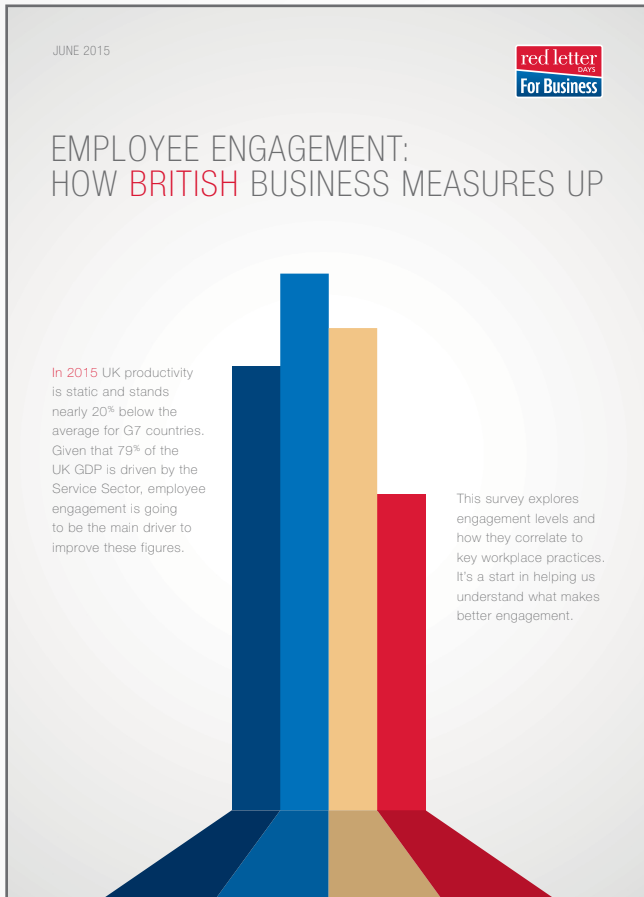
of highly engaged staff are allowed to work from home

38%

of employees with low engagement are allowed to work from home

SNAPSHOT OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE UK

The previous Red Letter Days for Business survey, **Employee engagement: how British Business measures up (June 2015)**, found that 36% of respondents were highly engaged. A few months on and the dial has barely moved.



Factors not affecting engagement

A few behaviours are true for all employees and have no correlation to engagement:

‘Sick leave. Highly engaged and low engaged employees have roughly the same amount of sick leave’

3.2

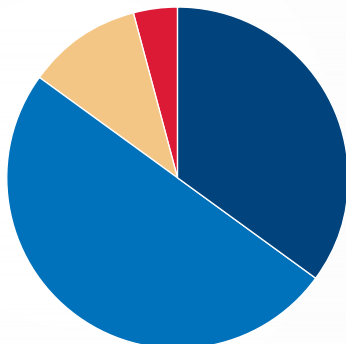
HOW ENGAGED ARE BRITISH EMPLOYEES?

35% say they are highly engaged

50% say they are moderately engaged

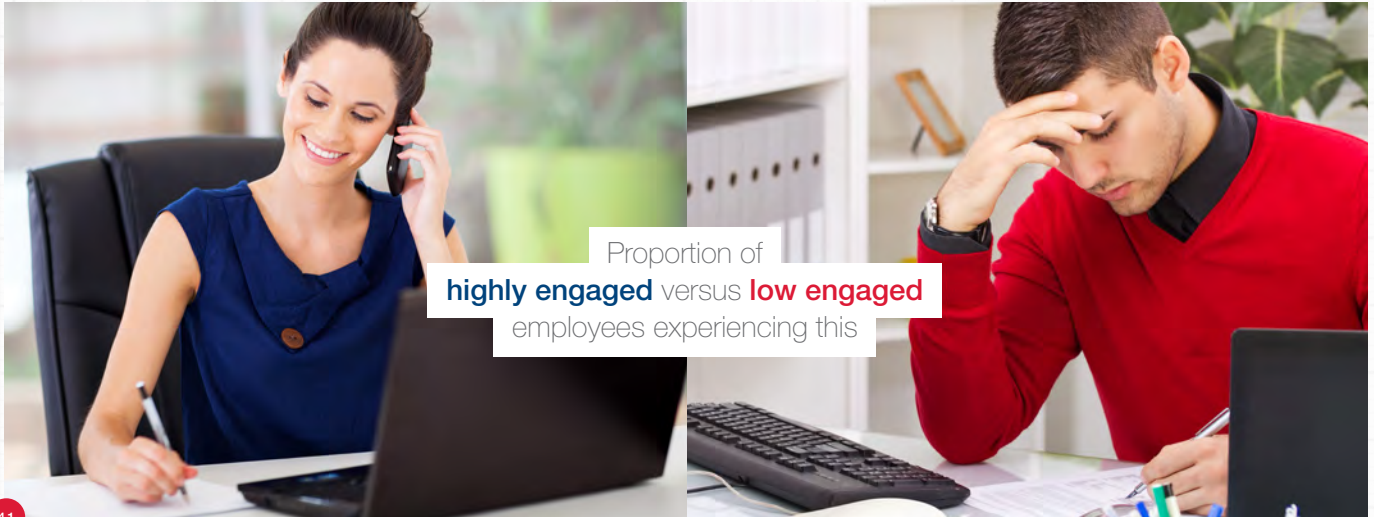
11% say they have low engagement

4% say they have no engagement at all



‘Lunch breaks. Highly engaged and low engaged employees all take lunch breaks, and the time taken averages to be more or less the same’

TIME WASTING: HIGHLY ENGAGED VERSUS VERY LOW ENGAGED STAFF



4.1

20%

Get into work late up to 50%
of the time every month

6%

64%

are never
late to work

76%

66%

are allowed to
work from home

38%

54%

never check their personal
social media accounts

71%

34%

of the above, spend at least
2 hours a day doing so

11%

68%

work
overtime

52%

32%

of the above, work two hours
overtime every day

18%

16%

chat to colleagues on a personal
level for two hours every day at work

4%

19%

say they do personal tasks at
work because they are bored

17%

48%

Say taking a break from work to
do personal tasks is a good thing

28%

24%

do not chat to a colleague
on a personal level at work

29%

CONCLUSION

This research indicates that **trust** and **flexibility** are key components to create an engaged workforce.

Employees who enjoy more flexibility on timekeeping at work as well as where they work are more engaged, work longer hours and are more productive. Highly engaged staff also have more freedom to do personal tasks at work. But when they sit down to work, they are more focused, work longer hours and are more productive than those with low engagement.

Staff with low engagement appear to be restricted in what they can do: they are far more likely to arrive at work on time, not be allowed to work at home, not talk to colleagues or do other personal tasks. They need more freedom to make them feel they are in control and self-govern in their job roles.



Recommendations for employers to improve employee engagement:

- ✓ Allow your staff to work from home
- ✓ Give staff the flexibility to come into work early /late and leave early /late
- ✓ Give internet access and allow the use of social media
- ✓ Don't chastise employees for doing personal tasks such as booking holidays – a break every now and then will allow them to work longer
- ✓ Give staff a working environment where they can chat to colleagues

About the survey

This survey was conducted among 2,004 British employees during August 2015. The survey was run by an independent research agency. The research questions and report were compiled by an independent writer and published in September 2015.

To request copies or to find out more about the survey please contact:

enquiries@motivates.co.uk

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