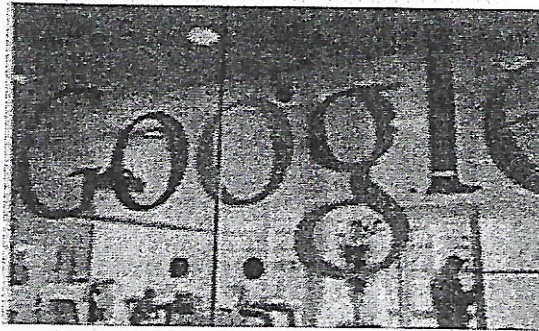


Success can be a game with many players



When it comes to motivating their employees, it can be said without question that Google **stands out** from the rest. One way the company does this is to hold competitions in everything, from office decorating to dancing and football with prizes for the winners. The philosophy behind such perks is the same - getting staff to meet each other, interact in informal settings and encourage teamwork.

The Best Workplaces survey indicates that such **initiatives** have a powerful effect. At Google Italy, for example, 90 per cent of the employees agreed that 'people celebrate special events around here'. Also in Italy, 100 per cent agreed that 'this is a friendly place to work' and 96 per cent agreed that 'there is a "family" or "team" feeling here'.

Another part of Google's objective is to make its workplace feel fun. Massage chairs, table-tennis tables, video games, lava lamps, hammocks, bicycles, couches and scooters are all part of the **furniture** in Google offices.

However, when it comes to the serious business of work, great emphasis is placed on motivating employees. 'What makes Google a great workplace is that the nature of the work itself is very **challenging** and interesting,' says Nick Creswell, the company's university programmes manager.

Google also gives employees a large degree of independence in deciding how to work - both in terms of the hours they work and how they do their jobs. 'There's a real culture of **autonomy**,' says Mr Creswell. 'Individuals within the business understand what their own goals are and they have a lot of freedom to go out and make those happen.'

1. Read paragraph 1 of the article and choose the best definition for perks.

- a) happiness and confidence in the workplace
- b) something your employer gives you in addition to your pay
- c) high-quality food and drink

2. Match these nouns from the article (1-5) to their meanings (a-e).

- 1 stands out (paragraph 1) a) important new plans to achieve an aim
- 2 initiatives (paragraph 2) b) independence/freedom to make your own decisions
- 3 furniture (paragraph 3) c) to be noticed easily and be much better than others
- 4 challenging (paragraph 4) d) the movable article required for use or ornament
- 5 autonomy (paragraph 5) e) stimulating and interesting

3. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Would you like to work in a company like Google? Why? / Why not?
- 2 Would Google's philosophy work in your organization or country? Why? / Why not?
- 3 Which of the perks or ideas mentioned in the article appeals to you the most?

4. Decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Correct the false ones.

- 1 Google promotes the idea of staff getting together.
- 2 Ninety per cent of Google Italy workers thought it was a friendly place to work.
- 3 The furniture in Google offices is different to that in most offices.
- 4 The work is challenging, and you need a university degree to work there.
- 5 Employees know what their objectives are and have the freedom to achieve them.