

Company Culture

1° Vocabulary

- a) ***Different companies have different cultures and ways of working. Complete the sentences with the items in brackets. One of the items cannot be used.***

Dress (uniforms/ casual Fridays/ weekend clothes)

1. We don't have to wear business suits at the end of the week. My company has a system of _____.
2. In many banks, staff can't wear what they like. They have to wear _____.

Timekeeping (flexible hours/ part-time/ shift work)

3. For two weeks each month, I work at night. I can't sleep during the day. I hate _____.
4. We have _____ system in our office. Some people work from 9a.m. to 5p.m.; others work from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Time off (childcare/ annual leave/ public holiday)

5. I am so busy at the moment that I worked on New Year's Day, which is a(n) _____.
6. How many days' _____ do you get in your company?

Reporting procedures (written report/face to face/ e-mail)

7. We often speak on the phone, but never _____.
8. He sends us a(n) _____ in the post each month.

Types of meeting (informal/formal/social)

9. Our department starts every day with a(n) _____ meeting. It is very relaxed.
10. Companies have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year. It is a very _____ meeting, with a lot people.

Names (job title/first name/ family names)

11. In some countries, the company culture is formal. Staff use _____ when they speak to each other.
12. What's your _____ now? Are you 'Chief Executive'?

- b) ***Would you like to work for an organisation which has:***

uniforms? _____
a lot of formal meetings? _____
casual Fridays? _____
flexible hours? _____

- c) ***Match each phrase with its explanation***

A positive company culture...

empowers employees.
supports innovation.
is customer focused.
rewards good performance.
encourages trust at all levels.

new ideas and change are welcome.
relationships between employees and managers are open and honest.
staff have a lot of control over their work.
the needs and wants of the customers always come first.
there is an incentive scheme for efficient employees.

2° Grammar

Should/ shouldn't

We use *should* and *shouldn't* to give advice and make suggestions.

We *should* wear formal clothes to dinner.

He *shouldn't* be late for meetings.

We often use *I think* or *I don't think* with *should* to say something is or isn't a good idea.

I think you *should* go on a training course.

I don't think you *should* interrupt her.

Do you think I *should* learn to speak the local language?

Yes, I do. No, I don't.

Must/ Mustn't/ Have to / Don't have to

For strong advice we can use *must* or *mustn't*.

You *mustn't* invade a British colleague's personal space too soon.

We often use *must* when the obligation comes from the person speaking or writing.

We *must* show more cultural understanding.

We use *mustn't* to say something is prohibited or not allowed.

You *mustn't* smoke inside any building.

We often use *have to* to show that the obligation comes from another person or institution, not the speaker.

You *have to* get a visa to enter the country. (This is the law)
 Don't *have to* and *mustn't* are very different.
don't have to = it's not necessary
 You *don't have to* hurry. We have plenty of time.

a) Complete the sentences below using *should* or *shouldn't* and a phrase from the box

speak to our boss/ buy an expensive computer/ be late / develop a better website/ stay three days

1. Our online business is bad. We _____
2. Our team is working too many hours. We _____
3. The meeting is very important. We _____
4. She wants to visit a lot of customers in Spain. She _____
5. We have to cut costs. You _____

b) Give the opposite advice by using *should*, *shouldn't* or *I don't think*.

1. I think he should go to Paris next week. _____
2. You should buy a franchise. _____
3. She shouldn't take the customers to an expensive restaurant. _____
4. I think we should launch the new product now. _____
5. My boss thinks it's too late to send the report now. _____
6. We should order online. _____

c) Use the notes to write suggestions to a colleague going on a business trip for the first time.

- write on business cards ✕ _____
- use surnames ✓ _____
- give an expensive gift ✕ _____
- shake hands ✓ _____
- be late ✕ _____

d) Match these sentences halves.

All foreign nationals must
Although it is quite a liberal country
In their meetings, junior staff have to
They have casual Fridays which means
You <i>mustn't</i> take more than
You <i>shouldn't</i> buy a very expensive gift

let senior executives speak first.
fill in the landing card.
the equivalent of 1,000 euros out of the country.
otherwise you could embarrass your hosts.
you don't have to wear formal clothes on that day.
you should avoid drinking alcohol in public.

e) Study the sentences in the previous exercise and answer these questions

1. Which two sentences express advice? _____
2. Which sentence expresses the idea that it is not necessary to do something? _____
3. Which sentence expresses the idea that something is against the law? _____
4. Which sentence expresses the idea that something is required by law? _____
5. Which sentence expresses the idea that something is required by social 'rules'? _____

f) Complete these sentences with *have to*/ *don't have to*/ *mustn't*

- In Britain you _____ pay tax on the interest that your money earns.
- In some companies, staff _____ clock in and out. Apparently, this encourages punctuality.
- You _____ write personal e-mails during working hours.
- In some countries, motorists are lucky: they _____ pay a toll to use motorways.
- You _____ take home any office equipment. If you do, you may lose your job.
- In most European countries, you _____ have an identity card on you at all times.

g) Choose the most appropriate modal.

- If you are invited to a Brazilian's house for dinner, you *must/ should* arrive at least 30 minutes after the time mentioned.
- You *mustn't / don't have to* give purple flowers as a gift in many countries.
- Staff *don't have to/ mustn't* disclose information on the project unless authorized.

I think you *should/ must* encourage the team to develop interpersonal skills.
Simone *doesn't have to/ shouldn't* work so hard – she is looking very tired.
You *mustn't / don't have to* pay immediately. We can offer you credit.

3°Video: Corporate culture

a) Comprehension questions

In what city was this video shot? _____
What's the name of the company? _____
What parts of the company are we shown? _____
Who is visiting the company? _____
What do you find surprising in the video? _____

b) Fill in the blanks

Spokesman: This is the -- this is the _____ ...
Jim Boulden: Um-hmm.
Spokesman: ...where everybody comes up for their -- their _____ between 12 and 2. Breakfast, as well, here.
Boulden: Breakfast as well?
Spokesman: Yes. The breakfast here is probably one of the best parts, you know, coming in at 8:30 and you get a _____ English breakfast or you can have _____ or -- it's just great.
Boulden: Why is _____?
A fundamental question.
What is it about _____ that the management decided _____ should be _____?
Boulden: I think it's a -- it's a great place that everybody can come together, different _____, the -- I -- I sometimes sit here with business, engineering. And we can all just sort of _____ and have a conversation about a _____ we're working on or just completely _____ altogether. And they have a couple of different things each day.
Boulden: Yes.
Spokesman: And everything is _____ sourced, as well, so it's once again online with our _____ programme.
Boulden: Do you mind if I start?
Spokesman: Sure. Go ahead.
Generally, if -- if you're -- if you're just having a day with no meetings, everybody meets here, pretty much. And it's -- we've had a, you know, a couple of people come in and _____ it as a restaurant.

c) Describe what happens in the different areas

3° Reading comprehension

Success can be a game with many players

One of the side effects of the free food for Google staff is what is known as the “Google 15” – the number of pounds that employees typically gain after joining the internet company. But whether it is providing snacks and gourmet meals in the canteen, annual skiing trips or games rooms at the office, the philosophy behind such perks is the same – encouraging staff to meet each other, interact in informal settings and encourage teamwork.

One way the company does this is to hold competitions in everything from office decorating to dancing and football, with prizes for the winners. Managers also receive a quarterly “celebratory fund” either to reward accomplishments or to build teamwork by going bowling, go-carting or dining out.

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, beanbags, bicycles, large rubber balls, 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 engaging 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 for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. “And for the type of people who really enjoy an intellectual challenge, that’s the biggest appeal of working here.”

Fostering this intellectual activity is a policy giving 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 and empowerment,” says Mr Creswell. “Individuals within the business understand what their own goals are within the context of their teams, and they have a lot of freedom to go out and make those happen.”

Even when it comes to learning and development, many programmes are voluntary and informal. Often it may be a case of inviting university faculty in to discuss their latest research. Google also invites prominent writers to give lunchtime talks about their books.

a) Read paragraph 1 of the article and choose the best definitions for perks:

1. happiness and confidence in the workplace
2. something your employer gives you in addition to your pay
3. high-quality food and drink

b) Read the article. Look at these key phrases that summarise paragraph 1-3. then write similar phrases for paragraph 4-7

1. Philosophy behind the perks
2. Competition and celebratory funds
3. Celebrating special events/ friendly place to work

c) Say whether the following statements are right or wrong. Justify with a quote from the text.

Google promotes the idea of staff getting together. R/W

Every month, managers get money to build team work and reward staff. R/W

Ninety percent of Google Italy workers thought it was a friendly place to work. R/W

The furniture in Google offices is different from that in other offices. R/W

The work is challenging, and you need a university degree to work there. R/W

Employees know what their objectives are and have the freedom to achieve them. R/W

Employees have the opportunity to listen to well-known or important authors. R/W

d) Match these nouns to their meanings

accomplishments	important new plans to achieve an aim
initiatives	success in doing something
autonomy	giving people the power to do something
empowerment	teaching staff
faculty	independence, freedom to make your own decisions

e) Discuss these questions

Would you like to work in a company like Google? Why or why not? _____

Which of the perks or ideas mentioned in the article most appeals to you? _____