



# unlocking productivity in the workplace

A guide for HR Managers and Professionals



# about this guide

As the saying goes “it’s not the number of hours you put into work, it is the amount of work you put in those hours”. A motivated employee creates a positive environment in the workplace and contributes a great output whilst an unmotivated employee can become distant and unengaged. Decreased productivity could mean an increase in sick leave, the need for temporary staff, disciplinary procedures, or an overall increase in staff turnover.

As HR Professionals you’ll know that advertising, sourcing, prepping, interviewing, hiring and training replacements can have a huge drain on valuable time, money and resources for your business.

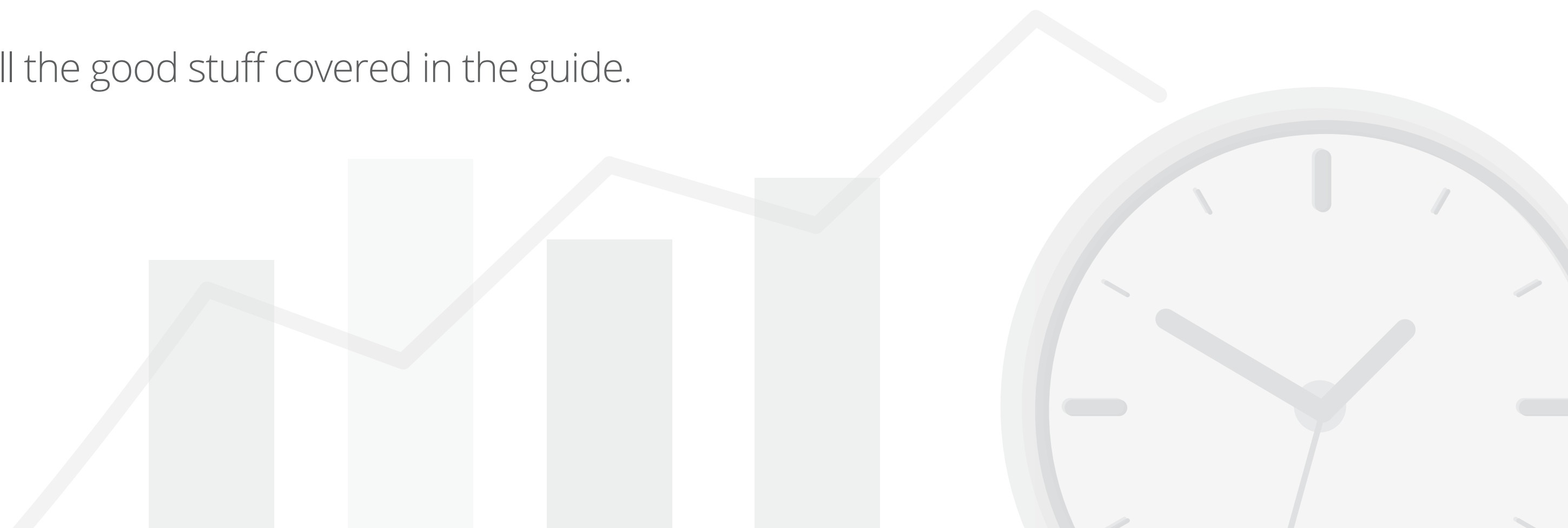
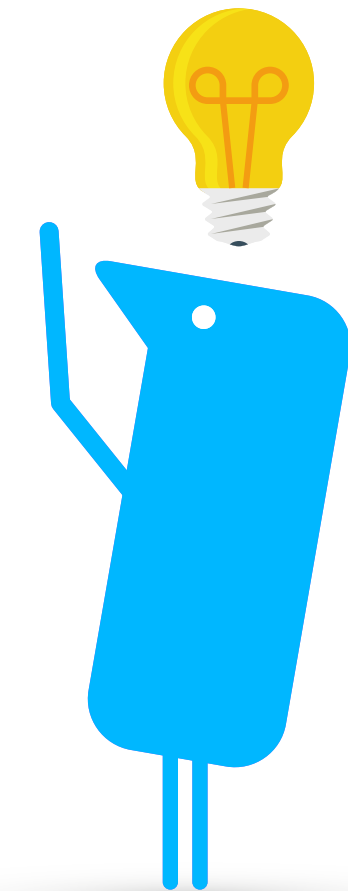
## **So what can employers do to increase productivity in the workplace?**

This guide covers just some of the many ways HR Professionals can help motivate employees to be a productive member of the business and their respective team(s).

## **Stuck for time?**

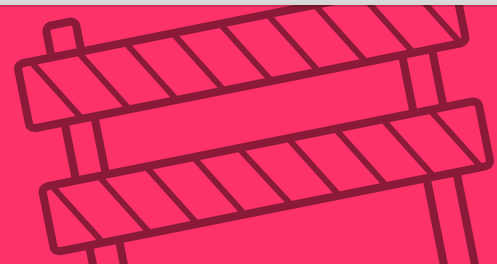
No problem, we’ve prepared a handy cheat sheet of all the good stuff covered in the guide.

[show me the cheat sheet!](#)





# contents



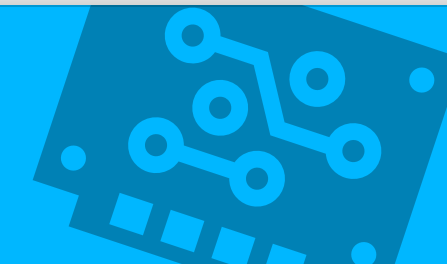
give employees  
generous  
boundaries

take me there



motivate and reward  
for good results

show me



embrace technology  
to thrive

bring me here



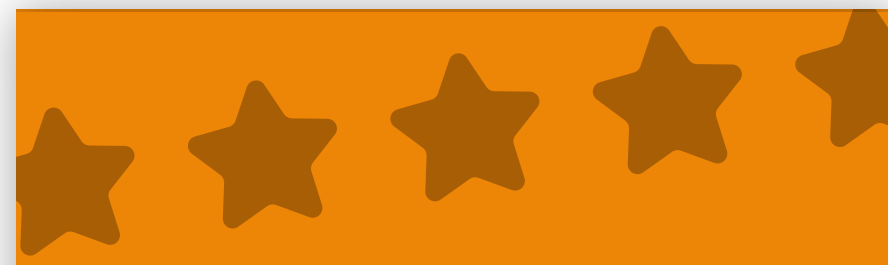
employee education  
and training

take me there



promote good  
health

bring me here



invest in employee  
happiness - it's the  
right thing to do

show me



flexible working

take me there

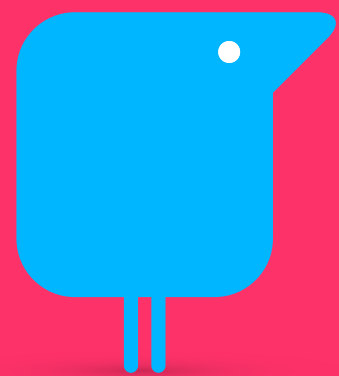


social media can be  
your friend

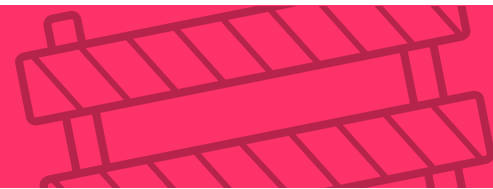
bring me here

give employees  
generous boundaries

freedom = motivation







give employees generous boundaries

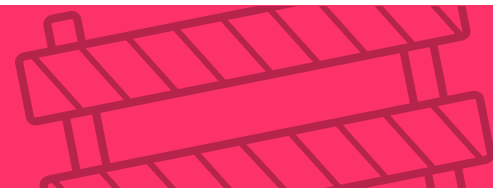
**Freedom is a basic motivator of performance**, so if you are looking for higher levels of performance then you need to be considering more freedom than you may be necessarily comfortable with.

Contrary to popular belief, boundaries don't restrict team members; they empower them. Define the boundaries within which an employee can make his or her own decisions. In doing so, you give them freedom to act.

#### How can the HR function help encourage employee empowerment?

- ✓ **First, start at the top.** Getting buy-in from senior managers so that you adopt a change in workplace culture, followed by support from all line managers in your business.
- ✓ For anyone managing other people, the first thing you need to understand is that **your success depends on their success**. The more you empower your employees, the more they will grow and thrive.





give employees generous boundaries

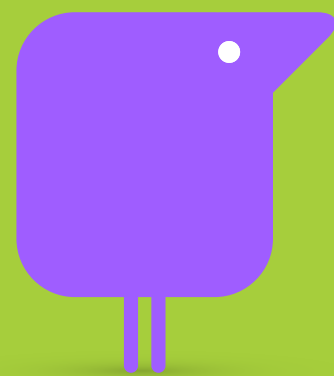
- ✓ **Share the vision.** What is the business trying to achieve on a 1, 3, 5 year term? Share these plans with all employees so they can see what part they have to play and take ownership of that role.
- ✓ **Manage but don't micro-manage.** Ask powerful questions. Instead of making rash demands or constantly telling employees how to do something, try talking less and observing more. Then, when you start to actually understand what's happening, express your observation in the form of a powerful question. Remember this question, and wait as long as necessary for a good answer.
- ✓ **Set goals** to ensure that people are focused on doing the right thing - short and long term goals that help to move the business forward.
- ✓ **When people are self-determining** and self-managing at work, they have a greater sense of job satisfaction. With this comes increased motivation and drive to do a great job. So staff are more effective in their roles and more productive; not to mention happier.

Not sure where to start? [Here's some more reading](#)



motivate and reward  
for good results

show your employees  
that you care







motivate and reward for good results

Employee retention is important. In order to promote employee job satisfaction, you can focus on making some perks available to your prospective and current employees.

It doesn't all have to be about compensation either. Not so long ago, motivating employees was all about pay rises, promotions and bonuses. Those days are gone, and today's employers are quickly learning that engagement stems from different kinds of incentives — ones that impact an employee's emotional wellbeing, rather than just purely financial.



**Keep it simple - say thank you.**

Seriously. More often than not, a simple “thank you” or “good job” from a line manager or another colleague can make a huge difference in the day-to-day life of an employee. Everyone wants to be recognised for their hard work, so encourage your employees, give each other special notifications, messages, or lunch meetings. Often it's team members who can see the day-to-day effort and hard work that individuals put in and this is their opportunity to acknowledge it.





motivate and reward for good results



### **A workplace points scheme**

Try rewarding employees for specific behaviours or for reaching certain goals. Typically, these points can be redeemed for gift cards, merchandise, or other items. If you want to encourage competition and participation in a rewards scheme, you can even make the results open to everyone in the office or share them in your internal work communities.



### **Team gatherings & networking events**

After a stressful day—or week—at work, most employees will want to relax and unwind. Host team gatherings and networking events and give them something to look forward to that's still connected with your work. Social activities and team building events help to build camaraderie, which will lead to an increase in teamwork, productivity and job performance.



### **Financial Rewards**

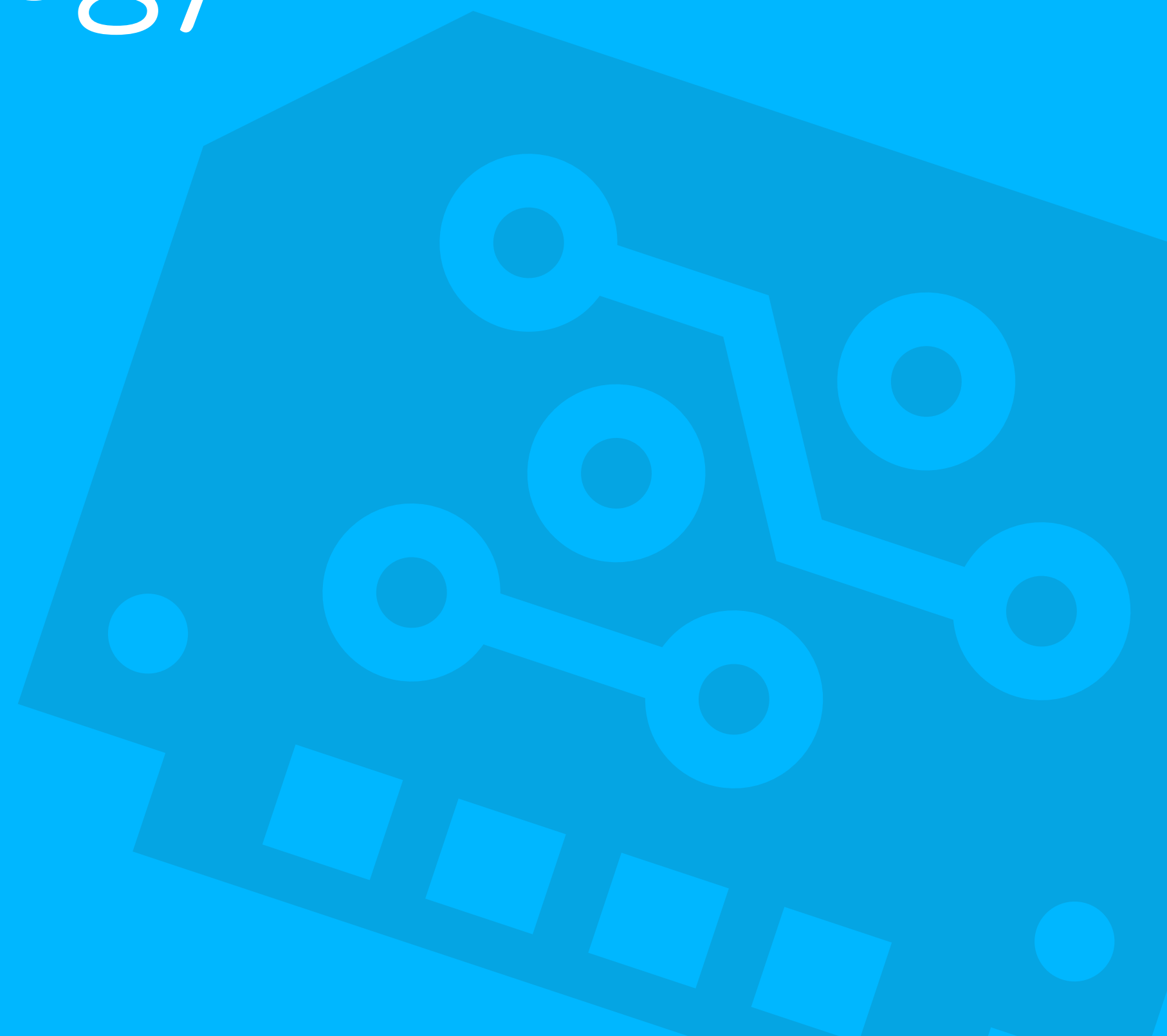
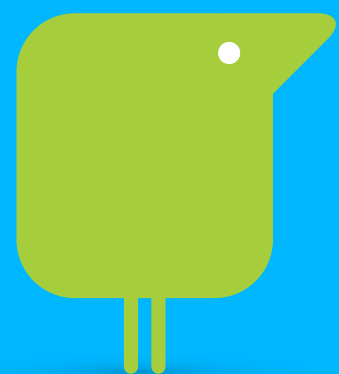
While money might not be everything, it still means a lot. Offering financial bonuses is an excellent way to reward employees and increase their motivation. Consider having a bonus-related incentive as part of their salary package that is then delivered, based on performance/achievement every quarter.

[Find out more](#) on employee rewards, pay and the legal aspects to consider.

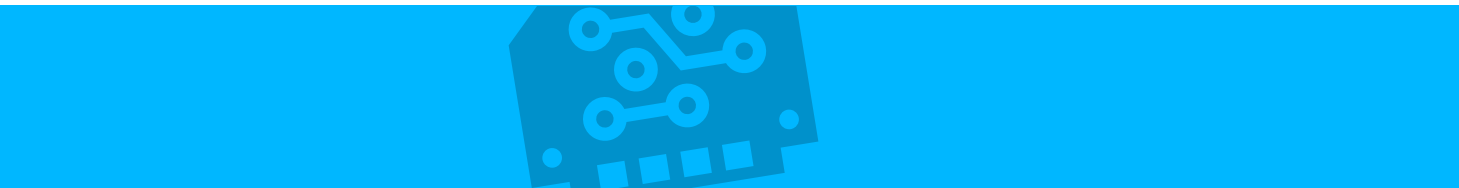


# embrace technology to thrive

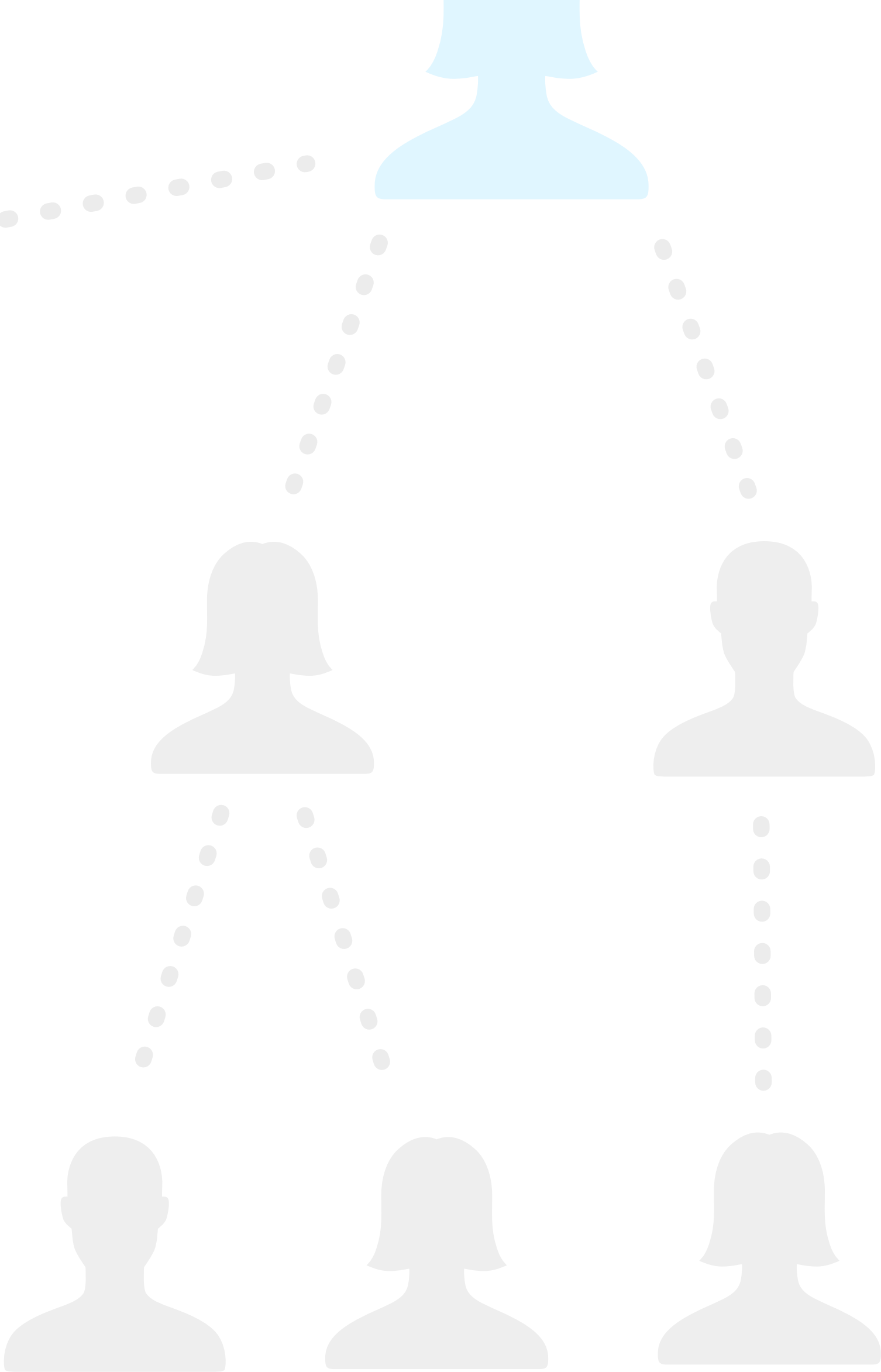
keep the IT  
guys on side







embrace technology to thrive



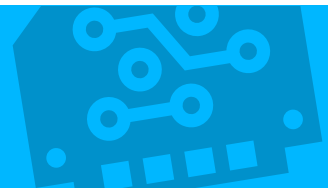
**Software can help you take control** of all HR functions. It allows you to manage employee data, payroll, expenses, benefits, recruitment, onboarding, training, absence, workloads, performance and more.

Some examples worth exploring include:

- ✓ People HR
- ✓ BreatheHR
- ✓ CIPHR



Organisations that invest well in technology enjoy multiple benefits, including enhanced productivity and greater innovation. The latest digital tools are creating workplace efficiencies and enhancing awareness in even the smallest of companies. They're improving both internal and external communication. And they're helping to make a mobile workforce a reality. That's why it's important to keep the IT guy on side and make smart investments in information and communication technologies.



embrace technology to thrive

## Look for technology that supports all staff

Businesses of every size owe it to their staff to provide adequate support that enables more accurate, efficient and easy-to-understand communication for every employee. There's no doubt that tech can be a transformative force for good, paving the way to a more efficient, productive workplace. And by making the right **tools available to support all employees**, businesses can ensure that digitisation benefits everybody equally - rather than throwing up needless barriers to understanding and being understood.



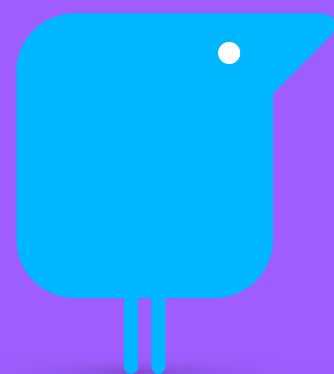
## Get ready for a more mobile workforce

Distinctions between the ideas of 'home' and 'office' have become increasingly fluid. Tools like **Google Hangouts**, **Google Meet** or **Skype** allow for increased collaboration, increased productivity and efficiency by reducing unproductive travel time, preventing meeting delays, creating shorter and more structured meetings and allowing for greater reach of a message.



# employee education and training

improve skills  
and knowledge



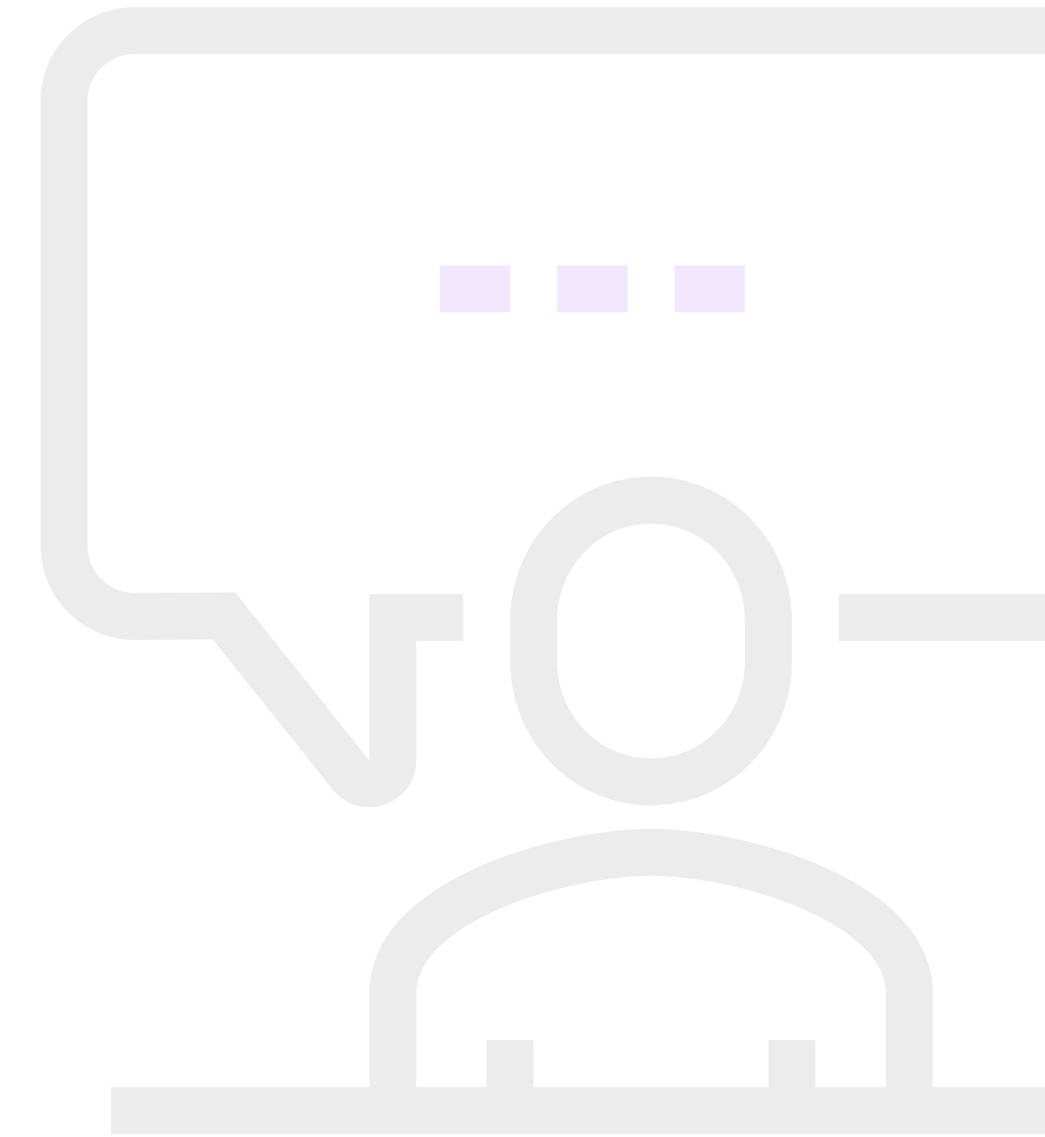




**A successful business is one that wants its employees to be successful too.** Offering employees the opportunity to improve their skills, knowledge, and education will allow them to not only keep their current jobs, but allow them to work towards promotions, and possibly work for the company in a variety of capacities in the future.

Small business owners tend to shy away from the idea of implementing a strong employee education and training programme, because they fear that employee development is going to cost them a lot of money. In reality, this is one of the rare types of business investments that ends up paying off for you over time. **Why?**

- ✓ **It helps with retention** - poorly trained employees end up leaving their employer within their first year on the job (it's a lot cheaper to train employees and keep them on the job than it is to replace them).
- ✓ **It helps you find great employees** - If your potential employee sees that you are offering them a chance to grow with you, they will immediately understand that your company is one that expects them to participate right from the get-go and grow professionally in stride with the company.



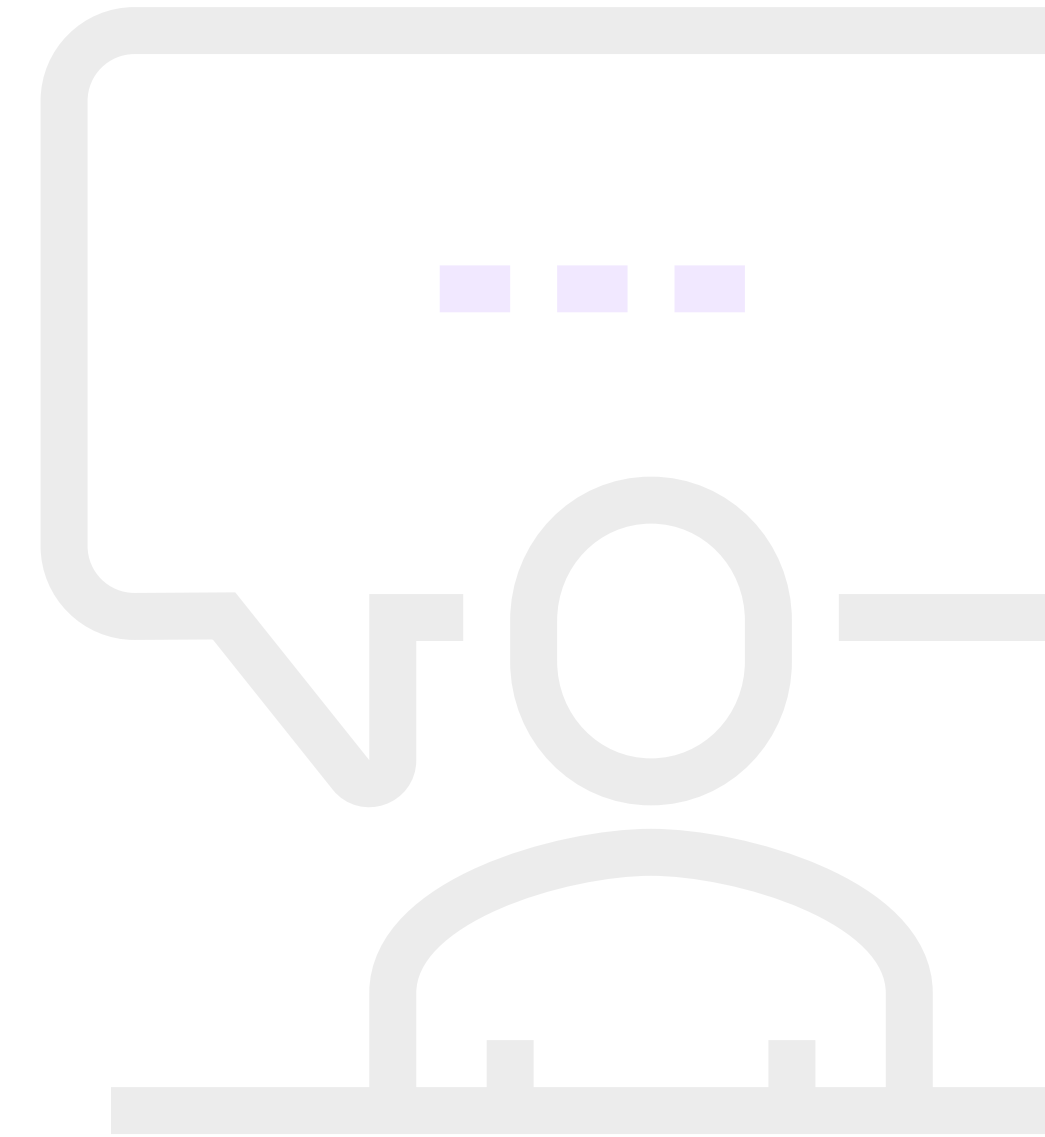


## employee education and training

- ✓ **It helps you promote from within** - Educating and training your employees makes promoting people internally much easier. Think about it. Who better to take over a managerial role at your company than someone who has been with you for a while, is familiar with the ins-and-outs of your business and has received a steady stream of education and advancement training along the way?
- ✓ **It ensures longevity** - Continually training your team allows you to keep up with all industry trends. Through constant development programmes, your team will always be looking towards the future – anticipating customer needs and industry innovations.
- ✓ **It increases engagement and productivity** - By continually working on employee development, you can keep your employees engaged and productive. Training programmes and educational courses provide challenges for employees. When employees see that they are able to move up in the ranks and take on greater responsibilities and more exciting work projects, they are naturally more engaged and more inclined to perform at a higher level.

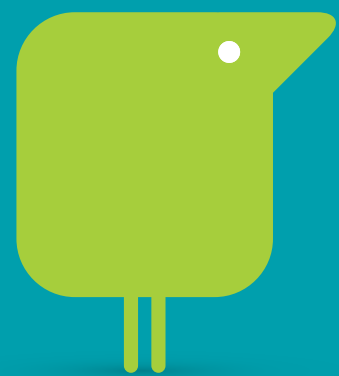
The benefits of CPD can be seen from two perspectives- that of the employee, and that of the employer.

[tell me more!](#)



# promote good health

make your employees  
health a priority





Poor health is not only damaging to employees, it can be detrimental to business too.

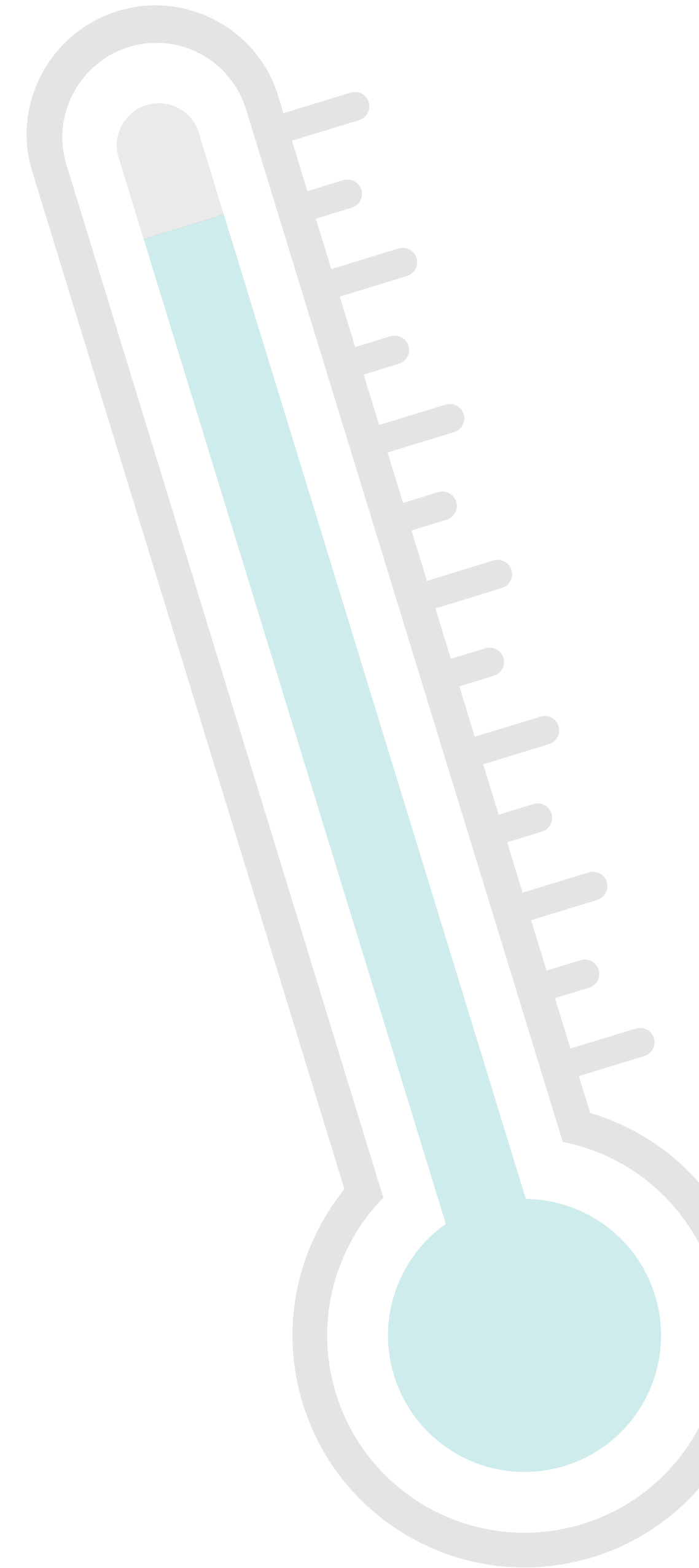
Businesses pay a heavy cost for stress-related illnesses - in particular, illnesses such as hypertension, gastrointestinal problems, and even substance abuse. Chronic stress has a variety of negative side effects such as weight gain, lower immune system, increased risk of disease, and fatigue.

HR Professionals can encourage employees on a regular basis to reduce stress levels and improve their overall health. By doing so, this will help reduce absenteeism, improve employee health and wellbeing and overall happiness. How?



### **Promote Physical Exercise**

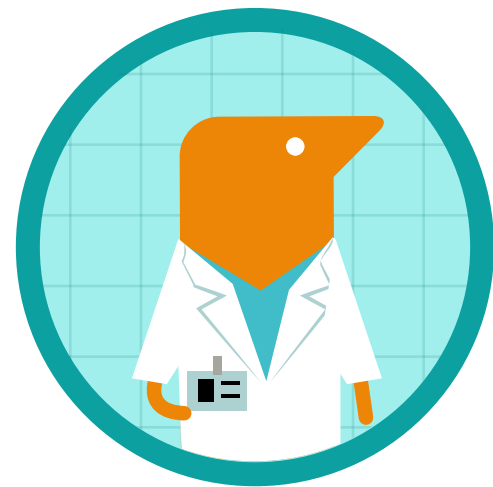
If possible, offer a company discount on gym memberships. This will encourage employees to make positive choices outside of the office and to exercise regularly. Also, encourage breaks throughout the day. Even small amounts of exercise throughout the day are beneficial. Consider regular activity-based team building events too. If the entire office is involved, employees will be more likely to accomplish their goals.





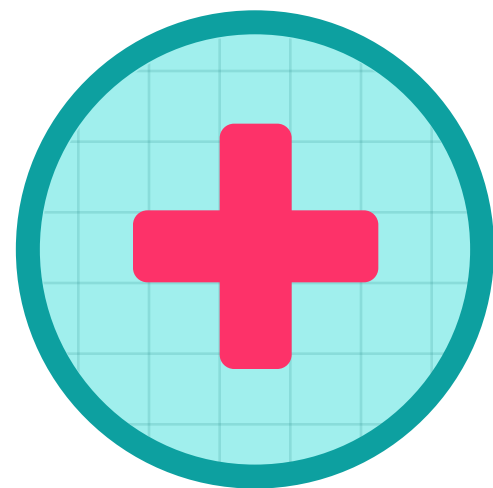
### Promote Healthy Food Choices

**Healthy eating habits in the workplace** can have a big impact. Diet can affect work performance too. Without regular well-balanced meals or enough water, employees may suffer from headaches, feel sluggish or have difficulty concentrating.



### Offer On-site Health Checks

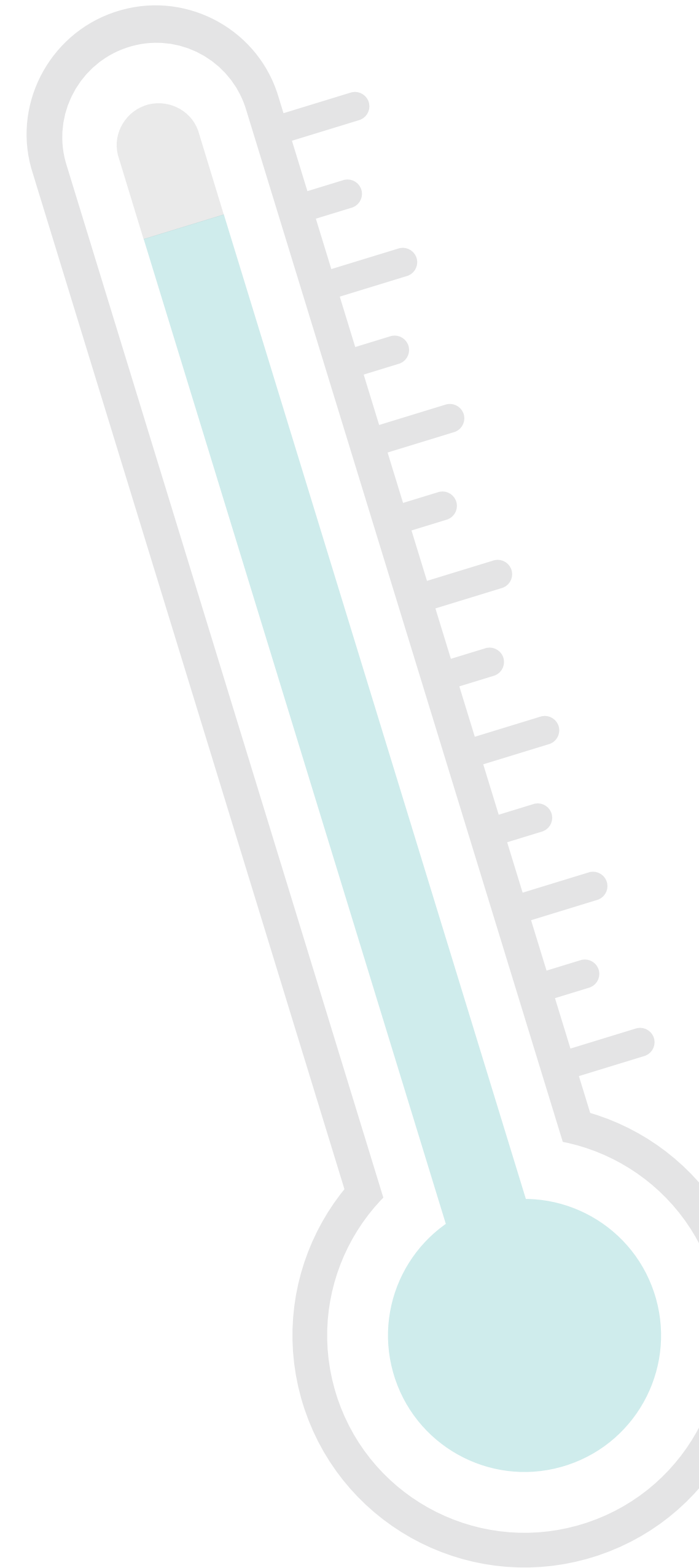
Get in touch with your local pharmacy to schedule on-site health checks for any employee that wishes to avail of the service. This can cover checks such as weight, BMI, blood sugar levels, cholesterol and blood pressure.



### Offer a contributory private healthcare scheme

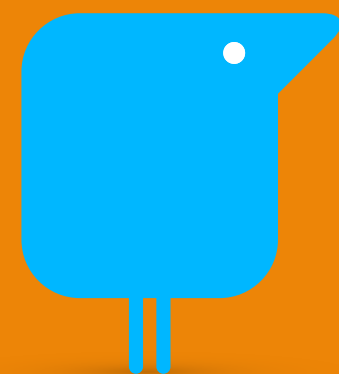
NHS waiting lists are long, that's an unavoidable fact of the times we live in. Offering a private healthcare scheme will not only give employees access to the services they need when they need it but will also help as an incentive to attract new employees too.

There are many companies to choose from, including; **BUPA** and **AVIVA**



invest in employee happiness -  
it's the right thing to do

create a happy  
work environment





invest in employee happiness - it's the right thing to do

HR Professionals - you hold the key to unlocking the potential for a much wider and more sustainable integration of health and well-being practices at work. Because you are in a unique position to steer the health and well-being agenda in your business and drive a systemic approach - this includes ensuring that senior managers regard it as a priority, and that employee well-being practices are integrated in the organisation's day-to-day operations.

Creating a culture of mindfulness, open communication and collaboration can help to improve morale and motivation among a workforce. Ensuring that employees are recognised for their efforts, whether by way of a reward or a simple 'thank you', will help to create a happy working environment.

Employee well-being impacts engagement, presenteeism, absenteeism and productivity — all of which impact the bottom line. More importantly, supporting and protecting the mental health of your employees is the right thing to do.

Not sure where to start? [The CIPD advises looking at the five domains of well-being.](#)



# flexible working

do you have a working  
from home policy?







One of the biggest misconceptions about flexible working is that it is only for people with children or for carers – but that's no longer true. Long hours in a fast-paced job can be stressful, so rather than burning out, a different working pattern might work better and be more productive for that employee.

Employers are becoming more aware of the benefits of flexibility, and governments are legislating in this area:

- ✓ [GOV.UK Flexible Working Rules](#)
- ✓ [US Department of Labor Flexible Work Arrangements](#)

Knowing that an employer is open to flexible working is great for employee morale and engagement, and is a sign that your business understands that employees have lives outside of work, and that you trust them to manage their time and workloads.

As well as potentially cutting down on time spent commuting, and financial and environmental costs, the ability to work from home (or other locations) also gives employees the opportunity to do the deeper work that they might struggle to complete in a busy office environment.

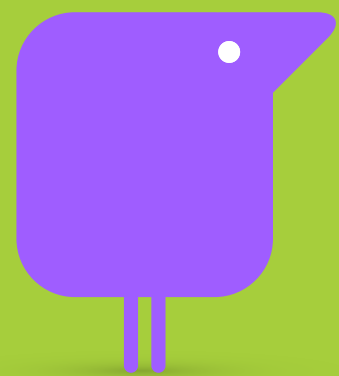
Need to create a working from home policy?  
Start by looking at seven key areas.

i'm intrigued!



# social media can be your friend

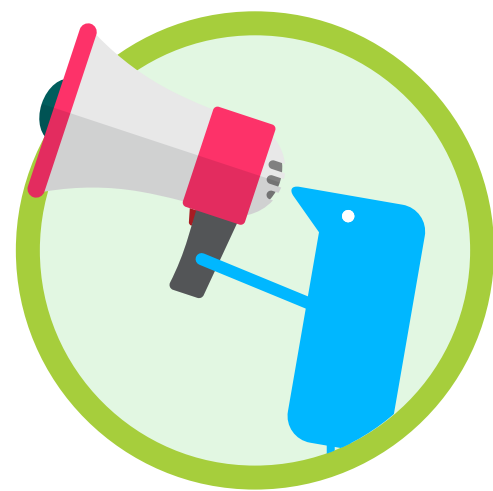
use distractions to  
your advantage





social media can be your friend

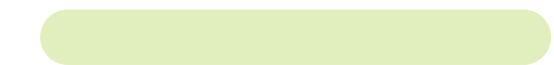
You might think that Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and dozens of other social media sites are dragging your employee's focus away with every imaginable update on their friends' and families' much more interesting lives. It's hard to ignore the prevalence of social media in almost every aspect of our lives. However, for HR Professionals it can be very frustrating to constantly see employees checking their phone and Facebook wall. But, you can turn this distraction to an advantage!



### Create an employee advocacy programme

If you're not sure how to approach a social media junkie, think about how you can make their addiction work for you. Businesses struggle to turn their employees into brand advocates. Some employees don't even know that their company has a social media presence. For the employees who are active on social media, ask them if they would like to contribute to official company accounts. This doesn't mean they need to do the work, but they can spend time researching topics or submitting ideas to add to the company's public blog and image. The business wins by getting an expanded creative pool and access to an employee audience.

Not sure where to start with employee advocacy? [Check out this article](#) and then have a discussion with your marketing team to take it further.





social media can be your friend



### **Learning and development is also becoming 'social'**

Whether it's by using social platforms, discussion forums, searching wikis, or simply by tapping the shoulder of the person next to them, social learners leverage the expertise around them on an on-demand basis to get exactly the information they need at the point that they need it. In turn, the learner can then quickly apply that information to complete a task or achieve a goal.

Social learning also supports continuous training on a daily or weekly basis. It also helps to foster workplace collaboration. Humans are naturally social beings who need to feel part of a group. Learners that are able to support and be supported by other learners (in person or online) are more likely to feel that they're part of something bigger.

[Learn more](#) about the benefits of social learning in the workplace





further reading

[CIPD - Productivity: Getting the best out of people](#)

[CIPD - Productivity: Unlocking Ambition](#)

[CIPD - Growing the health & wellbeing agenda](#)

[CIPD - Wellbeing at Work](#)

[ONS - International Comparisons of UK Productivity \(ICP\), Final Estimates 2016](#)

[WHO - Workplace Health Promotion](#)

[BHF - Health at Work](#)







about us



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At Texthelp we believe that absolutely everyone deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential - at school, in the workplace and in later life, too.

We believe in digital inclusion - where life stage, visual impairment, dyslexia or dis/ability aren't barriers to the online opportunities that others enjoy.

Most importantly of all, we believe that everyone's entitled to the best possible learning and language support on their own personal journey –  
**from literacy to life.**



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get in touch

sign me up!