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## Quirky and original ways to incentivise staff

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### Motivating and retaining staff

A recent report by the University of Warwick found that when employees were happy, productivity increased by 12%. When they were unhappy, productivity fell by 10%. So, happiness is vital to a productive workforce!

One way to keep your employees happy, and therefore productivity up, is offering new, innovative ways to incentivise them. Employers are trialling ever more inventive ways to motivate and retain staff in an economy where we are close to full employment, making competition for talent fierce.

### Unlimited holidays

Richard Branson introduced 'unlimited (paid) holidays' to Virgin senior staff (he adopted this model from companies in Silicon Valley). While this sounds like an amazing perk, it could be open to abuse. Branson said he was working on "*the assumption that they are only going to do it when they feel 100% comfortable that they and their team are up to date on every project and that their absence will not in any way damage the business – or, for that matter, their careers!*"

Under a scheme such as this, employers still need to ensure that employees were taking their statutory minimum level of leave (28 days including bank holidays). The effect of having no stated limited holiday days might actually be that employees are wary about taking more than the statutory number of days, for fear that doing so might reflect badly on them and potentially affect their career.

### **'Pawternity' leave**

Pawternity leave allows staff time off when an employee gets a new pet. This was pioneered by craft beer and pub chain, Brewdog. Many new pet owners compared the experience to that of being a new parent. Clearly, some paid time off is beneficial to the employee adapting to becoming a pet owner.

Other companies, like Metro Bank, have a pet day where employees can take their pets into the office and others offer compassionate leave when a pet dies. Offering these kinds of perks to a national of pet lovers will attract pet loving candidates into your talent pool!

### **What else?**

In recent years, work perks have become more unusual. Some employers like Facebook, Google and Apple, offer to cover treatment to freeze the eggs of their staff, helping female staff to have children later in their careers.

Winston Capital employs a 'food evangelist' for employees who helps to advise them on healthy eating. Huddle offers a £5,000 signing on bonus. Boxed contributes up to £16,000 (\$20,000) to an employee's wedding costs. Zillow pays for its female employees working abroad to post their breast milk home.

Many City employers are offered a dry-cleaning service with items picked up from your desk. Companies are also offering onsite gyms with free personal trainers. These perks may be beneficial for the employee, but clearly also benefit the employer by allowing the employee to be more present and readily available to work for longer.

### **HR or PR decision?**

These new ways of incentivising staff raise the question whether they benefit the employees or the employer? Is it HR or PR? Employers certainly benefit from good PR

and a healthy, productive workforce, and in a competitive market for talent, your benefits package might be the difference between securing the best people for your company or losing them to a competitor.

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## Adecco

“For me, it’s the commercial creativeness and ability to think outside the box, which makes the employment team at Joelson a joy to work with.”

Meera Ferguson, Head of Legal  
Adecco

