



# HAPPY AT WORK



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
14QD-I6CF-E21V

## 1 Warm-up

Which three of these things do you think are the most important factors in making people happy in their jobs?

- being listened to
- fairness
- flexible start/finish times
- high salaries
- generous vacation time
- perks\* at work
- trust and respect

\* a perk is an extra advantage you are given because of your job, e.g. an employee discount or access to special services or activities

## 2 Watching for the main idea

Watch the full TED talk, "This is what makes employees happy at work" from speaker Michael C. Bush, and check your three predictions from the last exercise.

## 3 Watching for detail - Introduction

INTRO  
(0:00-1:12)

1. Before you watch the introduction again, add the missing vowels to complete three terms from the first part of the listening:

- a. Increases in the company's regular income = r\_\_v\_\_n\_\_ \_\_ gr\_\_wth
- b. The buying and selling of shares and investments in companies = the st\_\_ck m\_\_rk\_\_t
- c. The rate at which the company has to replace workers who have left = \_\_mpl\_\_y\_\_ \_\_ t\_\_r\_\_n\_\_v\_\_r

2. Now watch the introduction again and make notes about how companies with a lot of happy workers perform in these three areas compared with companies whose employees are generally not happy.

3. How important is it for a company to have happy workers?

**4****Watching for detail - Part 1**

PART 1  
(1:12-2:13)

This part of the talk is about how showing trust and respect increases employees' happiness.

1. Before you watch, match the verb + object collocations from Part 2 of the talk.

- |            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. empower | a. a laptop (or a purchase)      |
| 2. approve | b. employees                     |
| 3. service | c. the best service in the world |
| 4. hand    | d. the customer                  |
| 5. deliver | e. trust (to an employee)        |

2. Watch Part 1 again and then use the collocations from exercise 4 to answer these questions:

- What situation does Michael Bush describe that would not make an employee feel trusted?
- What example does he give that shows that a company trusted and respected its employees?

**5****Watching for detail - Part 2**

PART 2  
(2:13-2:51)

This part of the talk is about how fairness increases employees' happiness.

1. Watch and answer these questions:

- Who are employees comparing themselves with when they think of fairness?
- What did the company Salesforce do to make their business fairer?

2. Find words in Part 2 of the transcript which have these meanings:

- slowly reduces or destroys something (verb)
- without considering/thinking about (adverb - linking word of contrast)
- a position that someone has in an organization, showing how important they are
- how long someone has been in their job (noun)
- skill or ability to do something well (noun)
- make something more equal or fair (phrasal verb)



## 6

**Watching for detail - Part 3**

PART 3  
(2:51-4:12)

This part of the talk is about how listening to employees increases their happiness.

**1. Watch and answer these questions:**

- a. What two common listening behaviors do we need to replace?
- b. If someone is practicing good listening, what might they do after the other person has finished speaking?

**2. Choose the best meaning for the words in bold from Part 3 of the talk, using the context to help you.**

1. We've all been taught about active listening and eye contact – **an intense stare** and a **compassionate look**.
  - a. using your eyes in a strange way and an angry way
  - b. using your eyes in a strong way and an understanding way
  - c. using your eyes in a loving way and a passionate way
2. Being **humble** and always hunting and searching for the best idea possible – that's what listening is.
  - a. dissatisfied
  - b. busy and hard-working
  - c. not proud or not feeling you are the most important person
3. The way you behave, the way you treat others, the way you respond, the way you **support**, defines the work experience for everyone around you.
  - a. encourage other people to do well by offering practical help
  - b. offer perks to reward someone for working hard
  - c. allow someone to continue in their role
4. Changing to be a better person – the world is **littered** with those failures.
  - a. dirty
  - b. completely full of
  - c. written
5. But changing because there's something you believe in, some **purpose** that you have ...
  - a. result of doing something
  - b. way of doing something
  - c. reason for doing something



## 7

**Reflect and discuss**

Michael C. Bush ends his talk by encouraging the audience to reflect on how they can change for the better. Think about how you might make a positive change at work or in a personal context, based on the three key points from the talk:

- trust and respect
- fairness
- listening skills

Get ready to explain your ideas to a classmate.

## 8

**Extension - pronunciation**

Find more key words from the talk with these syllable stress patterns:

syllable stress pattern	example	words from the TED talk
O (1 syllable - stressed)	trust	
Oo (2 syllables, stress on the first)	billion	
oO (2 syllables, stress on the second)	erode	
Ooo (3 syllables, stress on the first)	turnover	
oOo (3 syllables, stress on the second)	decision	
ooO (3 syllables, stress on the third)	outperform	

Practise saying the words with the correct pronunciation.



# This is what makes employees happy at work

## Transcript

- 1. INTRO (0:00-1:11)** We survey CEOs, police officers, truck drivers, cooks, engineers. If people are working, we've surveyed them. And what we know, in terms of their happiness: workers all want the same things.
2. There's three billion working people in the world. And **about 40 percent** of them would say they're happy at work. That means about 1.8 billion, or almost two billion people, are not happy at work. What does that do, both to those people and the organizations that they work in?
3. Well, let's talk about money. Organizations that have a lot of happy employees have three times the revenue growth, compared to organizations where that's not true. They outperform the stock market by a factor of three. And if you look at employee turnover, it's half that of organizations that have a lot of unhappy employees. The miracle thing is, you don't have to spend more money to make this happen. It's not about ping-pong tables and massages and pet walking. It's not about the perks. It's all about how they're treated by their leaders and by the people that they work with.
- 4. PART 1 (1:12-2:12)** So I'd like to share a few ideas that create happy employees. Idea number one: in **organizations where employees are happy, what you find is two things are present: trust and respect.** Leaders often say, "We trust our employees. We empower our employees." And then when an employee needs a laptop – and this is a true example – 15 people have to approve that laptop. So for the employee, all the words are right, but 15 levels of approval for a \$1,500 laptop? You've actually spent more money than the laptop, on the approval. And the employee feels maybe they're really not trusted. So what can an organization do to have a high level of trust? The first organization that comes to mind is Four Seasons. They have magnificent properties all around the world. And their employees are told, "Do whatever you think is right when servicing the customer." To hand that trust to your employees to do whatever they think is right makes the employees feel great. And this is why they're known for delivering some of the best service in the world.
- 5. PART 2 (2:13-2:50)** **Idea number two: fairness.** The thing that erodes trust in an organization faster than anything else is when employees feel that they're being treated unfairly. **Employees want to be treated the same, regardless of their rank or their tenure or their age or their experience or their job category,** compared to anyone else. When I think about great organizations who get fairness right, the first organization that comes to mind **is Salesforce.** They **found that men and women working in the same job with the same level of proficiency were making different amounts of money. So immediately, they calculated the difference, and they invested three million dollars to try and balance things out.**
- 6. PART 3 (2:51-4:12)** **Idea number three is listening.** So, to be a listener who connects with all types of people, we have to unlearn a few things. We've all been taught about active listening and eye contact – an intense stare and a compassionate look. That's not listening. Repeating what the person says – that's not listening. **Being humble and always hunting and searching for the best idea possible – that's what listening is. And employees can feel whether you're doing that or not.** They want to know, when they talk to you and share an idea, did you consider it when you made a decision? The one thing that everybody appreciates and wants when they're speaking is to know that what they say matters so much you might actually change your mind. Otherwise, what's the point of the conversation?
7. We all know the things we need to change, the things that we need to do differently. **The way you behave, the way you treat others, the way you respond, the way you support, defines the work experience for everyone around you.** Changing to be a better person – the world is littered with those failures. But changing because there's something you believe in, some purpose that you have, where you're willing to risk almost everything because it's so important to you – that's the reason to change. If it's not, you should probably find a different place to work.



# Key

## 1. Warm-up

5 mins. This can be done as pairwork or groupwork. Check students understand the meaning of all the terms as some of them are abstract – if you are teaching a monolingual class, it might be helpful to ask students to translate them. Note: although perks is not one of the correct answers, it is mentioned in the talk. If students record their ideas about the three most important factors for happiness, they can check them in the next exercise.

## 2. Watching for the main idea

5 mins. Answers: being listened to, fairness, trust, and respect.

## 3. Watching for detail - Introduction

10 mins

1. Complete this part of the exercise before watching the introduction again. Make sure students can pronounce the terms. Answers (underlined syllables are stressed):

a. a. revenue growth                      b. b. the stock market                      c. c. employee turnover

2. The information is delivered quite quickly in the talk, so students may need to watch twice. After listening, ask students to explain the figures in their own words.

Answers (from the transcript):

Organizations that have a lot of happy employees have three times **the revenue growth**, compared to organizations where that's not true ...

They outperform **the stock market** by a factor of three. And if you look at **employee turnover**, it's half that of organizations that have a lot of unhappy employees.

3. Ask students to summarise the information in the introduction to answer the question. Sample answer:

High levels of unhappy workers (reported in the talk at 60%) have a significant negative effect on companies, due to both loss of potential revenue and the high cost of recruiting and training new workers.

## 4. Watching for detail - Part 1

10 mins

1. Complete this exercise and check answers before listening to Part 1. Elicit/explain that collocations are words we often use together; recognizing collocations helps students build natural and accurate sentences. Encourage students to notice the collocations as they listen in the next exercise.

1. b                      2. a                      3. d                      4. e                      5. c

2. Students may need to listen more than once to Part 1 to notice the collocations and remember the information. They should use the collocations to answer the questions, but they can rephrase the rest of the information - they don't need to remember all of the exact words in the video. This exercise could also be done as pairwork, with each student in the pair responsible for listening for the answer to a different question and explaining this to their partner.

Sample answers:



- a. Michael Bush describes a situation where an employee needs a laptop for their work, but **approving the purchase** is complicated and expensive. It is not a good use of resources to investigate reasonable requests like these and it makes the employee feel that they are not trusted.
- b. The hotel chain Four Seasons **hands trust** to its employees because it **empowers them** to make their own decisions to **service customers**. As a result, they **deliver** excellent **service**.

## 5. Watching for detail - Part 2

10 mins

1. Go over the questions before students watch Part 2 again so they know what to listen for. Again, this exercise could also be done as pairwork, with each student in the pair responsible for listening for the answer to a different question and explaining this to their partner.

- a. Employees are comparing how they are treated with the way all the other employees in the same company are treated.
- b. Salesforce made sure that men and women were paid the same salary if they had the same role/position in the company, and raised salaries where necessary.

2. The order of the words in the exercise is the same order that they appear in the text. Again, this could be split into pairwork – this is best done as Student A taking responsibility for a, c, and e and Student B responsible for b, d, and f. Make sure students know how to pronounce the words – stressed syllables are underlined in the answers.

- |                  |                         |                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. <u>erodes</u> | b. <u>regardless</u> of | c. rank                         |
| d. <u>tenure</u> | e. <u>proficiency</u>   | f. <u>balance</u> something out |

## 6. Watching for detail - Part 3

10 mins

1. Go over the questions before students watch Part 3 again so they know what to listen for. Again, this could also be done as pairwork, with each student in the pair responsible for listening for the answer to a different question and explaining this to their partner.

2. Answers:

- a. a. Making eye contact and repeating what the person has said are, on their own, "not listening" behaviors, and should be replaced or "unlearned".
- b. b. A good listener will consider the other person's points carefully and may even change their mind about something important, after hearing someone speak.

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. b | 2. c | 3. a | 4. b | 5. c |
|------|------|------|------|------|

## 7. Reflect and discuss

10 mins or longer, in pairs or small groups. Give students a minute to reflect and plan what they want to say. For feedback, ask each pair/group if any of their answers were the same, and/or which were the most different.

If students have little/no experience of work, they can reflect on other relationships, e.g. family or friends.

If this topic is too personal, students can write a response for the teacher to read for homework, or the teacher can simply ask them if they found the TED talk interesting, and which of the three areas they'd like to improve in, or they'd like others to improve in, without asking for details. If the discussion isn't taking off, try the extension (Ex8), or it can also be set for homework.



## 8. Extension - pronunciation

This is an alternative to Ex7, if this suits your class better. It can also be done for homework. Sample answers:

O (1 syllable - stressed): growth / perks / trust / rank

Oo (2 syllables, stress on the first): laptop / service / fairness / tenure / humble

oO (2 syllables, stress on the second): percent / respect / intense

Ooo (3 syllables, stress on the first): revenue / properties / customer

oOo (3 syllables, stress on the second): empower / approval / unfairly / regardless

ooO (3 syllables, stress on the third): employee

Drill pronunciation – using different hand gestures for stressed/unstressed syllables is an effective memory aid.