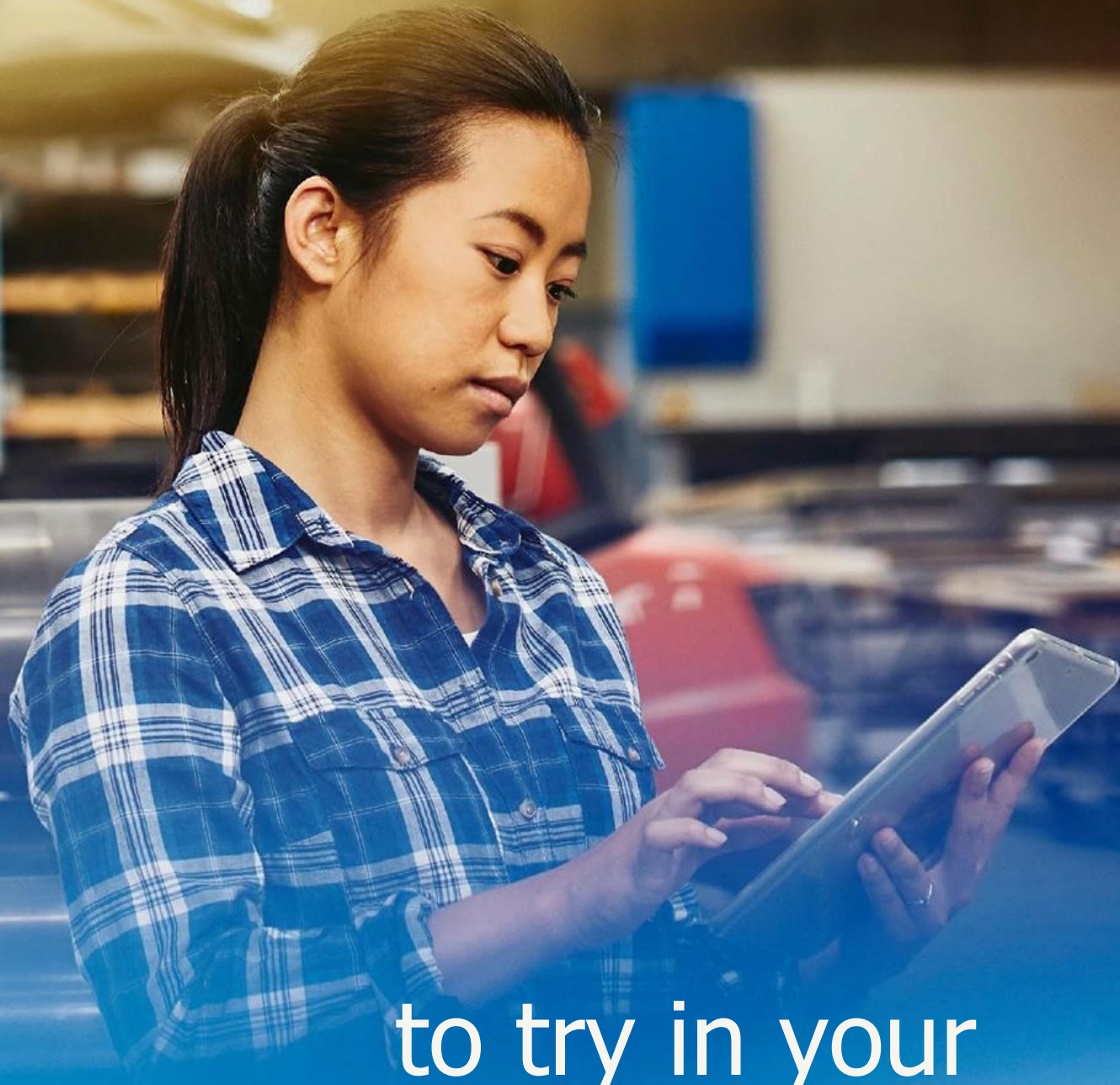


13 employee productivity hacks



to try in your
organisation.

1. improving the workplace.

From [lighting and colour](#) to the sounds of the workspace, the conditions people work in can impact overall productivity.

For example, people have reported being [5 to 15% more productive](#) in environments with appropriate climate control simply because they feel more comfortable. And studies indicate that fatigue caused by heat can reduce productivity by around 2% for every degree over 25 degrees C (77 degrees F).

A [study from the University of Texas](#) indicated that the colour of a space can impact quality and productivity. Some people didn't work well in a red room as compared to a blue room, and the researchers found that most people were apt to make more mistakes in a white room.

Does that mean you need to set the thermostat to a specific number and paint the walls of the factory floor a calming shade of blue? Not necessarily. But it does mean you should pay attention to how various working conditions impact the average productivity of your teams. Some things you might want to test include:

- [sound](#)

Can you change or reduce the sound, provide music or equip workers with ear plugs or other safety gear to reduce loud noises or distractions? Talk to team members and try out different audio environments to find options that maximise productivity.

- [light](#)

Natural light is often a positive addition to workspace, but it's not always possible. Try different forms and amounts of light to discover what works best for teams.

- [colours and design](#)

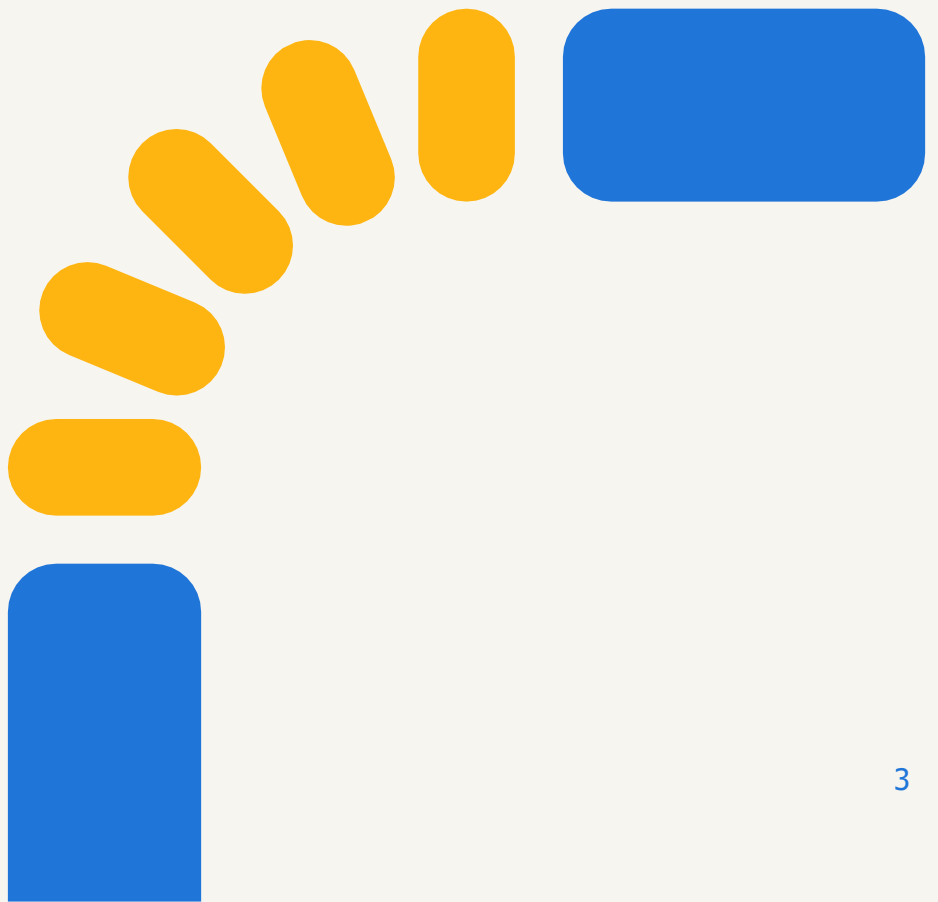
Create visually appealing environments - or at least work areas that aren't jarring and distracting to the eye.

2. allow flextime when possible.

One survey indicates that employees who are able to work flexible schedules may experience productivity boosts. Around 30% of participants in the survey felt that their productivity went up due to flexible schedules. Even more telling, a Cranfield University study indicated that 90% of managers thought flextime improved both productivity and quality of work.

One reason for these results may be that individuals are genetically predisposed to be more [productive at different times](#). That's because everyone's circadian rhythms - the natural body processes that regulate sleep and energy levels - are different.

Whether or not you can offer true flextime - which allows employees to set their own schedules and come and go as they please - depends on the nature and needs of your business. But many organisations can offer flexible scheduling of sorts - working with employees and teams to cover business needs while also allowing people to work at times that are right for them.



3. enhance employee training.

A study investigating the relationship between training and worker performance in Chinese manufacturing environments found that solid human resource management was critical from the beginning and throughout training.

This one just makes common sense: Employees who know what they're doing and are confident in their positions are likely to be faster and more accurate than employees who don't understand their jobs as well.

Take time to create a training plan for your entire team. Include an [onboarding plan](#) that starts employees out on the right foot, but don't forget to address ongoing training, coaching and growth opportunities and annual refresher and compliance training.

4. encourage employee health and wellness.

Data compiled by the [Carnegie UK Trust and RSA Future Work Centre](#) notes that health, safety and psychosocial well-being has a moderate impact on productivity. The only other factors showing up higher in the study were pay and benefits, so don't let the term "moderate" fool you - employee wellness is definitely an important factor in productivity.

In addition to many of the other strategies on this list that can help contribute to employee wellness, here are a few ideas for supporting it in your organisation:

- [offer exercise programmes](#)
Incentivise walking or other movement or create space where employees can go during breaks to get their steps in.
- [offer wellness programme](#)
These may be offered through benefits packages or separately and help employees connect with gyms and other wellness providers as well as services such as therapy.
- [prioritise work-life balance](#)
Create policies that help workers care for themselves and their family while also succeeding at work.



5. use positive feedback.

Have you ever considered that employees may not be performing optimally because they don't know what that looks like? Recognising workers for high productivity or other positive performance serves two important purposes:

- it rewards them for a job well done, which increases the likelihood they will repeat it
- it demonstrates to others what optimal performance looks like (and the rewards that come with it), so it's more likely other employees might imitate high performers

6. support intuitive breaks.

A study used data collected via a productivity app called DeskTime to understand [work habits of people who were most productive](#). One of the facts they uncovered is that people who get more done tend to take more breaks. On average, according to the data, people who worked around 52 minutes and then took a 17 minute break were more productive than others.

Obviously you probably don't want to pay people to work this type of schedule. In an eight hour shift, that could add up to 118 minutes you pay for that no work is getting done.

But a few paid breaks throughout the day could result in more production when employees are working, which might benefit your bottom line. You also might find that "breaks" don't have to be actual breaks from all work. It might be that simply switching tasks after around 45 to 50 minutes gives workers minds and bodies a break from whatever they were doing.

7. put people in the right positions.

Matching people with the right positions can increase productivity by taking the most advantage of each person's natural skills, experience, knowledge and desire for the job.

This doesn't actually mean that you need a highly experienced worker for every position - there are times you may need to hire someone with less experience and train them up. But paying attention to overall fit drives productivity benefits at all levels. Here are some tips for doing so:

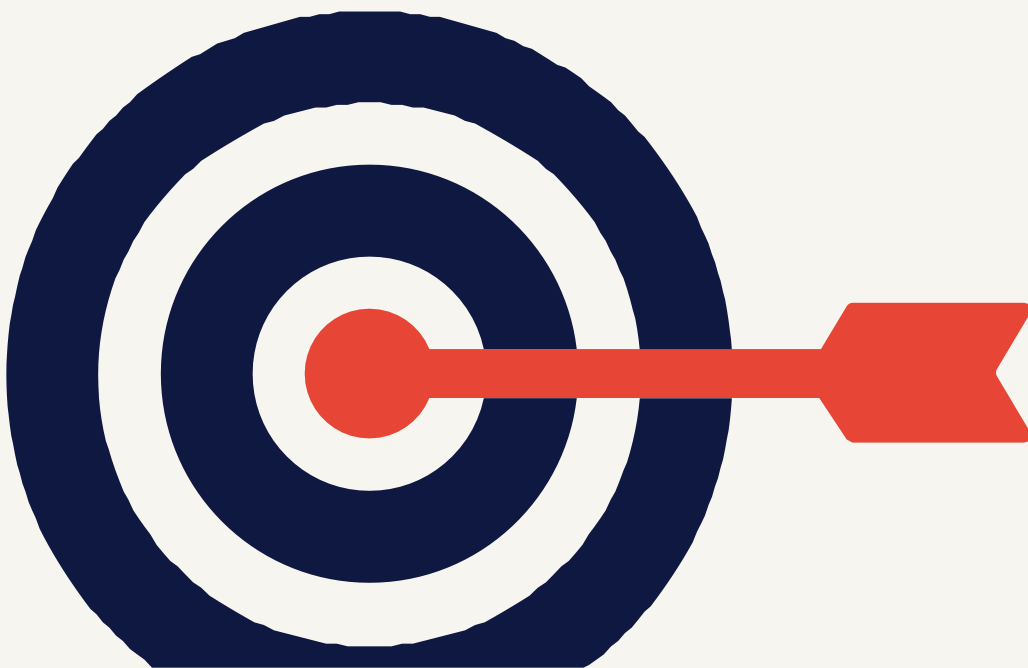
- understand the skills and experience each person brings to the table and how they apply to various positions in your business.
- ask employees what their personal goals and desires are with regards to the work so you know how to match them to the right opportunities.
- don't assume once someone is in a position that the match is made in heaven and permanent - constantly re-evaluate your workforce to understand when it might be time to move employees to other opportunities.

8. create focused, clear goals.

Seeking to understand the impact of goals on productivity, researchers [conducted experiments](#) at the Training Factory for Energy Productivity at the Technische Universität München. They measured performance for both quality and quantity in a factory setting to find out if setting clear goals improved production outside of other factors, such as financial incentives. The researchers found that even without incentivising workers, clear goal structures had a positive impact, boosting performance by 12 to 15%.

Some reasons goals can improve productivity include:

- [it gives people something to shoot for with their work](#)
Most people want to succeed, but you have to tell them where that line is.
- [it pushes people to do more](#)
Simply setting a goal can be a great way to get people to commit to doing a bit more every day.
- [it provides a structure for incentivisation](#)
If you are going to motivate people with rewards and bonuses or tie raises and promotions to performance, you need goals so everyone knows what stick you're measuring against.



9. cut out nonpriority or distracting tasks.

According to [data from Atlassian](#), workers in the U.S. deal with around 56 interruptions a day, which can lead to up to two hours recovering from distractions every day. Data from a UC Irvine study indicated that it might take around [23 minutes](#) on average to recover from interruptions and get back to max productivity.

Take time to look at your workflow and business processes to reduce distractions at all levels. Cut out extraneous meetings, emails and announcements, and ensure people aren't having to stop production lines constantly to deal with issues of machinery.

Identify bottlenecks and create solutions to ensure work flows freely, reducing how often people have to stop to wait for work to reach them.

10. make quality a priority.

Remember that production doesn't just mean churning a certain number of widgets per hour. You need those widgets to work - whether they're going to customers or feeding the next part of a process. Poor quality actually reduces productivity even if your workflows are pumping outputs at maximum levels. Low-quality outputs have to be reworked, which effectively doubles or even triples the time it takes to complete the work.

Create processes, training and culture that value quality. Sometimes, it's better to reduce productivity slightly in favour of ensuring every output is as high-quality as possible.

For example, if you push people to make 10 widgets an hour but that leads to an average of two subpar widgets that need to be wasted or reworked, you're only getting eight widgets an hour. You might test setting the requirement at eight widgets; if they're all acceptable, you save yourself rework and waste, which means you're more productive overall.

11. increase employee engagement.

According to Gallup, businesses with the most engaged workers are 21% more profitable than those with the least engaged workers. Other benefits of [employee engagement](#) include increased safety, customer retention and productivity.

Ensure employees are engaged by:

- creating [inclusive workforces](#) and positive company culture
- encouraging feedback loops - don't just tell workers how they're doing; ask them to provide honest feedback for peers and management in structured settings and follow up on their feedback
- empowering employees to take ownership of their work and make appropriate decisions within the process
- working to build cohesive teams that tackle jobs and goals together rather than alone



12. consider workers as individuals.

While teamwork is typically critical for any organisation, it's also important to remember that your labour force is made up of individual people. What works to increase productivity for one person may not be ideal for another. While you certainly can't play favorites and need to work with human resources to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all, you can find individual ways to motivate each worker.

For example, some people don't like the spotlight and wouldn't want to be recognised publicly—they might prefer an email thanking them for their service that's CC'd to your boss, though. Someone else might enjoy being told they did a good job in front of the entire team.

13. work with an HR partner like randstad.

Finally, consider working with an HR partner to find the right talent, onboard them in an efficient and effective manner and provide ongoing support that enhances productivity.

For more information about how Randstad can be that partner, [reach out today](#) to speak with our HR experts.

Randstad is the global leader in the HR services industry. We support people and organisations in realising their true potential by combining the power of today's technology with our passion for people.

[Contact us](#) to start a conversation about your talent needs.