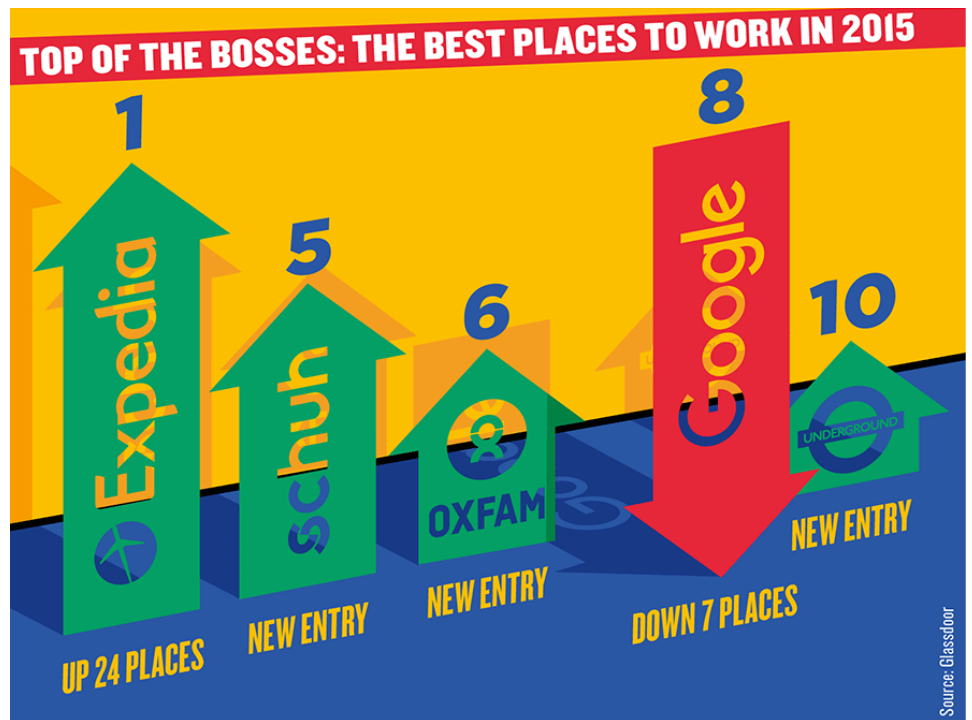


# Friendly, fun, flexible: Britain's best jobs

The London office of a popular travel website has officially replaced Google as the best place to work in the UK. 'Love what you do' is a modern idea. But is it really the best way to live?



A 'strong, friendly work culture'. Excellent 'work-life balance'. Free breakfast once a month. These are just a few of the reasons why the travel website **Expedia** was yesterday crowned the best company to work for in the UK.

The list of the top 25 firms is compiled by the recruitment website **Glassdoor**, which reviews anonymous feedback from employees to determine 'outstanding work environments'. The result is a diverse list of companies including high street shops, tech firms and the Easyjet airline, where 'no two days are the same'. Finance jobs were somewhat less popular than last year, as **JPMorgan** fell 11 places, and HSBC disappeared from the rankings all together.

Most companies were praised for their friendly environments, strong salaries, supportive managers and 'clarity of vision'. Are these the things that motivate people to travel to work in the morning?

Answering the question 'why do we work?'

## Q & A

### Q: Are you saying there's no point trying to get a job you enjoy?

A: Absolutely not! Finding a job that you love can be one of life's great joys, and we would not want to discourage you from it. But

used to be fairly simple: to survive. In fact, the philosopher Friedrich Engels believed that it was labour which drove humans to **evolve**, learning how to communicate and develop society. Before the **industrial revolution**, most work took place in the home and surrounding fields — but as capitalism took hold, jobs were separated from family life. Work was performed in exchange for payment, often becoming more specialised as factories and machinery grew more advanced.

Now, the consensus is that society has shifted again; we work for more than just money. Author Daniel Pink believes that people are motivated by three key factors: autonomy, the need to make your own choices; mastery, the desire to be good at something; and purpose, a search for some kind of 'meaning'.

Work is no longer a way to pay the bills, but an integral part of our identity — something we should enjoy as well as be good at. And for the workers at Expedia, it doesn't get much better.

remember that it's not the most important thing about your life either — there are other ways to be happy, and they are no less valid.

### Q: What are people looking for in employees these days?

A: It depends on the job — but it will probably be important to understand technology, and to

### Work it out

Should we live to work? As we weigh up career options, most of us are encouraged to find a job which we enjoy. When we love what we do, we are more likely to do it well, and to go home happy. 'Choose a job you love,' said the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, 'and you will never have to work a day in your life'.

Or should we work to live? There is no reason why the thing we do for money should become an all-consuming part of our identity, argue others. The idea that the only jobs worth doing are the ones that we love leaves a lot of people feeling disappointed and unfulfilled. There should be no shame in clocking out at 5pm and letting your 'real life' begin, without worrying about the job you left behind. Let's not forget — when he wasn't writing poems, the young TS Eliot worked in a bank.

be good at adapting to new situations. One of the most interesting predictions about future careers is the idea that they will be much more flexible and diverse; people are likely to have more jobs during their lifetime than previous generations. So as long as you're willing to learn new things, you're already at an advantage.

## YOU DECIDE

1. What job would you most love to do when you grow up?
2. Has the 'love what you do' approach to careers made us more selfish?

## WORD WATCH

**Expedia** – The company describes itself as the 'world's largest travel site'.

**Fourth largest** – According to Forbes in May 2015, Apple is the world's largest tech company, followed by Samsung and Microsoft.

**Glassdoor** – The jobs website asks employees to submit reviews of their workplace, to help

## ACTIVITIES

1. Write your dream job description – including all the perks. As a boss, would you ever offer someone that job?
2. Plan an essay explaining how the industrial revolution changed people's attitudes to work.

people find 'a job and company you love'.

**JPMorgan** – An investment management company. One employee praised its 'great leadership' and described it as 'one of the best banks to work for'.

**Evolve** – In 1876, the German philosopher Friedrich Engels theorised that labour 'created man himself', by encouraging humans to develop tools, to speak to each other and solve ever more complex problems. 'Agriculture was

## SOME PEOPLE SAY...

*'Hard work is more fun than free time.'*

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

added to hunting and cattle raising; then came spinning, weaving, metal-working, pottery and navigation... trade, industry, art, and science.'

**Industrial revolution** – Taking place between the 18th and 19th centuries, the invention of machines and factories marked a major shift in British society. For some, living conditions improved; for others, harsh working conditions made their lives much worse.

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