

Work with added benefits

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Four weeks annual leave, superannuation contributions and rostered days off are all stock-standard entitlements of full-time work. But what if you could visit the library, take a nap, do some yoga, be massaged or even see the doctor in your workplace?

As the skill level of the Australian workforce continues to rise, employers are having to fight harder to find and keep the best of the best, knowing that Gen Y always has one eye open for the next great offer.

But does all the extra fun have an adverse affect on productivity?

Quite the opposite, according to Google Australia – a company that would know, after topping the BRW 2009 Top 50 Great Places to Work list.

Google Australia offers a unique array of benefits, perks and policies that reflect the local market and improve the lives of googlers, such as medical and life insurance, study help, tuition reim-

bursement, an employee referral program and gift matching staff contributions to non-profit organisations.

Google spokeswoman Lucinda Barlow said the company offered incentives because googlers worked hard and Google wanted staff to enjoy coming to work.

“But most importantly, I think people are motivated at Google by the opportunity and freedom to work on projects that have a wonderful impact on people’s lives,” Barlow said.

The biggest perk for Google innovator Justin Baird, from Leichhardt, was an ingrained construct in Google’s culture called “20 per cent time”, which allowed staff to use work time to develop personal interests.

Many of Baird’s personal projects started in his “20 per cent time” and became Google breakthroughs, such as the online technology for Earth Hour and a new platform soon to be launched called Show Your Vote.

Google was free of management layers, which offered flexible working

hours and free lunches, Baird said.

“What’s really amazing about that is . . . a significant number of good ideas have all happened over lunch,” he said.

It’s a similar story at the Teachers Credit Union (TCU), which won the Hewitt Best Employer Highly Commended award this year.

ATCU spokeswoman said in addition to standard entitlements, it offered salary-sacrificed super contributions, 17 per cent holiday loading, study help, annual flu shots and subsidised massage.

Sarina Russo Group spokesman Brenden Brian said people who had fun at work were more productive.

But Griffith University’s Work/ Life Balance expert Prof Peter Brown warned employees not to be blindsided by the glitz and glam of company extras.

Being interested in and motivated by the role should be the primary reason to accept a job, Brown said.



On song: Justin Baird makes the most of working for Google.