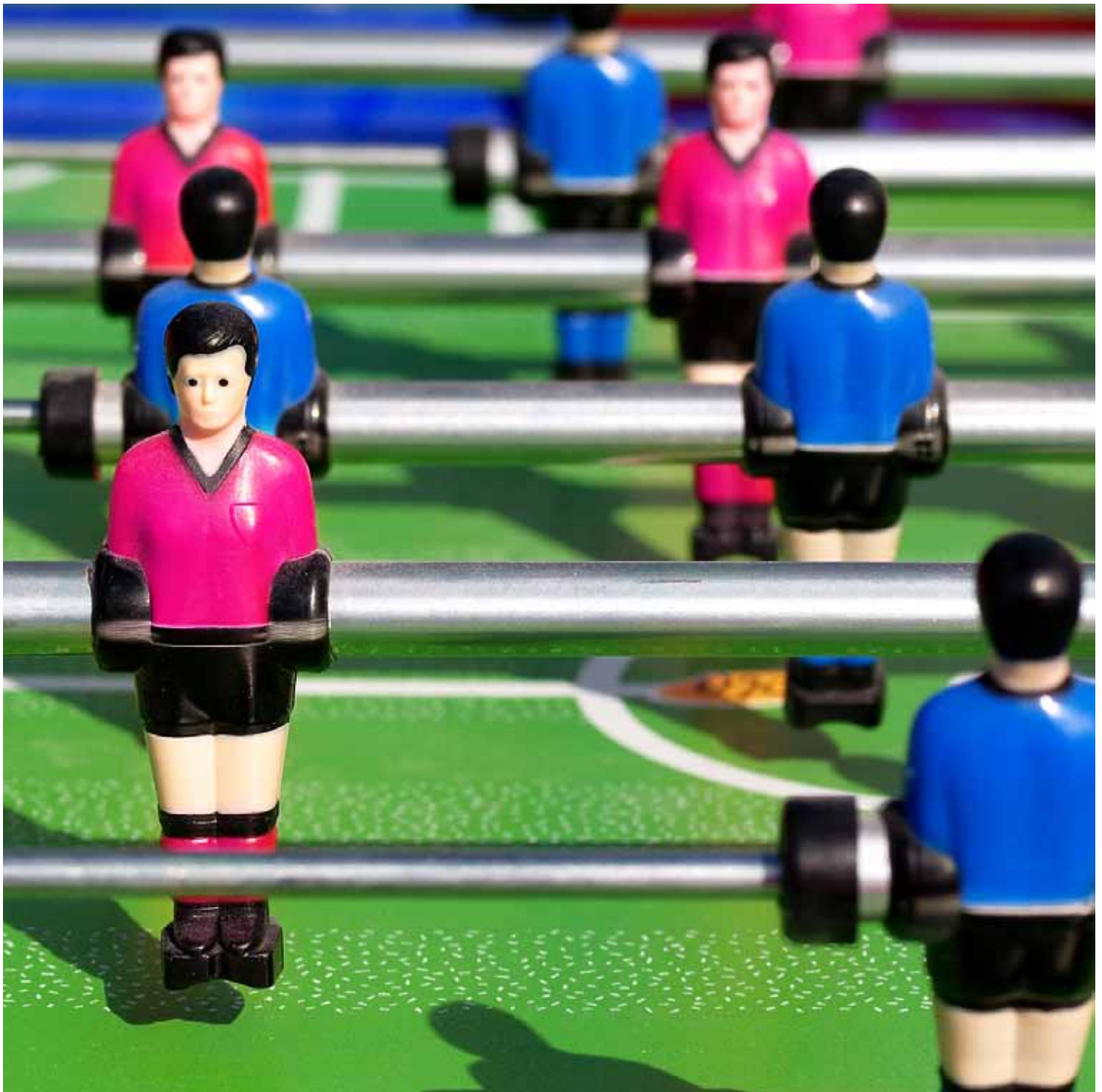


Win, Lose or Draw



The workplace impact of the
World Cup and major sporting events

June 2010



Introduction

This results paper presents the findings from a survey conducted by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) in May 2010, just before the start of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The paper provides insights into the arrangements managers are making in preparation for the World Cup and the impact that the tournament, and other major sporting events, are likely to have in the workplace. It also examines managers' attitudes to absence management.

CMI invited 15,000 of its members to complete a short online survey in May 2010. A total of 687 responses were received from across the UK, drawn from sectors across the economy including both public and private sectors, and from managers at a range of levels of seniority up to senior directors and chief executives.



Summary of Findings



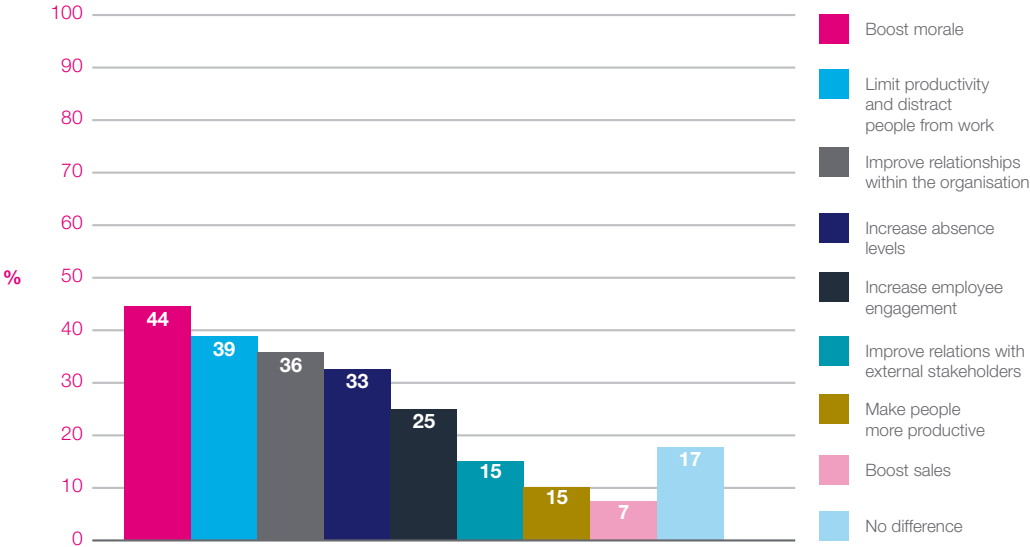
Arrangements for the World Cup

- Only a quarter of managers report that their organisations are making special arrangements for this summer’s World Cup. Fourteen per cent are making provisions for staff to watch games at work, 13 per cent are allowing staff time to watch games if they make up the hours later, while 6 per cent are planning a team event around important games.
- Arrangements are more common in the private sector with 29 per cent of organisations making special plans, while in the public sector this drops to 17 per cent.
- Only 8 per cent of managers are booking time off for the World Cup, although nearly a quarter say they have team members who will.

Impact of the World Cup and other major sporting events

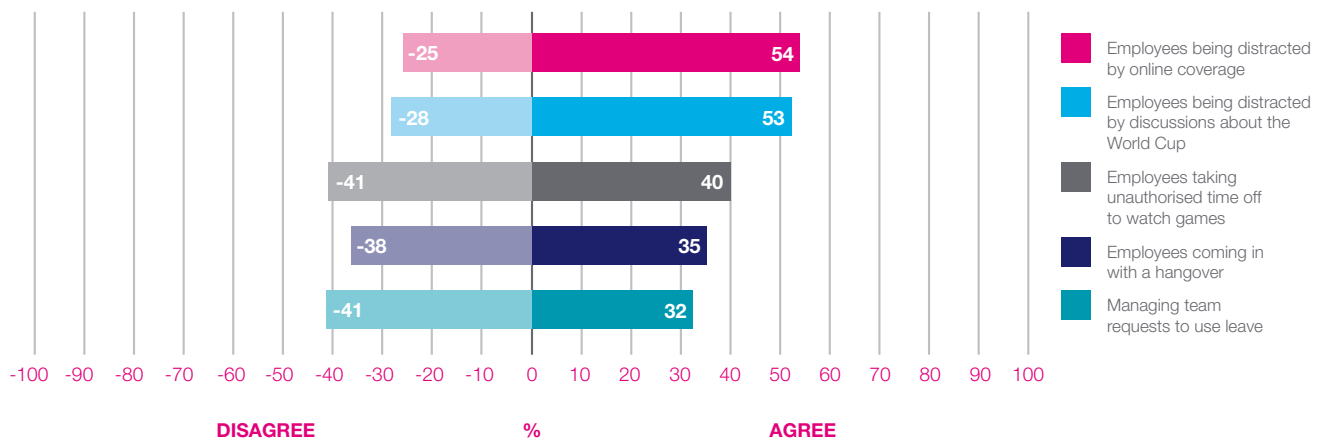
- When managers were asked what impact major sporting events have on the workplace, the most common response was a boost in morale (44 per cent). Over a third (36 per cent) also felt relationships within organisations will improve, although 39 per cent worry about the impact of distractions on productivity. Chart 1 displays this mixture of positive and negative effects in more detail.

Chart 1: Impact of major sporting events on the workplace



- Among potential problems arising from the World Cup, the most widespread concern is about the potential distraction of online coverage, which 54 per cent of managers view as a problem. Similarly, 53 per cent worry that employees may be distracted by discussions about the tournament. Forty per cent of managers agree that unauthorised absence could be a problem but with 41 per cent disagreeing, opinions are split.

Chart 2: Potential workplace problems during the World Cup – level of agreement



- If work commitments clash with an important game, the majority of managers (60 per cent) say that work would come first. A significant minority (30 per cent) would try to rearrange commitments if reasonably possible, while one in five would try to watch or monitor the game at work (20 per cent). Fewer than one in ten would book time off (9 per cent) and less than one in 100 say they would call in sick in order to watch the game.
- The vast majority of managers, 93 per cent, say that if (or when) their team crashes out of the tournament it will not affect their work. After all, it's 'only a game'.

Costs to UK employers linked to the World Cup

- Bearing in mind the potential downside of the tournament, UK managers expect an average of 2.35 hours of productivity to be lost, per employee, over the course of the tournament.
- This could amount to a cost of £947,588,088 to the economy as a whole – based on the average UK salary as provided by the Office of National Statistics.

Attitudes to absence during the World Cup

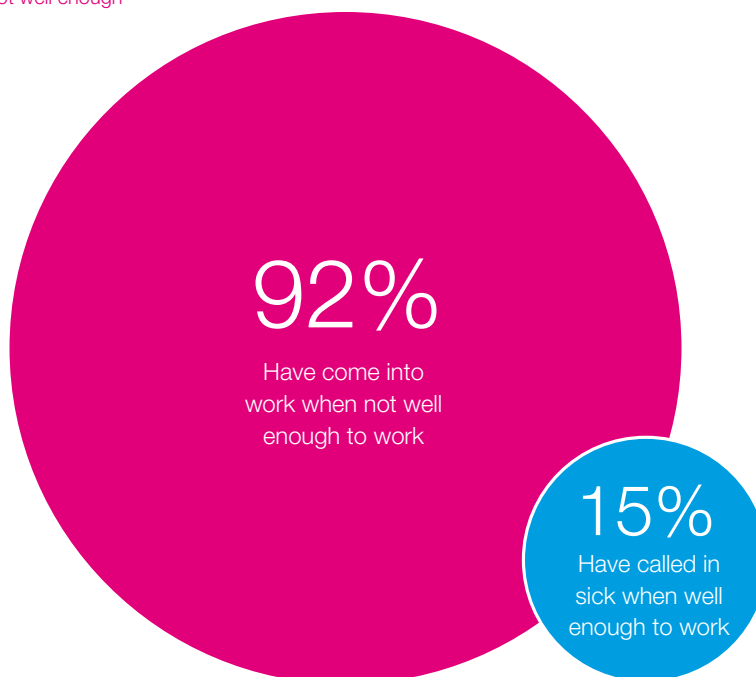
- The survey explored attitudes to absence during the World Cup or other major sporting events. A majority, 58 per cent, indicate that the key to absence management during major sporting events is for managers to discuss any issues with their staff in advance and to make plans to manage the impact. One third would be happy to deal with key games by letting staff leave early and make up the hours – but a similar number, 32 per cent, say it's "business as usual" and nothing should change. This sentiment is strongest in the public sector where 37 per cent support this viewpoint.

- Fewer than 1 in 100 managers would be more willing to turn a blind eye to suspicious absences – indeed, 14 per cent think absence should be scrutinised more closely.

Managing the impact of absence

- Managers were asked to rank the most important challenges they face when a team member calls in sick. In order of importance, they were:
 1. Managing workload impact on the rest of the team – picked as the number one challenge by 55 per cent
 2. Maintaining customer relationships
 3. Planning ahead to deal with possible absence over a longer term
 4. Supporting their return to work
 5. Determining if the illness is genuine
- Asked to pick the top three factors likely to contribute to raised levels of absence, managers highlighted a range of issues. The most common causes were low levels of job satisfaction (55 per cent), personal problems (47 per cent), bad management (40 per cent), feeling undervalued (36 per cent) and high levels of pressure (33 per cent). While managers cannot prevent problems in team members' home lives, they can directly influence the other factors. There is a clear responsibility for managers to play their part in minimising their effect.
- Finally, the survey results showed that 15 per cent of managers admit to having phoned in sick when they were well enough to work – a figure dwarfed by the 92 per cent who have come into work knowing they were not well enough to work properly.

Chart 3: Managers that have called in sick when well enough to work and managers that have come into work when not well enough



Recommendations: A World Cup Survival Guide

For football fans everywhere, this summer means just one thing – the World Cup. For every fan lucky enough to afford the trip to South Africa, there are many thousands more left behind in the UK who will be planning their lives around key games. And that includes their working lives.

If you are tempted to think ‘World Cup; so what?’ now might be the time to re-evaluate your position. The World Cup and other major sporting events are great opportunities for organisations to engage their staff. CMI’s short World Cup Survival Guide offers five top tips to help you ensure that the sporting summer is as productive and painless as possible.

Tip one: Act now to reduce employee sickies around World Cup games

Minimise the risk by putting a clear absence management policy in place and communicating it to staff ahead of the tournament. The policy should outline your organisation’s stance on absence and your expectations for attendance throughout the World Cup.

Tip two: A little flexibility goes a long way

Sporting events are a great opportunity to give workers greater autonomy over their working hours. Empower staff by allowing them to leave early for important games if they make up the time earlier in the week or afterwards. This will enhance the sense of responsibility employees feel for their working routine and result in a happier, more productive workplace.

Tip three: The World Cup is a great excuse to get engaged

A key factor that inhibits employee engagement is poor working relationships. As an employer, being flexible around the World Cup and tapping into the collective good mood of your people is a good way to give your working relationships a much needed boost. Why not watch a big game as a team?

Tip four: Post-match hangovers can be a serious headache

Substance misuse is rare in most UK workplaces but employers should be prepared. Implementing a clear drugs and alcohol policy, so that staff understand the consequences should they be under the influence of substances at work, will help minimise the potential for things to go awry.

Tip five: Make sure your employees keep their eye on the ball

Online coverage is more prevalent than ever so there is great potential for distraction – but monitoring what staff are doing every minute of the day is not the answer. This will make it tough to take advantage of the goodwill and team spirit that surrounds the tournament. Instead, set out a clear policy about what will and will not be tolerated and trust employees to abide by the rules and get their work done. Trust is crucial to a healthy and productive employer/employee relationship and will pay dividends long after the tournament draws to a close.

- Read CMI’s World Cup Survival Guide in full at www.managers.org.uk/worldcup
- Download CMI’s Management Checklists for practical guidance on tackling the issues: relevant checklists include managing absence (checklist number 58), work life balance, (number 193), and developing trust (number 243). Find them via Management Direct at www.managers.org.uk/mgtdirect.
- For best practice guidance on creating a drugs and alcohol policy, see www.managers.org.uk/best_practice



CMI

CMI is the only chartered professional body in the UK dedicated to promoting the highest standards of management and leadership excellence.

As a membership organisation, CMI has been providing forward-thinking advice and support to individuals and businesses for more than 50 years, and continues to give managers and leaders, and the organisations they work in, the tools they need to improve their performance and make an impact. As well as equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge and experience to be excellent managers and leaders, CMI's products and services support the development of management and leadership excellence across both public and private sector organisations.

Through in-depth research and policy surveys of its 86,000 individual and 450 corporate members, CMI maintains its position as the premier authority on key management and leadership issues.

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