

HR solutions strong and weak recommendations practice

Choose one of the ideas on the next page and make a related strong or weak positive or negative recommendation/ suggestion. Your partner will agree or disagree on the recommendation and/ or its strength or weakness. If you disagree at all, including only disagreeing on if the recommendation should be strong or weak, discuss it until you agree or it's clear that you won't be able to agree. If you exactly agree, including on the strength or weakness of the statement, write your agreed sentence down. Then choose another idea and do the same.

Useful phrases for doing the activity

Totally agreeing/ Agreeing 100% about the strength or weakness of the statement

I think that's exactly right/ That's exactly what I would say because...

Slightly disagreeing/ Disagreeing only on how strong or weak the statement is/

Thinking the statement should be stronger or weaker

(I agree but) I would go further and say... because...

(I agree/ I more or less agree/ I basically agree but) I wouldn't go so far. I would say that... because...

Strongly disagreeing

(I understand your opinion but) (I'm afraid) I totally disagree/ I have the opposite opinion because...

- A longer maximum period to take your paid leave (e.g. five years) – A shorter maximum period to take your paid leave (e.g. only one year)
- A quota for how many women there must be in management positions
- A single annual appraisal meeting once a year – More mini-appraisals
- Advertise jobs in the local job centre – Advertise jobs online
- Close the office for (summer/ winter) holidays – Ask staff to take hols at different times
- Downsize/ Restructure/ (Voluntary/ Compulsory/ Last in first out) redundancies/ Early retirement – Recruit more staff/ Expand
- Equal opportunities – Positive discrimination/ Affirmative action
- Explain the company's mission statement more – A new mission statement
- Flexitime – Core time
- Head-hunt managers from outside – Promote people from within the company
- Higher pay – More perks
- Higher pay for working overtime/ after... p.m./ at weekends/ on public holidays
- Hotdesking – People having their own desks
- Internal management training – Pay for staff to take MBAs
- Job sharing
- Judge foreign language skills with interviews/ with written language exams
- (Longer/ Shorter/ Paid/ Unpaid) maternity leave/ paternity leave
- More middle managers – Fewer middle managers
- More new graduate recruits – More mid-career recruits
- More objectives/ More challenging objectives – Fewer objectives/ Easier objectives
- More praise/ More positive feedback/ Showing appreciation more
- More specialist staff – More transfers between departments/ More variety of work
- More staff/ More employees – Fewer staff/ Fewer employees

- More telecommuting/ working from home
- More temporary staff/ More temps – More permanent staff
- Online training – Face-to-face training
- Open-plan offices – Cubicles/ Individual offices
- Paid sick days – Unpaid sick days
- Panel job interviews – One-to-one job interviews
- Pay more for overtime – Limit staff overtime
- Pay rises – Pay cuts
- Pay for childcare/ Subsidised childcare – A nursery school/ crèche on the premises
- Performance-related pay/ Performance-related bonuses
- Personality tests
- (Shorter/ Longer) probationary periods/ trial periods
- Raise the retirement age – Lower the retirement age
- Re-hire retired staff – Hire more young people/ Internships
- Renovate the premises/ New facilities
- Seniority-based promotion – Merit-based promotion/ Fast-tracked promotion
- Staff lounge/ Time-out area/ Chill-out area/ Relaxation area
- Staff satisfaction questionnaires – Staff satisfaction interviews
- Team building (activities)
- Telephone job interviews – Face-to-face job interviews
- Use more consultants – Use fewer consultants
- Use recruitment agencies

Practise using strong and weak language by taking turns making medium-level suggestions with one of the phrases below and replying with stronger or weaker phrases.

- We should...
- We shouldn't...
- ... would work.
- ... wouldn't work.
- ... is a good idea.
- ... is a bad idea.
- I would suggest...
- It's worth...

Continue discussing your partner's recommendations, but this time flipping a coin to decide how much you disagree/ what aspect of the recommendation you disagree with:

- Heads = Totally disagree
- Tails = Only make the statement stronger or weaker

Do the same, but this time making every statement stronger or weaker

- Heads = Make it stronger (more negative if it is negative or more positive if it is positive)
- Tails = Make it weaker