

Questions 1-6

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage? Write:

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information.

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information.

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this.

- 1 Buffer has its headquarters in the UK.
- 2 A distributed team helps Buffer offer good customer service.
- 3 Team members contact their managers daily.
- 4 The money employees get for their work varies according to where they live.
- 5 When they meet face to face, team members give presentations about their work.
- 6 Buffer employees focus on the financial benefits of the company's approach.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

A different way of working



Buffer is a company producing software that allows users to manage their social media accounts effectively. The company originated in the UK and is now officially based in the USA. Many individuals and businesses all around the world find Buffer software extremely useful, but what is most interesting about the company is its relationship with its employees. The unusual aspect of this relationship is that it uses what is known as a distributed team. This means that each employee can choose to work in any part of the world they wish.

Because Buffer has team members in different time zones, it means that someone is available to speak with customers 24 hours a day – which they say is central to their aims as a company. A distributed team is better for their customers and so it is also better for their business.

To keep their remote team happy and productive, Buffer provides staff with all the tools they need to be successful. Tools include laptops, tablets and e-readers. A favourite software application for employees is one that makes video conferencing with management and customers fast and reliable. Another important piece of software allows people to know where other team members are and what time it is where they are. The team also uses software that encourages chat between employees as that helps everyone to feel part of a friendly team.

Keeping an international team happy also means paying people in a way that depends partly on where they are. The price of accommodation, food and transport is very different in different cities. Buffer's system of payment makes it possible for team members to afford the cost of living no matter where they are.

Buffer also brings the team together for one week every five months in different locations. Previous events have, for example, taken place in Thailand, South Africa, the US, Australia and Iceland. These weeks are an opportunity not only to talk about company matters, but also to get to know colleagues as friends.

One of the many things Buffer does better than so many organisations is telling everyone how they encourage a culture where everyone respects and trusts each other. They claim that remote work plays a key role in that. And indeed, many members of the team have written about this and how working remotely with Buffer allows them to live much happier, more fulfilled lives. The quality of life, they say, is far more important to them than having a lot of money in the bank.

