

## Handout 2 - Article



# Richard Branson proposes unlimited time off work

**He has introduced the idea in Virgin offices across the United States and United Kingdom.**

Billionaire 'man of the people', Richard Branson, has become more popular by saying that everyone should be able to take time off work —whenever they want.

"Employees should decide if and when they want to take off a few hours a day, a week or a month," the Virgin Group entrepreneur writes in his book, "The Virgin Way: Everything I Know About Leadership".

He introduced the new idea in Virgin offices across the United States and the United Kingdom. The idea is that employees who feel their absence will not harm the business can take leave from their jobs. It is their responsibility. Branson got the idea after reading an article about the Netflix business model, and how they do not track vacation time.

"I have a friend whose company did the same thing. They've observed an improvement in everything - morale, creativity, and productivity," he said.

On the subject of great business ideas, Branson claimed that he gave Apple founder Steve Jobs the original inspiration for iTunes. As a result, Branson's Virgin Megastores, a chain of music shops, closed eight months after it was launched in 2001.

"On April Fool's Day 1986, I gave an interview to a popular music magazine and I told them that Virgin was secretly developing a 'Music Box' which can store music. For a small fee, music lovers can download any individual song or album they want."

"Many years later, Steve Jobs told me that he really liked the idea. We will never know for sure, but I have always wondered if that April Fool's joke resulted in the launch of iTunes and the iPod —technologies that caused the death of our Virgin Megastores and completely changed the music industry."

*Adapted from The Independent, by Jenn Selby, September 24th, 2014*

**Put T (True) or F (False) next to each statement.**

1. Richard Branson wants people to take time off work whenever they want.
2. Google doesn't track employees' vacation time. '
3. Letting employees take time off when they want has a negative effect on business.
4. Richard Branson believes that he gave Steve Jobs the idea for iPod.
5. Richard Branson's music store chain closed when Apple launched iTunes and the iPod.