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Embedding Psychological health and wellbeing at work

A brief guide to the Psychology of Employee engagement

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Case study

In a large private consultancy it was decided by someone that it would be a good idea to bring together the top seven consultants and form a new division concerned with organisational learning. One day, each of the seven was invited to a meeting and told they were leaving their old divisions and setting up the new division together. The seven didn't know each other very well, and each had developed an excellent practice in the division that they were in, attracting several millions each. Moving to something entirely new was not something they had thought about, and anyway, they had not been told that a new division was on the cards.

As the magnificent seven had already demonstrated their abilities as consultants it didn't take them long to get to know each other and work out strategies and modus operandi for the new division. Then, out of the blue, someone they didn't know introduced herself as their new leader. She had the charisma and intelligence to demonstrate she knew absolutely nothing about the work of the seven, but knew everything there is to know about marketing.

Curiously, the new division was not provided with any start up money, therefore there was no funding for marketing. Quite quickly the penny dropped. One of the largest private consultancy groups (selling management advice to clients) was effectively doing everything it could not to retain the services of seven of its 'star' consultants. Bewildered, and with no explanation forthcoming, the consultants started to exhibit the symptoms of psychological distress – demotivation, lethargy, belligerence, anxiety, depression, and lost interest in contributing to the business. They soon realised that psychological distress was harming their professional expertise, as well as their ability to work.

Armed with this insight all seven left. Two have since started a business in competition with their old employer and doing very well. Most of their former high expending clients continued with their services, and supported the new initiative. The remainder have joined competitive consultancies.

Outcome

The company lost seven of its best and most experienced consultants, all of whom now work in competition with their former employer.

Brief guidance

1. Employee engagement is central to the success of all organisations. It is achieved by embedding the principles of Psychological health and wellbeing at work. It leads to organisational success. Stress levels, sickness, absence and staff turnover are all significantly reduced; quality and financial success are significantly greater.
2. The critical manager behaviour needed to guarantee employee engagement is 'attentiveness'. If a manager is attentive to the needs of staff, staff will respond by being attentive back.
3. The behaviour of managers always takes place in the context of the organisational culture. A strong culture of manager attentiveness will yield a strong desire by employees to remain at work.

Our role

- Our 3 step programme embeds psychological health and wellbeing at work.
- We provide leadership training in the behaviours required to ensure staff engagement at work.
- We provide individual and team development through coaching in the behaviours and approaches required to ensure staff engagement.
- We provide individual mentoring support for top managers to help with the embedding of psychological health and wellbeing at work.

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