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Embedding Psychological health and wellbeing at work

A brief guide to the Psychology of
Management performance

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Case study

A sales team for an internationally renowned retailer welcomed a newly appointed Director of Marketing following a takeover. The previous director had left on amicable terms for a new position elsewhere. The new Marketing Director had limited experience within the retail sector, and was keen to impress her new Board. Within 2 weeks she had prepared a strategy for sales which she had prepared in draft and left on the company's server unprotected. The Marketing Director included in her draft report a number of personal comments about her inherited sales team. She hadn't actually met most of them and hadn't discussed her ideas with any of them. Included in her comments were some less than flattering observations about the Sales Manager, someone who had been with the Company for five years and had been credited with increasing profits by several million pounds.

The Sales Manager, by chance, accessed the draft whilst undertaking some research using files on the company server. Having reviewed the remarks from the Marketing Director, the sales manager immediately complained. His complaint was rejected on the grounds of his 'unauthorised access' to company files. He appealed, and HR decided to invite us to investigate prior to the appeal being heard.

Outcome

We found that the Marketing Director had placed the Company at risk of legal action as her behaviour could be regarded as creating a 'foreseeable' risk situation. She failed to manage her staff effectively, and had acted without due care towards her staff.

However, the Sales Manager decided that he could no longer work for a company that employed an unprofessional leader, and left the company under a Compromise Agreement, limiting the risk that the situation could be reported in the media. Other members of the sales team left the company in the six months that followed.

The Marketing Director was provided with intensive coaching and training in the management of people.

It took several months for the sales team to replace the lost and highly successful staff, to re-establish commitment to the company and to make the level of contribution that pre-dated the arrival of the Marketing Director.

Brief guidance

- 1) The behaviour of leaders in their relationship with staff is critical in the promotion of psychological health and wellbeing at work. Leaders who cause psychological distress also cause poor performance in staff, as well as themselves, and contribute to staff sickness, absence and staff turnover, which is highly costly to organisations.
- 2) Leaders and managers who do not possess the skills to interact successfully with staff may cause a rapid deterioration in performance, as well as placing at risk the reputation of the company in the market place for recruiting high quality staff.

Our role

- We undertake assessments of leaders in relation to their ability to manage staff and promote psychological wellbeing at work.
- We provide leadership development programmes that address all the issues and train leaders and managers in the skills to manage staff effectively and promote psychological health and wellbeing at work.
- We provide individual counselling, coaching and support to leaders in their management of staff and in the creation of effective psychologically healthy team working.

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