

Management

THINK ABOUT IT

June 2006

Wales Management Council works with partners within and beyond Wales to promote better management performance at all levels in the economy.

As part of that task we encourage managers like you to consider how they can expand their own capabilities and become better at what they do.

This monthly digest aims to help you, and people like you, to focus more clearly on the practical challenges you face.

We don't pretend to have all the answers but we hope these questions promote thinking that is helpful to you.

If you have views on any of the issues raised please let us know.
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On the ball or on the sidelines?

It's reported that World Cup fever is threatening an upsurge in absenteeism this summer. Lisa Fowlie, president elect of the Institute of Occupational Health and Safety is recommending that employers give staff time off to watch matches, if possible, because it will boost morale and lower workplace stress.



In your workplace would such a move amount to making a virtue of necessity and generate valuable goodwill or would it be seen as a sign of weakness that would open the floodgates for further "sports absences?" If you do allow people time off to watch a match, should you insist they take an entire day's annual leave or would that cause damaging resentment?

Word of mouth or the written record?

A survey of 250 firms by the Employment Law Advisory Services revealed that nearly half of managers in small and medium sized companies do not insist on seeing a CV from job candidates and would rather rely on word of mouth recommendations?



Personal recommendations can be very valuable, particularly if they come from a trusted source. However, if you are among the managers who side-step the CV evaluation process, can you be sure you have fully appraised the candidate concerned and that you haven't been lulled into a false sense of security by your friend or associate's general high opinion of the individual. Furthermore, without comparing CVs, can you be sure you haven't missed someone even better qualified, or indeed haven't left yourself open to later claims that you'd been unfair?

Ready for the new generation?

There was a time when the majority of the workforce would have been white and male. Virtually all would have been able-bodied and a very high proportion aged under 45. Within four years only a fifth of the working population will fit that description, according to Government figures.



If the bulk of the workforce is going to be either female, ethnic, disabled or older aged, are you ready for such a mix. Do your policies and procedures meet the needs of these groups? Are you waiting until you have to change before you make your move, or are you already laying the groundwork for diversity?

Good reasons for bad management?

According to the Good Boss Report 2005-06 nearly a quarter of managers are rated bad or dreadful by their staff and only 4% of staff would give their boss full marks. However, nearly half of workers say it's not the bosses' fault. In their view, their bosses are either poorly trained or badly managed by their own superiors.



If your performance were to be criticised by those under you, would you know how to put things right? For example would you be able to pinpoint and acknowledge the skill gaps causing the problem and know what training you might need? Alternatively would you be willing or able, if necessary, to address the deficiencies in the way your line manager handles you?

You're fired!

Millions watched enthralled over recent months as Sir Alan Sugar uttered the dreaded words "you're fired" to a succession of managerial hopefuls he decided had fallen short of his expectations.



Is it really that easy to rid your company of someone who hasn't shaped up? If you needed to defend a decision to dismiss someone on the grounds of poor performance would you have the paperwork or other evidence to prove that you behaved reasonably in taking the action you did?

Management Webwatch

www.hse.gov.uk/workplacehealth

"Earlier this year, the Health and Safety Executive launched Workplace Health Connect, a national advice line for small businesses. It estimates that only 3% of employers have access to occupational health support and says the challenge to reduce absence levels is particularly tough for small businesses. Workplace Health Connect offers free advice on everything from health issues to communication problems and, in some regions, will visit companies to assess their specific needs. In an unwell organisation, people resent the time they spend in the office and sit all day clock-watching just to rush out come five o'clock."

Leading Wales Towards Management Excellence