

Management

THINK ABOUT IT

August 2007

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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Putting in the hours?

French employees are renowned for working no more than their official 35-hour week yet still manage to be 7% more productive on average than the 'super-efficient' Americans. On a similar note a new UK study by employment consultancy Croner found that staff working long hours and missing lunch-breaks are actually becoming less efficient.



Does your workplace have a long-hours culture where people skip breaks and stay late? Do you feel this is necessary or healthy? Would you still be able to function as a business if all of your staff stuck strictly to their designated hours?

Cutting corners

Following the recent discovery that BBC producers had misled viewers to avoid embarrassment over interactive TV programmes that went wrong, the organisation's Director General Mark Thompson apologised unreservedly and ordered that thousands of staff be retrained in ethical behaviour.



Do you believe your staff would cut corners on a project in order to overcome or disguise a problem? Is this ever justified? If so could they distinguish between a 'harmless' shortcut or something more sinister that would constitute a breach of trust with the customer?

Adding real value

According to leading management development consultant Deiric McCann of Profiles International, the only way to retain valuable customers is to build relationships that are mutually beneficial.



Are you confident that your service adds real value to all of your customers' businesses? If so, do they understand fully how important you are to their success? If your current contacts within those organisations were to be replaced tomorrow would their successors regard you as an indispensable supplier?

Healthy disagreement

Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi never saw differences of opinion as something to worry about. In fact he said: 'honest disagreement is a sign of progress.'



Do you allow enough room for disagreement to take place safely within your team, particularly during times of change? Are you able to discern when such disagreement is 'honest' and not simply the product of someone jockeying for position or pursuing a personal agenda?

Spotting fake opportunities

In some fields of business it has become common practice to invite proposals from contractors simply in order to glean information or ideas, or just to test the market.



How can you spot these phantom opportunities before you waste precious time preparing tenders or pursuing them in other ways? On the other hand how can you make sure that you don't inadvertently let a genuine business lead slip through your fingers?

Healthy disagreement

With just three clicks on the new beabettermanager.com website, managers can find best practice checklists - based on National Occupational Standards - to help solve their immediate problems, grasp opportunities for personal and professional development and achieve immediate improvement in their results. A very user-friendly website, easy to navigate and attractive to look at, it's worth taking a bit of time to explore."

Leading Wales Towards Management Excellence