

Management



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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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Office Romance

Statistics indicate that one in four long-term romantic relationships begin in the workplace and many indeed meet their life's partner at their place of employment. Because of this many USA firms insist new recruits enter 'love contracts' to ensure they behave appropriately in the event that they do become involved in a relationship with a colleague.



Given the probability that this will occur within your workforce at some time, have you got any policy in place to protect the business? Would you allow the two people concerned to continue working in the same team? If a manager becomes involved with a subordinate, how would you guard against perceptions of favouritism, breaches of confidentiality or disruption, if the relationship ends?

The hardest word!

Legendary self-improvement author Dale Carnegie once said: "There is a certain degree of satisfaction in having the courage to admit one's errors. It not only clears up guilt and defensiveness, but often helps solve the problem." A US study which shows that far more lawsuits are settled out of court - 73% compared to 52% - if the defendant is prepared to apologise.



Are you confident that your managers have the skill and wisdom to know when and how to say 'sorry' in order to diffuse a situation which could damage the business. Do you actively encourage them to do this or is there a culture in your firm that admitting one's faults to staff or customers amounts to weakness.

Working Holidays

A recent Chartered Institute of Management survey of 1,484 managers found that one in four do not take their full holiday entitlement and, when they do take leave, 39% regularly access their work emails. The reasons given for this reluctance to switch off were work overload, pressing project deadlines, fear of redundancy and not wanting to let colleagues down.



Are you or your managers among this breed of anxious executives who feel they can't let go of their work, even for a few days? Do you simply allow this to happen and risk burn-out of key people or do you have a strategy for ensuring your personnel get the full benefit of the rest time to which they are entitled?

Challenging effectively

Software entrepreneur Bill Gates said: "I certainly have meetings where I spur people on by saying, 'Hey, we can do better than this. How come we are not out ahead on that?'"



Some managers seem able to get positive staff responses from challenges like this while others find their team becomes defensive and demoralized as a result of such exhortations. What is your approach when you want to get better performance from the team? Are you confident that you or your managers have the skill to inspire through constructive criticism?

Hitting the Target

Professor Robert Kaplan and Dr David Norton invented the balanced scorecard method of measuring many aspects of a company's performance to gauge progress towards overall objectives. However they accepted the limitations of this method, saying that good leaders will set goals but not tell staff exactly how to achieve those goals.



How important is detailed target-setting in your business? Have you got a few key targets to achieve or is there a target for virtually every activity you undertake? Apart from the obvious bottom-line financial result, which targets do you feel are really worth measuring in your company?

Leading Wales Towards Management Excellence