

# Management

THINK ABOUT IT

JANUARY 2009

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. [gwyneth.stroud@crc-wmc.org.uk](mailto:gwyneth.stroud@crc-wmc.org.uk)

## Out of Sight, Out of Mind

In a recent review of the health of the British workforce, the Government's National Director for Health and Work found that 40% of employers didn't have any kind of sickness absence management policy.



As a manager do you have contingency plans to cope if there was a sudden increase in sickness absence or if a key member of the team has a prolonged illness? What action would you take to try to prevent short-term sick leave turning into long term absence? If this isn't possible, how would you help an employee who has been on long-term sick leave regain the confidence to return to work?

## Covering your back

Dean Acheson, American Secretary of State during the early 1950s once described a memorandum as something: "that is written, not to inform the reader, but to protect the writer."



Is there some truth in this? Written communications are of course vital in management, both for briefing or clarifying agreed actions. However do you or your staff ever find yourselves drawn into playing 'email tennis' that has more to do with office politics than conveying information? How can you discourage such activity?

## Oil on Troubled Waters

According to a recent survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development nearly one in three people admit to having left a job because of conflict with a colleague or a manager, and nearly two thirds of HR professionals say they have handled conflicts which caused one or more of the parties involved to go on long-term sick leave. In many cases poor management was blamed for the problem



As a manager would you be aware if conflicts were brewing between people on your staff? Do you have a strategy for diffusing and resolving such situations? Given the potential damage to the business, should you seek more training in this sensitive area?

## Loyal Customers

Richard Mabbott, head of planning at marketing communications agency Gyro International, warned businesses that the cost of acquiring new customers during a recession is going to rise sharply due to increased competition for a smaller pool of prospects.



Given that winning new customers will be much harder, have you considered the potential for gaining more business from existing customers? Do you understand enough about their needs and why they do business with you? Could you provide them with additional services they are currently sourcing elsewhere and offer them the chance to save money in the process?

## Avoiding a skills recession

New figures from the Chartered Management Institute show that 60% of employers expect to spend less on training and development in the coming year than they did in 2008



What are your plans for the training budget in 2009? If you do feel under pressure to reduce investment in training what is the likely impact on competence, morale and delivery of service? Have you explored ways in which you can use your budget more creatively to achieve the same skills outcomes for a lower cost.

## A Good Read

Leading Wales Towards Management Excellence