



“Practical simplicity” Newsletter Spring 2011

Pet&r

Personnel, Equality, Training and Recruitment

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Flexible Working

It's not just about making adjustments for people with parental responsibilities, disabilities or looking for phased retirement.

Flexible working is about working smarter - working wherever and whenever it is most effective to enable you to get the work done. It can cut costs, boost productivity, motivate people and release potential. It can involve changing hours worked, change the times required to work and working from other locations.

Flexible working will become more the norm as we move into a future with job growth outstripping growth in the working population and more over 50's being in work than those in their 40's.

The severe weather this winter almost brought parts of the country to a standstill, but some businesses continued more or less as usual, many down to flexible working.

Things such as working from home, using phone and video conferencing and out of hours working were used to great effect meaning blocked roads did not mean blocked business.

Trust is a great part of flexible working. Trusting your employees to work from home and them trusting you not to be constantly checking up on them. You need to look at

outputs and results rather than hours worked.

Leadership is also important to set an example, make sure any additional resources are made available such as improved IT services, ensure the correct support is given to employees and to ensure the system is fair, consistent and benefits the organisation.

Flexible working involves give and take and different solutions work for different businesses so it is important to analyse your business and get staff involved to come up with potential solutions. It needs to be treated as any business tool to help you achieve your business objectives and if it doesn't improve systems or aid objectives then don't do it.

Dealing with Redundancy

Local Authority job cuts are huge in some areas of the country but it's not only public sector jobs being lost. The knock-on effect down the supply chain within the private sector is also being felt.

Any form of redundancy is bad for an organisation be it voluntary or compulsory, because it means someone is leaving the organisation. Someone who has knowledge and skills within the organisation that are hard to replace. Organisations put a lot of time and money into their employees even if they don't acknowledge it all formally and this is a great loss to any organisation.

Redundancy should always be seen as a last resort, downsizing can be more costly than maintaining staff levels. During their time in a role, people develop particular skill sets and ways of doing things which are not written down or a specific part of the job description.

For example is it specifically written in the receptionist's job description that she water the plants or feed the new tropical fish in reception? Does everyone in the section know the really simple way to deal with a particular IT error message without having to wait 3 hours for IT Support to come down?

This tacit knowledge can be vital to an organisation and should be taken into consideration when assessing job descriptions and roles within redundancy talks.

Look at alternatives such as part-time working, flexible working, job share and re-training so you maintain people if at all possible.

However, sometimes redundancy is the only option, in which case it needs to be handled correctly, carefully and with genuine concern for all concerned, including those remaining with the organisation.

Remember, sending out redundancy notices is not enough, you must consult with staff correctly and bear in mind the cost of minimum redundancy pay required by law and in the employees contract.

If money is an issue and the statutory minimum redundancy pay is all you can afford, consider adding to the redundancy package by giving staff adequate time off for interviews, giving job search support, help with interviewing and training opportunities. Look at counselling for those leaving and those staying to make the whole process less traumatic for all involved.

Redundancy is a tough decision to make, make sure it is the right one and then make sure it is done right. Contact lynne@petandr.co.uk if you would like our support in dealing with redundancy.

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Motivating to Perform

The Corporate Leadership Council recently showed that the number of employees willing to put in discretionary effort, considered a vital part of productivity, has dropped by almost half since 2007.

If you don't know the score, it is hard to stay interested in the game. By the same token, if people don't get feedback on how they are performing it can be difficult for them to sustain the effort required to contribute effectively at work.

More and more, organisations are being asked to do more for less, but how do you motivate people to perform?

- Ensure employees understand what they are doing and why within their role and how it all fits with the organisations aims and objectives.
- Agree SMART objectives with employees which are aligned to those of the business
- Give and receive regular, constructive feedback
- Recognise, reward and show appreciation of a job well done. It doesn't have to be monetary, a simple thank you goes a long way.
- Conduct relevant appraisal interviews
- Monitor performance appropriately for the role try and move away from outputs and more to outcomes, they can be more productive
- Don't look over people's shoulders but maintain regular contact. Trust remote employees to deliver agreed outputs and outcomes
- Empower staff to deliver to their full potential by giving them confidence, responsibility, and support.
- Address underperformance

Hopefully if you do the first eight things properly and consistently, you won't have to deal with the ninth point.

However, you can't get it right all the time so it is important to have a system in place to address underperformance, ignore it at your peril. Always act promptly, fairly, consistently and within the law.

For more information on our Motivating to Perform course contact lynne@petandr.co.uk.

Royal wedding

There are 2 things the British public seem to love, football and a royal wedding. Last year we had the World Cup and this year William and Kate's wedding, but, unlike the World Cup, the royal wedding has resulted in an extra Public Holiday on 29th April. This has resulted in 2 long weekends in a row and confusion about employee holiday entitlement.

Do employers have to give employees the 29th April off and do they have to pay them?

The simple answer is no, there is no automatic right for an employee to have a Bank Holiday off or get paid if they work it, it usually depends what is written in their contract of. If the contracts states so many days plus Bank Holidays then you do need to give them a paid day off but if their holiday entitlement states X days including Bank Holidays then no.

However, sticking to the letter of the contract could be counter - productive. As we emerge from recession we want employees engagement not alienation and if employees see friends and family getting something they are not, it doesn't matter what their contract says, the goodwill is lost. The financial saving of £98.08 per person by making them work based on the national average salary is likely to be lost through time spent arguing, going slow and being critical of the company. So think before you act and be fair.

You Scratch my Back.....

I'll scratch yours, along with corporate hospitality is often viewed as part and parcel of doing business, but the new Bribery Act 2010 may make people re-think this view point.

The Bribery Act 2010 is due to come into force in May/June 2011 and aims to reinforce the UK's reputation as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. It abolishes the current common law offences and introduces 4 new, all encompassing offences.

A key aspect is the creation of a new offence of failure by a commercial organisation to prevent bribery.

Defence against this would be if you have adequate anti-bribery procedures in place including:

- Robust financial controls and sign-off
- Adequate whistle blowing arrangements
- Contracts of employment clauses relating to bribery
- Appropriate disciplinary policies and procedures

It is important to keep track of the development and implementation of this bill as well as the implications for your organisation so visit www.justice.gov.uk for more information.

Lip-reading needs your help

Did you know that well over 50% of the population will have a hearing difficulty in their lifetime. Quite a statistic but here is another one, there are NO lip-reading classes in the North East!

RNID in the North East has set up a petition to try and get something done on this issue. If you would like to help, please go to the link below and sign the petition. <http://gopetition.com/petition/41521.html>.

Courses and Services

HR Consultancy, Research, Advice & Guidance; Recruitment and Selection Testing; Policy & Strategy Development; Management Coaching & Mentoring; IIP Support & Corporate Action Planning.

Leadership, Management, & Supervisory Development; Conflict Resolution, Harassment & Bullying; Customer Care & Interpersonal Skills; Equality & Diversity Training;

Work Team Health Checks and Repair Clinics, Team Toughness, Recruitment Training, Mental Toughness Assessment Interviewing and Selection Testing.

Public Consultation, Social Research, & Event Management. Sustainable Development and Sustainable Lifestyle Training, Volunteer Development, Retained Advisory Service.

ILM and NCFE Accredited courses

If you would like to know more about our work, please visit the web-site www.petandr.co.uk, or contact lynne@petandr.co.uk.