



“Practical simplicity” Newsletter Winter 2011

Pet&r
Personnel, Equality, Training and Recruitment

In this issue:

1. Keeping hold of your stars
2. Case study: An engaged workforce
3. Coaching is.....
4. Are you Games ready?
5. Open courses
6. Courses and Services

Keeping hold of your stars

With the continuing economic climate organisations are still facing budget cuts and job losses. The uncertainty people feel can result in a lack of purpose, focus, drive and people leaving. Your people are your best, if not your only competitive advantage, so how do you motivate and retain talented staff during these difficult times?

The key is to develop a strong employee/employer relationship. This increases the input, voice and commitment of employees to maximise their efficiency, quality and performance. This is strong business strategy based on authenticity, and trust, not ‘fluffy bunny stuff’.

Keep employees informed of developments and treat them as adults. Employees need to see the whole picture and where they fit in so effective communication is vital. Involve people in discussions and decisions, they are the ones at the front end and know how to cut costs, be more productive and work smarter so use them.

The message needs to be clear and delivered appropriately, whatever it is. Highlight positives and look to the future, even when delivering bad news, realising there is a future is a great motivator.

Deal with redundancies fairly and invest in helping those leaving the organisation to work on their future. This will demonstrate care and commitment to those remaining.

Look after redundancy survivors. They may feel guilty if friends have gone, or worried about extra workload or they may be next. People need to see why things are happening and what their role is. They need support and development to be able to cope with new responsibilities etc.

An organisation which takes these things on board will be seen as an organisation which cares for and is committed to its employees, and therefore one worth sticking with for the long haul. A strong relationship will enable an organisation to work together and come out of the recession stronger.

For help in developing an engaged workforce or dealing with redundancies contact Lynne.

Case study – An engaged workforce

We talked in earlier newsletters about engagement and the need for organisations to get people to understand the goals, believe in what the organisation is doing and invest their energy in the success of the company, particularly if the organisation wants to remain competitive. This is true not just in the private sector but is also relevant in the public sector which is facing a second round of deep cuts and the voluntary sector which is trying to meet rapidly increasing needs when funding sources are shrinking just as rapidly.

The power of engagement was shown for us recently in a couple of examples of work that our clients have been doing.

Last year an international airline was reducing its customer support operation in the UK. Some staff were transferring to other carriers, whilst a significant number were

going to be made redundant. They chose to involve their staff and called for representatives to help them handle the transition. There was no possibility in changing the decision or negotiating new terms, but they wanted to consult with and involve employees in planning the change. Peter was involved in training the fifteen volunteers who came forward, helping them to understand their role, act effectively in meetings and represent their people.

The training nearly didn't take place, because another international airline chose that date as one of several strike days last year, but luckily Peter's flight was not affected. This training led to a positive outcome for the company, a better transition for the staff involved, and valuable experience for the volunteers. By contrast the well-known British airline has suffered damage to its profits, its reputation, and its employee relations. If only it had invested more in engaging with its workforce, perhaps it would be in a stronger position today.

In the last couple of months, Peter has worked with two major charities, both of whom have been engaging their employees and using employee representatives in creative ways.

Peter worked with one to help existing employee representatives expand their role and act as mediators in workplace disputes between colleagues and support employees in discipline and grievance meetings. He trained a new generation of employee representatives for the other, who will work to help the charity undertake a major change project under a new Chief Executive.

Both low cost investments in people that will help their organisation thrive in challenging times.

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Coaching is.....

when done properly, one of the most powerful and cost effective ways to develop individual and organisational performance.

It doesn't provide answers to problems, rather it helps people come up with their own solutions through 1 to 1 conversations and guided questioning to unlock people's capability and potential. Many people confuse 1 to 1 training with coaching. Training is about showing someone how to do something or imparting knowledge, coaching is about helping the individual to develop their own performance.

Coaching shouldn't be about reducing faults or dealing with performance problems. It should be about assessing current levels of performance and capability, setting goals and agreeing a development and performance plan to achieve those goals.

A popular approach is the GROW model:

- G – goal, what you want to achieve
- R – reality, current situation
- O – options, ideas to reach the goal
- W – wrap up, plan of action

Coaching isn't just for senior managers, it is valuable for all employees. ILM research has shown that 92% of managers who received coaching saw their performance improve and 95% saw benefits to the whole organisation.

There is no one size fits all approach to coaching as it is about dealing with individuals but it can help with employee retention and motivation and developing a high performance culture.

Pet&r LLP coach managers: individually or in groups; when undergoing training programmes, to help embed the learning; when newly appointed, to get them off to a flying start; or when leading major change, to help them focus on what really matters at each stage. We can also help individuals at all levels who are experiencing performance difficulties or facing transition. For more information on how we can help your organisation, and funding for coaching senior managers, contact Lynne.

Are you Games ready?

Are you ready for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games? I don't mean have you been going to the gym but is your business prepared for the full impact the games could have on you, your employees, suppliers, and customers?

Many companies are directly involved in the games, so you may want to check your suppliers' commitments. If they win what is to them a large contract, will they still be able to meet your needs?

Have you got alternative suppliers or systems in case your usual ones let you down? Can you bulk buy stock to tide you over the Games period?

Think about disruption to transport links and the effect that could have on supplies and delivery times. How would actual or threatened terrorist activity affect you?

No-one can plan for every eventuality so make sure that all your staff know how to deal with giving customers bad news so that they stay with you.

It's amazing how many people who never show an interest in sport suddenly get very interested in the Olympics. This can lead to increased team morale through national pride, but it will also inevitably lead to increased holiday requests. These could be for actual competitors, volunteers, lucky ticket holders or armchair fans.

There is no legal right to give people unpaid time off even to volunteer for the Games. Many small organisations won't be able to but some will, the key is to be as accommodating and flexible as possible but not put the business at risk just to avoid arguments. Suggest matching unpaid leave with time take from holiday entitlement or more flexible working when key events are on.

Define the rules and clearly communicate them before the Games start, and implement them fairly and consistently.

You also need to give a clear sensible message to ensure that friendly rivalry does not become harassment.

Don't forget those who don't want to watch the Games, they will probably be holding the fort for you and you should think about offering them flexibility at other times for things they want to be involved in.

Forthcoming Open Courses

Personal Effectiveness Review for Leaders - 18th January 2012

Start the year well with a session that gives you the chance to stop and reflect on your personal skill set, understanding of current approaches and techniques as well as your own knowledge pool and information gathering strategies. We will help you identify what aspects you wish to develop further and introduce you to reflective tools to ensure you get maximum learning every day from just doing the job.

Employee Representatives 16th February 2012

Since 2004 the law requires employers to communicate with employees about workplace matters. This interactive course will enable people selected as representatives to better understand their role and responsibilities, differentiate between consultation and negotiation, clarify their expectations and consider those of others. In addition they will learn how to prepare for their first meeting and develop the skills needed to participate effectively and report.

Call us if you are unsure of your responsibilities - and stay legal.

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 Resilience, Assessment Interviewing and Selection Testing.

Public Consultation, Social Research, & Event Management.

Sustainable Development and Sustainable Lifestyle Training, Volunteer Development, Retained Advisory Service.

ILM and OCNNE 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.