



"Practical simplicity"

Newsletter

Autumn 2009

Pet&r

Personnel, Equality, Training and Recruitment

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Quality Success!

More and more organisations are asking for confirmation of quality standards to act as differentiators between potential suppliers.

Quality has always been a priority at **Pet&r** and though we have a comprehensive internal quality system, we decided to go for ISO 9001 Quality Standard to get official recognition for this system.

Being a small organisation this was quite a daunting task, especially after reading guidance from a number of providers and people who had been through the process themselves. However, after further research we found an organisation which worked on the same principles or practical simplicity as us in QMS.

In preparation for the assessment we put together all our policies and procedures, instigated additional monitoring measures and created a comprehensive document maintenance system. The initial assessment and GAP analysis took 6 hours and then QMS wrote a draft quality manual for our approval and that was it, we had ISO 9001 within 2 months.

We would like to thank all at QMS, especially Nick Parkes, for all their help and for making the whole experience easy, quick and painless.

Another success recently was Peter Hammond being accepted as a Fellow of the Institute of Training & Occupational Learning (ITOL).

Employee Engagement

There is no doubt that engaged, motivated staff are essential for a business to succeed, especially in these challenging times, but how do you engage employees? It boils down to 4 key words, Consult, Listen, Praise and Trust.

Consult - If you don't involve your workforce in decision making it reduces the level of commitment, especially to changes regarding restructuring and budgeting. Consulting gives a feeling of ownership of actions and that you value people and their opinions, both of which lead to increased productivity and a more harmonious workplace. So actively encourage people to give opinions and ideas, seek them out. Be prepared to change.

Listen - Consulting is one thing but actually listening and acting on the consultation is another thing. Failure to act on consultation findings or ignoring people disengages them more than not consulting at all.

There is another side to Listen, the personal side of finding out what makes your people tick. What are their interests, their views on the organisation and their jobs, what they like/dislike about them, their frustrations, their work/life balance.

If you find these things out you can build up a motivational profile which will help inform any additional engagement activities. This interest must be genuine and acted upon to be successful,

people know when you are paying lip service to them. React carefully to what you hear.

Praise - All too often people fall into a system of picking on mistakes and not acknowledging a job well done. Giving praise isn't soft or weak, it shouldn't be taken as a given that saying nothing means you are doing well. Praise is essential for an engaged workforce as they feel valued and appreciated and we all fare better under those conditions.

Praise can be given in an ad hoc fashion or be more structured within well designed and conducted appraisals, but however you give praise it must be done genuinely, appropriately and consistently, avoiding favouritism or discrimination.

Trust - In any organisation there are things which need to be confidential but these should be kept to a minimum.

Don't try and 'catch people out' or use informants. Don't divulge things told to you in confidence. Don't fall into a situation of 'do as I say not as I do' or a 'them and us' culture. If you are told something needs doing, act on it. Remember you are all grown-ups.

If you do all the above and involve people in activities, listen to them and praise good performance in a genuine way people trust you more and if you trust someone you are more likely to go that extra mile for them. This is an engaged workforce.

Pet&r has run a number of successful Employee Engagement activities for a variety of clients, from Attitude Surveys to Works Councils. If you would like to know more contact Lynne.



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Stress Is.....

inappropriate levels of arousal that last too long. Recent statistics show that 73% know someone who was made redundant in the last 4 weeks, 14 people declared bankrupt or insolvent every hour and 3,178 people are made redundant every day in the UK.

Not surprising then that stress is on the increase with 23% of people surveyed by insurance companies saying stress gave them a late night, 46% suffered insomnia and 38% saying stress levels were higher than this time last year.

Stress is caused by customers, resources, systems and people with 80% of effects coming from 20% of causes and 20% of effects doing 80% of the damage.

Stress is not necessarily bad and is often unavoidable. Many stressors are what motivate or challenge us but individuals react differently to the same stressors.

Stress can manifest itself in a number of ways including mood such as feeling fed up, physical state such as headaches and arousal level such as restlessness. Symptoms of each do not mean you are stressed, only when the symptoms persist do you become stressed.

So what are the signs of stress?
- **A rise in sickies**, stress is the second biggest cause of sick leave
- **Arise in skiving off**, low morale and de-motivation often result in an increase in absenteeism
- **Stroppiness**, short-term memory lapses, mood swings, irritability or indecisiveness are all signs of pressure building
- **Decreasing levels of performance**, lateness and a reduction in quality/output from a previously good performer

To help yourself you need to look at what you can change, what you can influence and what you can endure. To help your people if someone complains of stress, take it seriously, don't fob it off as a weakness. Look into what is causing the stress and see how you can change things to reduce or remove the stressor(s).

Pet&r can help you identify stressors and develop strategies for you and your staff to deal with them. We also offer the Mental Toughness Assessment or the full Development Programme which helps you develop the ability to consistently perform towards the upper range of talents and skills regardless of competitive circumstances.

Swine Flu and You

Swine Flu has now been designated a global pandemic and estimates say that half the UK population will be affected this year and this will lead to a 5% fall in the GDP.

The Business Advisory Network for Flu (BANF) predicts the first wave of swine flu between August and November with a peak in late August early September which could result in 12% of the workforce being absent from work. This will have a significant effect on businesses, especially small businesses who haven't the staff capacity to cover large absences.

The catch it, bin it, kill it message is being promoted throughout the country, coupled with advice to stay away from crowded areas and a general increase in hygiene measures.

Employers can look at more remote working, conference calling etc. to reduce the chance of spread as well as increasing hygiene facilities and procedure.

Raise awareness of the symptoms and procedures for swine flu and make sure that employees feel confident about taking time off if they are unwell. Look at systems and procedures and see what can be done to minimise the effects of large scale absenteeism, the more prepared you are the better.

People can call the National Pandemic Flu Service on 0800 1513100 for advice about symptoms and treatment.

Employers, go to the NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/pandemic-flu and Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk websites for more advice, including sector specific advice.

Forthcoming Open Courses

Strengthening Client Relationships – 29th October

- appreciate and assess the customers' perspective, techniques for influencing behaviour to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome

Dealing with Difficult Customers – 2nd December 09

- two way communication, understand customer needs, remove barriers to service deliver

Attendance Management – 3rd December 09 am

- tracking attendance, coping with an empty space, return to work interviews, legal aspects

For more information on these, and other open courses, please visit our website or contact Lynne at lynne@petandr.co.uk.

Courses and Services offered

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

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

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

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

For a practical, focused and cost effective approach to a wide range of HR issues leading to real and sustainable change in workplace culture.

If you would like to know more about our work, please visit the web-site or contact us.