

Are You Driving Your Business or Are Your People Driving You Crazy???

You have a great idea for a business.
You have the vision and guts to get out there and get started.
You create jobs for people.
You are a nice person, people generally like you.
You are nice to your staff and you try to be easy going.

Why then are there

- rumblings of discontent
- staff leaving
- bickering and backstabbing
- mistakes being made, and
- performance sliding as your reward?

Sound familiar?

Welcome to the reality of the business world and the variable called 'People'.

This is an all too familiar tale for many businesses. So what does drive your staff to drive you crazy? How did that nice person you employed who was so enthusiastic become demanding, and unhappy?

There are many answers to this.

Some of the areas which give rise to these issues include the following:

1. The decision to hire someone for a position.
 - Analysing the tasks required,
 - Designing the job,
 - Creating Job Descriptions
 - Deciding on your requirements,
 - Understanding the difference in what people of different ages will look for and expect, and then
 - Recruiting successfully to those requirements
2. The need to compete for talent – selling you and your business to prospective employees.
3. Orientation of the new employee and laying out the ground rules of the playing field and expectations.
4. Managing the employee day to day
 - Workloads
 - Praise
 - Interaction with others
 - Understand why people are 'difficult' – sometimes they are just 'different'.
5. Managing the employee for the bigger picture and their longer term (as well as yours)
 - Understand what drives employees
 - Understand how and why their needs change
 - Understand why people leave
 - Understand that different generations require different management skills
6. Handling issues and problems as they arise.
7. Performance management

Lets start with working with the employees you already have.

I believe you have to start with the environment you create. From an employee's perspective, they want to know what is expected of them. They will only know this if you have made it clear for them.

To do this, you need to have a clear concept of what your business is about, what it stands for and where it is going. Yes, I'm talking about those trendy things called your Vision and Mission.

Not only do you need to know these, more importantly, you need to be sure this is communicated clearly to your staff AND be sure they understand it AND buy into it

Watching an organisation drift along with managers or owners sitting in separate rowing boats rowing or drifting in different directions is certainly not a helpful starting point and not designed to give staff certainty or clarity.

Once you and your staff are on the same wavelength with the playing field marked out, you can then set out the rules of the playing field. This is where you, or you and your team, can set out expectations of how people may contribute, what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and develop common understanding on how everyone works.

This then allows:

- Everyone to contribute in a safe environment where different views and opinions are respected.
- Open discussion and resolution of any issues, problems and difficulties as soon as they arise, with everyone working towards acceptable and efficient solutions.
- Early recognition and resolution if someone has a problem or causes a problem.
- Unacceptable behaviour can be handled as soon as it arises as everyone has previously agreed that they would abide by certain standards and openness.
- Empowerment of staff and contributions to efficiency and effectiveness.
- Reward and recognition to be meaningful.
- Working with individuals and the team on their development to meet both their own needs and those of your business' objectives without this being threatening.

Dealing with problems and issues early cannot be emphasised enough. Unhappiness is infectious. If problems are not dealt with up front, they tend to grow and spread around the organisation. Suddenly you have dissatisfied, uncooperative staff. This is when dealing with staff may start to drive you crazy and take an extraordinary amount of time which you could otherwise spend on growing your business. It takes far less time to deal with small and isolated issues with one or two people as they arise.

Many studies have shown that men and women think differently, reason differently, make decisions and act differently and use different levels of perception and intuition. So, without criticising male managers and employers, I draw their attention to the need to be aware, recognise issues early and deal with them straight away. If you work with male managers and owners, emphasise the need for situations to be handled promptly.

People will respond if they feel that what they think and feel does matter, and they are taken notice of and heard. This is half of the battle.

Praise and recognition for effort and contribution which is timely and appropriate is also vitally important. There is nothing that causes problems faster than a 'perception' of being taken for granted. It is not the reality that is important, it is the employee's perspective which is the driving factor. How do you know there is a problem then if it is their perception and not your view of reality? Talk to them! Always talk to people. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

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