



Straightforward Employee Wellbeing Strategies for 2018

By Karen Meager and John McLachlan, co-founders of Monkey Puzzle Training

Employee wellbeing is an increasingly hot topic in the business world, and should be the subject of various efforts. But as with many factors central to a healthy company culture, it cannot and should not be introduced with a fanfare as an afterthought that proves you care. To achieve the results it is capable of, employee wellbeing needs to be incorporated at a deeper level, that carries through every facet of the company and is evident. Employee wellbeing needs to be ingrained on the culture of the company to really work its magic, and this is easier to do than you might think. Here are a couple of key ideas that can help you make employee wellbeing a full and functional aspect of your company culture.

BANISH LONG HOURS CULTURE

In some industries, long hours culture is still very much a problem that is felt by employees and glossed over by managers. Having to put in the odd late day for a special project or unforeseen emergency task is one thing, but operating a culture within which people are actually worried about leaving on time for fear of looking uncommitted is quite another thing. A company with a long hours culture is not more hardworking or dedicated than any other - it simply has a problem with time management and productivity. People who

work in companies with long hours cultures have far higher levels of Cortisol (the stress hormone) pulsing through their bodies than is healthy - it is like forcing them to try and survive a never-ending famine, and inevitably results in low productivity, mental health issues and exhaustion among employees. When you look at it in this light, it is unsurprising that people burn out and can no longer stand to work in certain industries.

It doesn't have to be like this though, and there are plenty of simple ways that you can bring balance to the working hours of your company. Here are a few ideas:

- Make tangible deliverables the unit of performance measurement rather than time.
- Avoid making links between late working and reward or praise.
- Look at reworking the employee training programme to help staff to rebalance their time and make the most of a work-life balance.
- Approach consistent late working as a problem and offer support to spread the workload.

- Introduce a policy that avoids emails outside of working hours - insist that correspondence wait until the next day

DEVELOP YOUR LEADERS

Leadership must be your first port of call when looking to reevaluate the levels of employee satisfaction in working hours. A recent CMI study found that UK businesses lost £39 billion due to poor leadership, and this figure consists of staff sickness and absence, turnover, tribunal and recruitment costs, among others. This demonstrates the cumulative effect that poor leadership can have throughout a company. Good leadership is not just a desirable in business, it is an absolute necessity to healthy and successful companies, but it must be sincere, and not just some grand display to make it seem as if real change is being affected. You don't need to be able to afford expensive new training initiatives for leaders or make it hugely ceremonious. Providing decent basic training for current and prospective leaders, that gives them proper opportunity to grow as professionals and bring their best to their roles, is what is needed. Don't worry about the grand gestures, just make sure the changes you do implement make a real difference. The more business leaders can approach their work with a level head and



a healthier outlook, the better the results they will reach, and the more contented a workforce they will nurture.

Improving the wellbeing of your employees is essential for the long-term health of individual employees, teams and the company as a whole, and a good leader with ambitions for the future should make employee wellbeing a concrete fixture of their company culture. As we have seen here, it doesn't take a lot of time, money or energy that you can't afford, and it can in fact be quite simple to do, but it requires commitment and a real understanding of why such efforts are necessary. Nothing will be achieved if steps are taken begrudgingly or for some ulterior reason. A good and caring leader will be ready and willing to make sure their teams are happy, healthy and working in an environment that is conducive to productivity and satisfaction.



About Karen and John;

Karen Meager and John McLachlan are the co-founders of Monkey Puzzle Training (www.monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk) and co-authors of *Time Mastery: Banish Time Management Forever* (£12.99, Panoma Press); a number one best-selling book.

Karen and John take the latest scientific and academic thinking and make it useable in everyday life. Both have successful business backgrounds for over 20 years, are clinically qualified in psychotherapy and hypnotherapy and two of only a handful of NLP Master Trainers in the UK.

Karen and John have a unique gift in helping people both in their business and personal lives to move beyond Time Management to become 'Time Masters', allowing them to develop an approach to time that is efficient and fits in with their unique personality. Too often, people are controlled by other people's priorities so Karen and John help people to take back that control, by understanding how their own preferences, style and interests impact their use of time.