



SME BUSINESS SPECIALISTS

WORKPLACE ISSUES — “IS THE TAIL WAGGING THE DOG?”

Many business owners and managers experience the fear of addressing employees regarding workplace issues. The reality is that we live in a complex employment arena, and with changes in our workplace compositions (including generational differences) these issues can potentially be difficult to manage. However when you shy away from dealing with these types of issues you can often create a far more unstable and difficult workplace. Ultimately, failure to address these issues early on may even lead to bigger issues to manage down the track.

WORKPLACE TIPS

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

We do not want to promote the idea of confrontation, rather it is the concept of effective management of workplace expectations. Firstly you need to assess these questions:

- ☑ What are our workplace rules? Are they formally communicated?
- ☑ What are our informal workplace practices (ie: what really happens)?
- ☑ What are our expectations of employees? Has this been communicated to employees?
- ☑ What is the impact of the employees behaviour, not only upon themselves but others?
- ☑ How long has this behavior been going on?
- ☑ Why hasn't this behavior been addressed?
- ☑ How ethical is our workplace?

When dealing with these issues we often find that there is a gulf between the expectations of the employer / manager and that of the employee.

Tolerance of particular behaviours has the ability to backfire, particularly given that employee behaviours are rarely undertaken in complete isolation or secrecy and so other employees become disillusioned by the reluctance of owners / managers to take action. In essence it can become a case of “if he / she can get away with that then so can I”, and it can become even more so if that person is in a position of influence.

Employees are particularly intuitive about their workplace cultures and so a lack of respect in the workplace can spread ever so quickly. But you own the business – right! So permitting a counter productive workplace culture eats away at your business and financial performance and makes it increasingly difficult to hire and retain the right staff. So what's the answer? The answer is to create a positive and balanced workplace.

CREATING A POSITIVE AND BALANCED WORKPLACE

- ☑ Encourage synergies between your goals and those of your employees.
- ☑ Train your management teams in workplace communications.
- ☑ Train your management teams in your workplace rules.
- ☑ Encourage “whistle blowing”.
- ☑ Encourage communication across staff levels.
- ☑ Ensure managers, as part of their ongoing role, allocate time to handle workplace issues.
- ☑ Develop genuine staff and position reviews.
- ☑ Manage expectations vs. entitlements.
- ☑ Communicate responsibilities across all parties.

And when all else fails it may be time to enact a “performance management” or “exit’ strategy.

KNOWLEDGE

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