

Qualification: CIPD Diploma in Applied Human Resources

Module Name: Understanding the Management of
Employment Relations

Activities: On the job training

Word Count: 843 words

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By signing below, I confirm that the work/evidence presented is my own, unaided work. I understand the regulations pertaining to candidate malpractice and the action that may be taken as a result.

Signed: MGoldsworthy

Date: 25/05/2020

On the job training:

Provide approximately 800 words which details how your organisation has been affected by the recent global pandemic of COVID 19. Examples could include furlough of employees, updating your remote working policy, maintaining regular communication update across the workforce, increase in sickness levels from key workers, a huge ramp-up (such as delivery drivers) or decline of work activities etc.

Since 24 March 2020 I have been on Furlough from my job at Bluestone Resorts as an HR Officer along with most of the 750 other employees employed there. The park has been closed to all guests and continues to be closed until the government allow us to re-open. The challenge with having 680 members of staff on furlough with skeleton staff not furloughed is communication. Before the governments' decision to close all leisure facilities we were able to set up a system to communicate to all staff via text message. This allowed employees to receive messages to their phones notifying them to check their 'Flow' (used for training and communicating) accounts and their email for any relevant information regarding the business or their furlough. Whilst we have various systems of communication already in place such as Facebook groups, email and Flow, not all employees use all of these; this meant we needed a way to communicate to them in a way most employees would be able to receive the information.

Bluestone have also implemented a return to work log for employees who are coming off of furlough to receive an induction, complete a health questionnaire and sign the social media policy. There is also a log of any employees that have tested positive for COVID-19 to ensure we take all measures necessary before they return to work.

Since the government stated that employees who resigned from their place of work since a particular date could be re-instated to claim furlough, bluestone have re-instated a number of employees in order for them to receive the payments.

To keep up regular communication with employees other than sending them relevant information regarding their furlough status, Bluestone have been sending out a fortnightly newsletter. This newsletter was something that happened fortnightly before COVID-19 but had stopped for a while when the pandemic was becoming more serious, as staff were more consumed with tasks relating to COVID-19 instead. The newsletter has been continued since the start of May to keep employees up to date with other things going on in the business and for a sense of community whilst the work community is apart from each other.

Bluestone have made every effort to communicate as much as possible with furloughed employees to minimize the stress some staff may be feeling and anxiety about their job safety. Whilst this is a difficult situation for everyone involved Bluestone are still one of the top employers in Pembrokeshire and have made efforts to ensure their reputation stands. Some employers who are less reputable such as Wetherspoon's decided to terminate all of their employees' contracts now face bad publicity for doing so at such a desperate time. The pub chain said that they could not afford to pay the 43,000 staff during COVID-19 until the company was reimbursed for their wages by the government (Davies, 2020).

Bluestone has employees working from home and has given them VPN access to do so. This has enabled some admin duties to continue including the creation of a staff survey to understand how staff feel about how Bluestone have communicated with them and to understand if anyone faces any challenges when they return to work. This will give Bluestone some essential information and enable us to put measures in place such as health and safety policies; there has been a health and safety policy implemented to protect staff who are currently working on site.

As for our guests; they are being communicated to via our Sales team who are offering to rearrange their breaks and refund the difference if the new break is a lower price, but ultimately giving refunds if the guest requests it. The bluestone team is trying to maintain its relationship with its customers whilst this pandemic continues by being as flexible as possible. Bluestone is still trying to bring in some revenue to allow staff to be paid and to minimize the impact that this is having on the business.

Some holiday parks such as Parkdean Resorts are not so flexible with their customers. Some customers have paid up to £5,000 this year and won't get refunds despite not being able to visit their holiday homes; Parkdean resorts wrote to their caravan owners on 14 May 2020 to confirm this (Hughes, 2020). This news has been shared 397 times so far on Facebook and means that they will face criticism about how they have treated their customers. This is an issue for Parkdean as customer may choose not to renew their memberships next year and go elsewhere; it may also be off-putting for any potential customers.

When leisure facilities are allowed to reopen as usual and with many people likely to choose not to go abroad anytime soon, they may seek a holiday in the UK such as Bluestone. The way leisure companies have treated their staff and customers during this pandemic may have an impact on their visitor levels as people are more likely to want to visit somewhere reputable and that haven't been disloyal or unethical during this crisis.

Bibliography

Davies, R., 2020. *JD Wetherspoon Denies 'Abandoning' Staff In Coronavirus Crisis*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/mar/24/wetherspoons-denies-abandoning-staff-in-coronavirus-crisis>> [Accessed 24 May 2020].

Hughes, M., 2020. *Caravan Owners Who Paid Thousands In Site Fees This Year Won't Get Refunds*. [online] walesonline. Available at: <<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/parkdean-caravans-lockdown-wales-fees-18288048>> [Accessed 24 May 2020].