

The human resources professional

Task 2

Well-being



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Executive summary

The aim of this report is to explore the key concept of employee's well-being as it affects the work of everyone in a company. Well-being is a critical part of Human Resource Management and ought to be considered in the most effective way by HR teams. This report helps those responsible for staff's satisfaction and employees' performance. Employees' management must be the process of getting people to do their best to achieve the desired result.



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I. Introduction

The term “human resources” is used to describe the organisation responsible for managing resources related to employees. Indeed, there is a human resources department in each company who’s the role is to manage employees and *“it is a comprehensive and coherent approach to the employment and development of people”* (Armstrong, 2014). Furthermore, human resource management (HRM) is responsible for the organisation design and development, learning and development, performance and reward, recruiting and staffing, ensure that every employee is paid correctly and on time but also services that enhance the well-being of employees (Armstrong, 2014). HRM involves increasing the effectiveness of an organisation and its business performance related to how employees are working and how are they feeling about their job. Well-being is a critical part of HRM and through this report, how HR department cares about their employees will be described throughout a critical review of employees’ well-being at UniEx, a UK Higher Education Institute. This university is one of the best in the UK regarding its high-quality education and its devotion to pushing the minds of its students to their fullest potential. It is located in different parts of the UK and there are around 10,000 students. Students dream of completing a Master’s degree in this university but this can be achieved only if teachers and university’s employees feel good at work and are motivated.

II. What is employee well-being and why is it important?

A. Definition and work environment

First, employee well-being in the workplace can be described as *“creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation”* (CIPD, 2014). Moreover, the CIPD believes *“that employee well-being at work initiatives need to balance the needs of the employee with those of the organisation”* (O’Donnell, 2014). A person who feels good at work will be happier in its life because well-being at work is an important aspect of life. That’s why, the work environment must be considered as the most important thing in a company regarding the design of jobs, the working conditions, how the needs of people are considered and how employees are treated by their employers and their co-workers (Armstrong, 2014, p443). The practice of employee well-being means to create a satisfactory work environment which deals with issues affecting people (Armstrong, 2014, p443). UniEx’s managers must ensure that their employees remain happy and motivated at work because, as a result, *“a happy workforce is a productive workforce”* (MorganLovell, 2019). Maintain a good level of well-being in a company is a big challenge for managers. Work conditions and work environment is impacting productivity and well-being. Therefore, according to CIPD (2018), *“promoting well-being can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive.”* Managers must provide a good quality of working life and make the workplace as “the place to be”. Regarding UniEx, its success depends upon the energy and enthusiasm of its employees. For example, Cardiff University is one of the UK’s most innovative and successful universities through its employees’ well-being (Cardiff University, 2019).

B. Impact on people

As said before, in order to increase the organisation’s performance and to ensure that all tasks are done on time, managers must treat people right which means *“recognising them as individuals with*

different needs and wants" (Armstrong, 2014, p448). Indeed, in a team group, there are a lot of different people with different skills and knowledge but also with a different life situation. One of the most important tasks is to adjust the lifestyle of everybody in order to create a positive work environment. This work-life balance should allow employees to satisfy their non-work activities. Managers should consider that flexible work is possible (part-time working for employees with young kids for example) because it is the most practical solution to establishing an effective work-life balance (Armstrong, 2014, p450). This work-life balance enhances employees' engagement because it shows that managers are considering employees' needs and situations. Regarding the University, managers can allow teachers to have a flexible schedule according to their living conditions if they have young children for example which will not impact students' performance. Moreover, according to The Sunday Times best companies to work for 2019, rank 1 which is Connect Catering has the highest levels of workplace well-being because "people here have the right balance between work and home life (81%, top again), and their health does not suffer because of their job (86%, also unbeaten)" (The Sunday Times, 2019).

Secondly, managers should be aware of different factors that influence employees' behaviour and therefore performance as motivation, commitment and engagement (Armstrong, 2014, p167). A good workplace with well-being issues considered as the most important thing will allow employers to keep their employees motivated. According to Armstrong (2014, p169), motivation is *"the force that energizes, directs and sustains behaviours and high performance is achieved by well-motivated people"*. Motivation is enhanced by job design which means that all jobs should provide complexity, variety and skill to engage the employee's abilities (Katz, 1964). Job satisfaction *"is the attitudes and feelings that people have about their jobs"* (Armstrong, 2014, p168) and this makes a direct impact on individual performance. Job satisfaction is in relation to the purpose of work for each employee. Keep a workforce motivated and engaged is a very big aspect of well-being and it is related to the quality of

supervision. That's why the company's reputation is related to that and regarding the University, will make students want to benefit from the quality of the teachers' courses. Employee engagement which is *"the extent to which an employee's personal goals and interests align with the vision and goals of the company at which they are employed"* (SnackNation, 2018) can allow an organisation to thrive. Therefore, well-being impacts commitment which represents *"the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, an organisation"* (Armstrong, 2014, p185). Commitments refer to attachment and loyalty which means to employers keep all employees in the organisation. Retention is also an important part of well-being issues. If University's employees are leaving, people will not want to apply to it.

Thirdly, well-being at work is stress and mental health issue. According to Caver, Davenport & Nyce (2015), *"a healthy and happy workforce can reduce costs by more than \$1,600 per employee, with reduced leave days caused by a disability or unplanned sickness"* (Forbes, 2017). Work is a major part of people's life because it is where they spend much of their time and where everybody makes social relations. Indeed, a toxic work environment can be very bad for employees' mental health and bring stress, anxiety or depression. It can affect their health with physical illnesses like hypertension or cardiovascular conditions for example. Poor mental-health will affect the way people think, feel or behave (CIPD, 2018). As evidence, workplaces with a high level of well-being is more productive. Moreover, mental health is *"the way we think and feel and our ability to deal with ups and downs"* (Mentalhealth.org, 2019). Managers should be aware of employees' mental health because it plays an important role in a person's relationships and can affect its potential. Managers should manage stress because excessive stress causes illness and moreover it can result in an inability to achieve with the job's demands which creates more stress, unfortunately (Armstrong, 2014, p446). Thus, *"managing stress effectively is a crucial part of a preventative approach to supporting mental health in the workplace and organisations need to develop an organisational framework for managing the risks to*

people's health from stress" (CIPD, 2018, p10). According to CIPD (2018, p4), mental well-being is *"the ability to cope with the day-to-day stresses of life, work productively, interact positively with others and realise our own potential."* However, the CIPD found that more than four in ten (43%) employees would not feel comfortable disclosing unmanageable stress or poor mental health to their employer or manager (CIPD, 2016). Stressed employees can impact the company's performance, that's why managers should consider this as another important well-being issue. Indeed, *"achieving optimum health and well-being in the workplace is the key to happiness in life and motivation in work"* (Thriveinlife360, 2019). In general, managers ought to manage and organise the workforce in order to make people want to stay in the company through their work and their relationships. That's why the HR department must control the employee's behaviour between them because bullying situation can happen and this is a harassment form which is very corrosive for mental health (Armstrong, 2014, p448). Furthermore, workers need to feel confident to speak to the HR department if they are exposed to a poor mental-health situation.

C. Impact for the organisation

In general, *"good health and well-being can be a core enabler of employee engagement and organisational performance"* (CIPD, 2019). Indeed, an effective working environment is delivering mutual benefit to people and organisations. As said before, a happy and healthy workforce helps to increase the company's performance and ensures competitive advantages. In the case of the University, the success and the development in comparison to the other Universities will be the reflection of the employees' well-being.

Furthermore, many organisations are trying to create a balance between maximising productivity and the risk that their employees may burn out, making costly errors or resigning (CIPD, 2018). Positive work conditions reduce absenteeism and also lower costs because managers don't need to replace missing employees. Absenteeism put a stop to efficiency and impact the performance. Managers

should make people want to stay in the company as long as possible because it's a link with the company's reputation. If people don't feel good, their entourage will have a bad view of the company. As a result, well-being has a direct impact on employee retention. Moreover, a good work environment will make people want to apply to the company. The University's reputation must attract students but also new staff with the best skills to offer the most successful education.

One other reason for investing in well-being is to build a relationship between staff and management team. Good harmony in the company plays an important role in organisation development. Indeed, employees feel confident, happy and healthy with a supportive HR department otherwise this will impact staff satisfaction. If employees feel good, this will impact the relationship with the customer which impact the company. It is very important to create a mutual respect climate in order to improved working relationships (CIPD, 2018).

Despite that some companies don't successes in their staff satisfaction, there are awards to reward companies with supportive management and a good work environment for their employees. Therefore, these companies are rewarded with "investors in people" or "health and well-being award" for example. These awards recognise and celebrate a range of activities and strategies that empower individuals and organisations with an improvement of employees' health (RSPH, 2019).

D. How managers can increase well-being

First, University's managers can improve a workplace environment through the comfort, the temperature, the light and the sustainability for example. This well-being workplace helps people to be comfortable at work and allow them to be motivated and to enjoy their place. Furthermore, employees with disabilities must feel good and don't be disturbed because of their disabilities. For example, in the University' case, the infrastructure must be easy to access for employees or students with a wheelchair.

In order to build strong relationships between employees themselves and employees and management team, activities outside the workplace can be organised. For example, it can be in-house yoga and gym session, healthy snack in vending machines, healthy menu in employee canteen, massage or support to stop smoking (CIPD, 2018). Furthermore, the HR department can deliver a traditional benefits package. For example, Marks & Spencer delivered a well-being package including flexible working and family-friendly policies (CIPD, 2018). UniEX's managers should promote well-being by making people want to apply in the company through all benefits delivered to employees. There are also employees' assistance services within university organisations but managers must not think that is enough and must show to their employees that they care about them. In spite of management team effort, it can happen that people don't succeed to feel good. As a result, there are different services which can help people to deal with their problems. For example, counselling services can be involved and the organisation can provide sick visits with a GP for employees (Armstrong, 2014, p448). Moreover, there are also websites as Explore and Work which can help and also mindfulness and meditation trainings (Mindful.org, 2019).

Thirdly, managers must keep their employees motivated and this can be enhanced by job design which means that jobs should provide complexity and challenge to engage all employees' skills. Moreover, managers should encourage people to be autonomous in order to achieve by themselves their goals (Armstrong, 2014, p170), they should help people to identify which skills and knowledge they can improve and reward them regarding their achievements. People are more likely to be motivated if they are working in a positive environment which is evaluating them for "*what they are and what they do*" (Armstrong, 2014, p181). Implement purpose in every job regarding the University's context can be an effective way. Motivation is one of the most important parts of well-being. UniEX's managers ought to encourage the development of performance management processes and recognise accomplishments. Motivation factor can be financial (Armstrong, 2014, p180).

E. Negative impacts if well-being is not considered

If the HR department doesn't promote well-being, there are a lot of negative impact on the company but also for the employees. A negative environment doesn't make people want to work hence this will impact the business performance. Students will not want to apply to the University while new staff will take other opportunities in other universities. This situation doesn't ensure a competitive advantage because competitors will have advantages in this business situation and the University is going to fail if they don't change. Employees will be unhealthy and unhappy which means that the company will not keep them in the company and it is called a high turnover. Turnover is impacting recruitment because it doesn't attract people to apply in the company. Absenteeism will be high too. Moreover, new recruitment processes are costly and it is not efficient because people will not stay as long as expected in the organisation. Without a well-being promotion, employees are not motivated to work and the mistake risk is important. If well-being is not considered, employees will be unhappy and unhealthy which will increase the stress as explained before. Unfortunately, these risks can be very costly. That's why well-being is a critical part of HRM and the University should consider it.

III. Conclusion

To conclude, well-being is one of the most important things which must be considered by the HR team. Every employee must give their best each day because each day is a great day at work (EngageForSuccess, 2019). Well-being at work is a big challenge for all managers but it is the base of employees' motivation and allow to increase the business performance. Through different methods, well-being makes people want to stay and to apply in the company. These methods are flexible work, good work conditions, benefits packages, health services and activities outside the workplace and rewarding. In order to increase employees' performance and staff's satisfaction, managers must consider the work-life balance as well as possible. If well-being is not considered, it can have a lot of negative impact as unhappy and unhealthy employees which will build a bad reputation to the company. Well-being shows that HRM cares about their employees and ought to be done in the most effective way.

IV. Recommendations

Regarding UniEx, HRM should demonstrate to their employees that all of them are important for the development and the success of the company. If employees don't feel good in their work, UniEx's managers should inform them who they can talk if they have a problem and share some information about different services outside the workplace. Furthermore, the University can organise activities outside the workplace as picnics or mindfulness session in order to build relationships between employees but also between employees and the management team. The HR team must consider all employees situation so they can organise a convention to talk about that altogether. In order to have feedback about how employees feel at work, the HR team can implement a suggestion box. Through this feedback, UniEx's managers can consider the well-being in the most accurate way.

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