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Business & Marketing
2018 - 2019

The Human Resources Professional

Assessment 2 - Wellbeing



May 7th of 2019

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Executive summary

The University X's CEO asked to make a report about wellbeing issues. This report will talk about human resources and business practices in the wellbeing area which has, at work a huge influence on the staff & employees' productivity and therefore, as a result, influences the success of an organisation.

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Introduction

University X is one of the biggest in the UK. They have more than 40 000 students, around 8 000 staff employees including teachers, administration, technical service or suppliers for example, and realise more than £500 million turnovers per year. Uni X needs to improve its wellbeing management and they would like to have more tools to deal with their human resources. Its role is to make sure that every staff and student feel good at work. Let's see in this report within these different parts, what are the main wellbeing issues and how the Uni X could manage its human resources as well as possible.

The first part will introduce the report with a wellbeing definition and a justification for this area choice. The second one will explain why it is important for every organisation to pay attention to their staff and employee wellbeing and not overlooked it. A third part, will talk about how organisations managed it with some practice's examples, on how they reduce staff stress and mental pressure. Then, in a fourth part, the report will explain some university practices regarding to their staff and student wellbeing. To finish, a conclusion will be done including recommendations for the Uni X to help them to improve their staff and student's wellbeing.

I) What is wellbeing?

First of all, what is Wellbeing? There is no single exact definition to define Wellbeing. Harper (2010) says that “*Wellbeing is a good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity*”. This definition explains the main sense of the word but Wellbeing can be evaluated on a different aspect. It refers to the human emotions (whether positive or negative), to the psychological and physical health, to the work, social or even more, to life satisfaction (CDC, 2018). Wellbeing is influenced by many factors such as regular exercise, food and water diet, sufficient sleep, social activity, family and friends circle, belonging sense or safety living environment (Diener, 2009). One of the most wellbeing issues is mental health; it could change from one moment to another. Have a good mental health means to have self-confident, self-esteem, express emotions, have good relationships, feel and work positively or even more manage and adapt the uncertainty (Mind.org.uk, 2013).

So, the positive effects of wellbeing are mostly positive emotions and life satisfaction. When people's wellbeing is measuring, it is called subjective wellbeing. It allows measuring positive or negative level about people's feeling in their life. There are different feeling and emotions like happiness, sadness, work satisfaction, health or hobbies. “*Well-being and life satisfaction significantly improve life within the four areas of health and longevity, work and income, social relations, and societal benefits*”. Unfortunately, the wellbeing can have negative aspects as well. Indeed, some people may be affected by loneliness, social isolation, poor living conditions, poor health situation, debt, unemployment or trauma that affects physical and mental health. Everyone needs to feel better, even if all those negative aspects happened, it is important to keep the positive mood in mind by research support from people around and express when things are not going well (Mind.org.uk, 2013). These are all factors that today influence the human resources within the organisations (Diener & Ryan, 2009). “*Wellbeing is a way to understand what's needed and how best we can all work together to improve our lives in a complex world*” (ONS, 2013).

II) Why is it important within an organisation?

“The concept of well-being at work is an encompassing concept, broader in scope than the notions of physical and mental health. It refers to a general feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment in and through work that goes beyond the absence of health damage” (INSR, 2018). The employees working environment, working conditions, the way they are threatened are important issues. It's a key point for the HR managers to show how they understand and manage their resources and how they make them feels good at work. *“Employers are responsible for creating a good work environment not only because it is their duty to do so but also as a part of the total reward system”* (Armstrong, 2012. p432). Every organisation should look after Wellbeing for their employees. It is one of the most important aspects that should be considerate because it will have a huge influence on organisation performances. Wellbeing influence employee's work, it influences their productivity and at the end, the organisation's success. Armstrong (2012. p432) say that *“it is in the interests of the employers to do so because this will increase committed to the organization and help to establish it as the best place to work”*.

There are consequences by overlooking staff and employee's wellbeing. Disregard their working conditions could create stress, absenteeism, burn out, mental pressure or unproductivity for the employees. Stress is one of the most common factors in work-related ill-being. It causes illness, inability to keep the focus on objectives, reduce working effectiveness and organisational performances. All those factors have a cost for the organisation that loose time and money (Armstrong, 2012. p432).

All these problems are the reason why every organisation needs to have HR team working on *“a well-being policy that contributes to the professional development of the employees but also to the improvement of the working atmosphere within the teams and to the reinforcement of the climate of respect and listening”* (INSR, 2018).

III) How to manage workers Wellbeing?

There is a lot of solutions to improve the Wellbeing at work. The main important thing is to understand how does the Human Resources works and how organisations managed to take their workers and staff needs into consideration. *“Promoting well-being can help prevent stress and create positive working environments where individuals and organisations can thrive. Good health and well-being can be a core enabler of employee engagement and organisational performance”* (CIPD, 2018). There are a lot of advantages by taking into consideration their staff and employees wellbeing to contribute to reduce absence, reduce their pressure, reduce lost work, reduce turn over, improve motivation, improve their work quality, improve their productivity, improve employee engagement or even more, increase organisation loyalty. *“When people are happy and well, a business can thrive and societies flourish”* (CIPD, 2018). The better the staff will work in good conditions, the better they will manage their team which will finally contribute the improve the organisation’s business (Hanbury, 2012; Cauilliez, 2015). There are a lot of ways to improve the organisation wellbeing area such as health promotion, good working environment, manager’s flexibility, keep a good relationship between employees, give career opportunities or change management style. In regard to the stress and pressure at work, some clear solutions exist to reduce it. For example, organisations need to clarify workers roles, make sure that everyone knows about their ways to go, defined reasonable and achievable objectives, offer jobs promotions or propose assistance program to talk with persons about their problems. Moreover, to create a better feeling in the work-life balance, organisations could encourage part time working, homework, flexible working time, annualized working hours or promote work sharing between different members (Armstrong, 2012. p433; 436).

One of the problems that an organisation can meet is the communication between their members. To make it easy, the non-violent communication concept created by Rosenberg. M (2018) is now used by different companies like SoundCloud, Kickstarter, Esty. Those companies have understood that no matter what, the fate of every company depends on the team’s ability to communicate clearly and constructively. It allows changing the way to expression themselves and better listening of people by

talking about observations, feeling, and needs. The dialogue is important issues to express wellbeing. For example, Le Beguec (2019) from the Nous university explains that people feel much better at work when they have the possibility to express themselves and when this space of sharing their ideas is recognizing, this is called the “working together”. The employee feels completely recognize in its abilities and skills and it makes him feels a better worker, more efficient and indeed, the company goes better.

IV) Universities practices

Let’s now have an idea about what are the wellbeing issues from same sector organisations like universities and have some ideas about what Uni X could be inspired in, as far as other systems are compared for staff and students.

Some institutions had set up listening units to help their staff which is the case of the Strasbourg University in France, where stress rate has been very high during a couple of years where the direction found a 10% strong unhappiness at work (Lefevre, 2014). The Montpellier University in France as well propose now free doctor consultation for their students, *“The staff prevention doctor analyses the working conditions. It assessed and prevents the possible impact of professional activity on health. The doctor can go to the student work place and advise about improvement”* (Université de Montpellier).

To improve their student's integration, some universities have a huge volunteering desk. This is the case of Swansea University which offers a wide range of volunteering activities where students can register, give their time and meet people (Swansea.ac.uk, 2019). In Cardiff, to make sure that every student feels good, the university has a counselling and wellbeing service that *“offers a wide range of support, including wellbeing and counselling appointments, interactive workshops, courses, and groups”*. They huge wellbeing politic, they propose a lot of activities such as desk yoga, roof top, physical wellbeing activities or dog & family pet. A student wellbeing service has been created. It’s open from Monday to Friday all day long. It also offers personal development sessions by groups to help students in their personal life. Indeed, they create collective energy support which is essential for a human being. Those

personal development sessions are a time where nothing is asked, students can go and be themselves, be listening, be understanding. They insist on this point by saying it's sometimes helpful to know they are not alone in their difficulties (Study, 2019).

The collective voice Universities UK (2016) and its 136 universities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, have created wellbeing and mental health programme for students. *“The aim of the project is to develop a mental health framework for universities to embed mental health and wellbeing across all university activities”*. They also explain that it's a new challenge for universities because they are welcoming more and more students each year. So, the idea is to create a community of support, to make it official and to make sure that students and staff know that there are spaces and people who are here for them if they need support. They also launch campaign research to establish a more robust evidence base on mental health and wellbeing in higher education in partnership with the IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research. They give the tune, and now most of the universities in the UK recognize the importance of the wellbeing for student and try to make it happen. For some students, maybe, it does no works but at least there is a structure dedicated to this subject and this is a big step toward the « taking care ».

To finish, the York university dedicated a web page on its website to student help wellbeing. They encourage their student to balance studying with other activities or to accept who they are. They also share online mindfulness videos and app to download. For example, one of the app called “Self-help anxiety management” is helping students to manage their anxiety through talking and sharing with others. Another one “stay alive”, is a prevention suicide resource student can use for themselves or others. Through this, the York university officially recognizes the importance of wellbeing and they go further by offering online services to help students (York.ac.uk, 2018).

Conclusion

Regarding all information found in this report, the wellbeing at work is an important issue that might be taking into consideration by every organisation. It allows improving the physical and mental health of the workers that feel better and stay in a good way to be productive and improve the organisation results. To improve their human resources wellbeing management, Uni X can find in the next section some ideas & recommendations about different methods that can be applied to their staff and student wellbeing.

Recommendation

First, physical health, and body expression is a way to reduce stress and work pressure. A Yoga room with a teacher can be good to relax them from their work. The university can also add new sport lessons in addition to what is already existing in order to make accessible to everyone. Music can be a good solution as well to stay in a good mood and relax by putting it in the university's common areas for example. Some organisation proposes fruits to its employees, it could be an issue to propose it in the Uni. Moreover, propose volunteering actions in different associations could be a solution to help students to meet other people, help those who need it and more importantly, spend free time for good actions.

A survey can be organised to collect opinions, to see what are the main thing that comes back often or what can be improved. By keeping this way in mind, another idea could be to establish a “suggestion box”. Everyone can write a suggestion on a paper, put it in the box which could analyse every week or month by the university. The main advantage thanks to this technic is that people can stay anonymous if they want. Some easy solutions exist for the staff wellbeing such as increase wages or job promotions propositions. These are classic solutions but they really have an impact on their work satisfaction feeling and their loyalty to the university that will make them stay longer. In the case of an employee

or a student doesn't feel really good, 1 to 1 therapy could allow to express themselves and talk about problems or difficult situations.

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