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Sent: 11 February 2011 12:50
To: Rebekah
Subject: If your employees love their job, you will love them

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When your employee loves their job, you get the benefits

When your employees are happy at work, you can expect them to:

- go the extra mile - particularly in areas like customer service, or where employees need to be creative, responsive or adaptable
- take pride in their job and showing loyalty towards their line manager, team or organisation

Employee Engagement occurs when employment relations are good. It can be measured by asking employees about their jobs. This can be done for example through an employee satisfaction or attitude survey. Typically you would like to find out:

- levels of trust between employees and managers
- whether the systems for communication and consultation are working and producing accurate results
- if people feel valued, treated fairly and respected
- what issues are preventing people from performing and feeling better

EE involves give and take with employees and employers recognising each other's needs. An employer provides an employee with opportunity for job satisfaction, training, clear objectives, flexible working and work-life balance as well as regular communication and

consultation.

An employee provides their employer with effective performance, understanding of the bigger picture, flexibility, loyalty and motivation resulting in pride in a job well done. Building engagement through trust and good relationships is essential to success. This is backed up by the Macleod Review on employee engagement, commissioned by the government and published in July 2009. It found that:

"there is evidence that improving employee engagement correlates with improving productivity".

Employee engagement can often result in better management of change, higher productivity and employment relations based on mutual trust and co-operation.

With February being the month of love, is it time to implement a relationship in the workplace policy?

A large number of people meet their partners at work. Should people keep quiet or go public? Undisclosed relationships can give rise to conflicts of interest and office gossip. If the relationship is out in the open, there is always the risk of blurring boundaries, which could lead to allegations of poor performance or misconduct.

However, usually a complete ban on workplace romance is unworkable. In a standard workplace setting, it seems impractical to make such a ban stick, even if it were desirable. A relationship in the Workplace+policy would be difficult to implement, but could address the potential problems that a failed or budding romance could impose.

One solution that is to impose an obligation on all workers to tell their employer if they form an intimate relationship with a colleague. If a relationship develops, those involved are expected to sign a contract confirming that the relationship is consensual and that neither will bring a claim for sexual harassment against the other if the relationship ends. However, such a contract will not stop a claim being brought, though it may help an employer defend such a claim. As an employer, you cannot force employees to sign such a contract as the Human Rights Act confers the right to respect for family and private life.

Maybe the fairest solution is to avoid treating intimate workplace relationships as a special case, but to assess the risks they pose, like any other workplace risk. For example, it may be appropriate to look at the risk of conflicts of interest in the organisation as a whole, and to address them in that context. Beware of a policy that could involve indirect sex

discrimination . for example, by assuming that it is the more junior member of staff who should move jobs or resign if a relationship starts, or ends badly.

Finally take a look at your electronic communications policy. A well-written policy will address excessive use of e-mails, the internet and social networking software at work. It will also look at the content of electronic communications to make sure they do not cause offence. This general guidance can be checked to make sure it is wide enough to cover the kinds of communications that lovers may be tempted to use, particularly at this time of year.

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