

Straight Talking

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Your staff - your business

With Christmas behind us and the economic climate still far from certain, it can be difficult as a manager or business employer to maintain staff morale. If service is fundamental to your business however, motivating staff is critical to success. Ultimately, satisfied employees deliver better customer service.

Not all managers are born leaders however and if employees are disenfranchised, very often the root cause lies at the top. Recently and during the Christmas season in particular, I have observed some staggering examples of mistreatment, resulting in resentment and unhappiness for the affected individual, with the potential to lead to eventual burnout due to stress and ill health.

So what makes a good leader and which are the potential traps to avoid?

The right fit

First and foremost it's important to create a good working environment. Employers spend significant time and money to attract the right people so providing an incentive for them to stay makes good commercial sense.

Space to grow

A good leader provides meaningful work and allows staff the freedom to learn and develop their skills. Failure to delegate and constant interference

not only holds employees back but results in deep frustration when they are unable to perform their job due to unreasonable restrictions.

Clear Direction

To avoid misunderstandings, it is important to ensure all your staff are on board with the company's mission and values and have a clear understanding of deliverables and targets. Confusion can lead to dissatisfaction and disappointment on both sides.

Reward

Reward systems are important but it's not all about money. Recognising individual worth and allowing staff to extend themselves is equally important when it comes to happiness and job fulfillment.

Respect

Recession is no excuse to treat staff poorly. Regard them as an asset rather than a replaceable commodity and they will still be with you when the market improves. It's easy to get a reputation as a bad employer, especially in a local marketplace and those that transgress may find themselves up against stiff competition or unable to find the right people.

As a leader, your job is to inspire and motivate your staff, particularly when times get tough. Look at any successful business and you will find employees at the heart of it. So get out there and Manage!

