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A Manager's Duty of Care

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A Manager's Duty of Care

- Our workplaces are full of problems, to put it lightly. According to the World Health Organization, 'Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse and stress, are common, affecting individuals, their families and co-workers, and the broader community. In addition, they have a direct impact on workplaces through increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased costs.'

A Manager's Duty of Care

- As 60-70 percent of people with common mental disorders were in work, according to various experts and governmental studies, it is up to each company and its individual owners and managers to do something about these crucial and debilitating problems at work.

A Manager's Duty of Care

- The principle that investing in support for employees who may be struggling is not just morally correct, but a financial imperative, according to experts.
- Also, you must remember that your staff, quite rightly so, are the single most valuable asset your organization has. This definitely means that when they work and travel for your company, you need to be assured of their safety at all times, to the best of your abilities.

A Manager's Duty of Care

- In general terms, a manager's or professional's **duty of care** responsibility is a legal, and many times, professional obligation, which is imposed on an individual manager or professional, requiring them to adhere to a standard of reasonable care while performing their duties and avoid any acts that could foreseeably harm others (organizations, societies, people, environment, etc.).

A Manager's Duty of Care

In practical terms, duty of care means that every party to a contract must comply well according to the rules included in it as well as other relevant industry and state laws and regulations on ethics, health and safety.

A Manager's Duty of Care

The same goes for an accountant incorrectly maintaining financial transactions and preparing company accounts;
Auditors, in confirming the financial statements of a company;
Board and managers in managing well their corporate resources, etc.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

Managers have a duty of care to their employees. This means that they should take reasonable steps to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing. Demonstrating concern for the physical and mental health of your workers should not just be seen as a legal duty - there is a clear business case, too.



It can be a key factor in building trust and reinforcing your commitment to your employees, and can help improve staff retention, boost productivity and pave the way for greater employee engagement.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

Legally, employers must abide by relevant health and safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care. They also have a moral and ethical duty not to cause, or fail to prevent physical or psychological injury, and must fulfil their responsibilities with regard to personal injury and negligence claims.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

- Take a moment, if you please, and think about the ways you currently manage and cope with wellness and occupational stress in the life of your employees in your business organization. Your wellness and stress audit for your business, if you have, can help you identify them.
- Are your wellness and occupational stress coping strategies healthy or unhealthy, helpful or unproductive? Have they improved the wellness of your employees and alleviated occupational stress in a meaningful way?

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

- Unfortunately, many board members, executives, professionals and managers cope with wellness and occupational stress issues and problems in ways that compound the problem or have no specific practical plans to manage workplace wellness for the business organizations they lead and manage. Lately, various medical facilities offer various health services in this regard but not in a holistic way as they only deal with the person only and not with both persons and workplaces.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

- Given the tremendous pressure of stakeholders and the markets, in many cases, corporate executives are too busy with the everyday operational problems. As they have to perform more and more and better all the time, they concentrate mostly on these issues.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

As these have to do with business transactions, deals and implementation of strategies, they forget or do not pay much attention to the human conditions or mental issues existing or created within their business organization due to the pressures to excel.

What Responsibilities Does a Business Have Toward Its Employees?

Thus, several problems come to forth including anxiety, occupational stress and other mental issues for their staff and themselves. Then productivity and corporate results are diminishing more and more.



Before they know it, they have a problem on their hands.

So what is the solution?

- There are various solutions to resolving this issue for business executives: From bringing in business consultants to employing psychologists, taking surveys, assessing your human strategy, etc.



- My recommendation to you in this regard is to consider using the following plan to managing your workplace wellness better and improving the wellbeing of your employees.

Workplace Wellness Management Plan

The **objective** of this strategic action plan is to present a set of steps you may use: to establish your workplace wellness framework; and to design, develop, implement and evaluate wellness actions both for you as well as for your enterprise (private business, public or non-profit organization).

Action 1: Audit.

Scope the wellness issues of your business. Identify the personal and wellness issues at both levels: At your personal level and the workplace level.

THIS ENTAILS:

- 1. Taking a wellness and stress audit for your own personal purposes**
- 2. Conducting a wellness and stress audit for your organization.**

Action 2: External Analysis.

1. Analyze and document the external environment.
 2. Assign a team of staff to research and inform management and the board about the wellness, health and other related safety and occupational health standards, rules and guidelines that your company must comply with.

Action 3: Conduct Wellness Feasibility Study.

1. Analyze all above data.
2. Determine the nature and extent of the problems to be solved by the Wellness System.
3. Determine the feasibility of any proposed development (technical, operational, economic and social, etc.).

Action 3: Conduct Wellness Feasibility Study.

4. Propose a general plan of action to solve the problem.
5. Detail the various alternative wellness solutions and the resources (funds, people, systems, policies) required to implement one of them.
6. Submit all these to the executive board and management for approval.

Action 4: Project plan.

Establish your workplace wellness project plan with a wellness budget to guide the wellness team in their efforts to implement the chosen wellness solution for your company. This plan should have two components:
An annual plan and a 5-year plan.

Step 2: Operate your workplace wellness management team

You operate your workplace team by executing,
in the most effective way

Action 1: Assign project manager or team leader.

Action 2: Appoint and develop terms of reference of the Wellness Committee.

1. The purpose of the committee should be 'to promote and support wellness strategies related to the company's physical and social environment, help practices and personal resources that lead to improved physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of employees, both in the workplace and in their private lives'.
2. The committee should consist of a coordinator, who acts as chair, and representatives of each business function of your business organization.

Action 3: Define the team, duties and the roles within the wellness team.

1. Assign specific responsibilities and performance objectives.
 2. Develop and issue project schedule and reporting mechanisms.
3. Educate team on all factors, issues, standards and regulations related to wellness, occupational stress and ways to improve the mental wellbeing of your employees and managers at your organization's workplace.

Action 3: Define the team, duties and the roles within the wellness team.

4. Build commitment and trust by valuing the contribution of each member of the team.
5. Build empathy for each person's challenges.
6. Ensure the competence of the whole wellness team, as well as each member.
7. Empower the wellness team by allowing the members to work within the guidelines with each other to accomplish the goals.

Action 3: Define the team, duties and the roles within the wellness team.

8. Ensure that they provide support to all business managers implementing the wellness strategies.
9. Collect the wellness performance data and issue reports to all concerned.
10. Review and make recommendations on wellness and stress issues.
11. Ensure that a mechanism is established to resolve conflicts.

Step 3: Establish your workplace wellness management framework

You establish your workplace wellness framework by executing, in the most effective way

Action 1: Envision.

Set clear vision, mission and values for the wellness project and its expectations.

Action 2: Top Wellness Support.

Ensure that Board and Management responsibilities are well defined including the establishment of a Wellbeing Steering Committee.

Action 3: Board Room Improvement.

Develop and execute a Corporate Board Room Wellbeing Improvement Plan.

Action 4: Wellness Policies and Controls.

Establish a Wellness Policy, an Occupational Stress Policy, an Occupational Health Records Privacy Policy and an Occupational Health Records Management System.

Action 5: Education.

Educate your wellness team and the leaders, including supervisors, managers, and executives of the company on your workplace mental health strategy and the wellness plans and actions you will implement. Also, make them aware of the philosophical concepts of ancient Greek wisdom and other approaches (e.g. The Mindfulness Approach) for wellness and occupational stress management.

Action 6: Institute Principles.

Review and finalize the corporate philosophical principles for managing occupational stress for your company. These philosophical principles will include Temperance, Faith, Justice, Harmony, Friendship, Kalokagathia (Goodness and Kindness) and Courage (**The Seven Principles**).

Action 7: Establish wellness goals.

Establish wellness goals, such as Improve employee physical health; Improve employee mental health; Improve employee retention; Improve employee productivity; and Decrease employee absenteeism.

Action 8: Establish and operate a wellness data collection process.

You should establish a data gathering process using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. More details in step 7.

Action 9: Ensure Communication.

Inform team members of the desired outcomes and measures of success. Invite each member to be a part of the team and communicate the goals and why they are selected.

Action 10: Assess Wellness Framework.

Finalize your wellness framework by ensuring that: a wellness organization exists; it is staffed properly; guidelines, rules and regulations have been researched and actions taken to comply accordingly; wellness responsibilities, policies and procedures have been enacted, and wellness goals and objectives have been promulgated and communicated to all relevant parties.

Step 4: Develop and Implement your workplace wellness strategies

To improve workplace wellness and reduce occupational stress at the personal and business levels you require specific action plans. These can be accomplished by executing, in the most effective way

Action 1: Review Approach.

Review the results of the wellness feasibility study, developed and executed according to the wellness project plan and the results of the previous steps to ensure that you are on the right track.

Action 2: Develop Wellness Strategies.

To construct good strategies check to see that the goals established for workplace wellness are still valid. Only then, you may develop your four wellness improvement strategies as described below.

Step 5: Establish your workplace wellness communications

You establish your workplace wellness communications by executing, in the most effective way

Action 1: Develop Policy.

Develop a wellness communication policy and associated procedures. Complement these with the following:

- 1. Ensure clarity and accountability for all types of communications.**
- 2. Ensure that the team shares information and develops an open mind.**
- 3. The design and development aspects are part of this phase (Development). The implementation aspects are part of the fifth phase (Evaluation).**

Action 2: Wellness Guidelines.

Develop and issue Wellness Guidelines. Their full contents could be included in a company newsletter and uploaded on the company website. A summary, as listed below, could be included in company posters and placed in the offices of the company to remind all employees and inspire them to take actions on their own for their wellness.

Step 6: Monitor and evaluate your workplace wellness activities

You monitor and evaluate your workplace wellness activities and results by executing, in the most effective way

Action 1: Wellness Monitoring.

Establish regular monitoring by developing your **Workplace Wellness Monitoring Plan** and execute its actions during the implementation actions of each strategy.

Action 2: Wellness Evaluation.

Review and evaluate all wellness actions, results and progress. Identify issues, and resolve problems.

Step 7: Manage your workplace wellness performance

You manage your workplace wellness performance by executing, in the most effective way

Action 1: Establish and operate a data collection process.

- 1. You should establish a data gathering process using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.**
- 2. The degree of detail required will depend on the complexity of your workplace, the goals of your business and the socio-economic environment in which you operate.**
- 3. Any collection of data should comply with all privacy requirements, legislation, collective agreements, and corporate policies.**

Action 1: Establish and operate a data collection process.

- 4. You should keep a record of the data collected and of the methods used in data collection.**
- 5. Where required by regulation, you should also share the data collected and related reports with authorized parties. Where data is shared, confidentiality of all persons shall be respected according to privacy laws.**

Action 1: Establish and operate a data collection process.

- 6. Data sources may include: existing company policies and plans pertinent to psychological health and safety in the workplace; job descriptions; job demands analysis; rates of absenteeism; rates of turnover; disability records and costs; benefit claims; workers compensation data; review of incident reports, complaints and investigations; health risk assessment data; laws and regulations, including human rights; etc.**

Action 1: Establish and operate a data collection process.

- 7. This process should feed your Wellness Management Report and your Worksite Health Scorecard.**

Action 2: Establish a workplace wellness performance policy.

- 1. Develop your workplace wellness performance policy for your wellness team members.**
- 2. Link this policy with corresponding corporate performance system.**

Action 2: Establish a workplace wellness performance policy.

- 3. Award your wellness team members when performance targets related to stress management and wellness are met.**
- 4. Manage and improve performance issues related to stress management and wellness.**

Conclusion

As I described above the **objective** of this strategic action plan is to present a set of steps you may use: to establish your workplace wellness framework; and to design, develop, implement and evaluate wellness actions for both you as well as your enterprise (private business, public or non-profit organization).

Conclusion

Before you go ahead and implement the actions described above, you also need a 'why' or in other words, a reason to focus your wellness efforts to the best possible results. You need a workplace wellness model, detailed next, for that purpose.

Workplace Wellness Model

Ancient Greek wisdom is my best bet and guidance here. Aristotle defined the aspects of a happy, well spirited ('eudemonic' from 'eudemonia') or flourishing life as follows:

- 1. Happiness is the ultimate end and purpose of human existence.**
- 2. Happiness is not pleasure, nor is it a virtue. It is the exercise of virtue.**
- 3. Happiness is a goal and not a temporary state.**

Workplace Wellness Model

- 4. Happiness is something final and self-sufficient and is the end of action.**

- 5. Happiness is the perfection of human nature. Since man is a rational animal, human happiness depends on the exercise of his reason.**

Workplace Wellness Model

- 6. Happiness depends on acquiring a moral character, where one displays the virtues of courage, generosity, justice, friendship, and citizenship in one's life. These virtues involve striking a balance or 'mean' between an excess and a deficiency.**
- 7. Happiness requires intellectual contemplation, for this is the ultimate realization of our rational human capacities.**

Workplace Wellness Model

Based on this happiness or flourishing aspects I constructed the following model of workplace wellness, which I have used in various assignments and which I am proposing for your use in improving your personal, and workplace wellness.

Workplace Wellness Model

This workplace wellness model is supported by the four strategies and the seven principles (temperance, faith, justice, friendship, harmony, kalokagathia (goodness, kindness) and courage), energized by the three sources (Soul, Supreme Being and Society) and inspired by ancient Greek wisdom.

Workplace Wellness Model

This workplace wellness model has four dimensions: **Believing;**
Bonding; Belonging; and **Benefiting.**

Dimension 1: Believe.

Believe (or have faith) in God, nature, yourself, your family, your company, your associates, your community, your country and your values and beliefs.

Dimension 2: Bond.

Bond (or unite) with God, nature, your friends, your family, your associates, your community, your company, your country and your profession.

Workplace Wellness Model

This workplace wellness model has four dimensions: **Believing;**
Bonding; Belonging; and **Benefiting.**

Dimension 3: Belong.

Belong (or attach) to your family, your nation, your company, your associates, your community and your country.

Dimension 4: Benefit.

Benefit (be of service or be good to) nature, yourself, your family, your company, your associates, your community, your country, your nation, others less advantaged, and your friends.

In closing, it may be wise, as managers, board directors and professionals, to note the following ancient Greek wisdom sayings:

By Democritus:

“Our soul is the base of our happiness' and 'Happiness to men is not the result of having money, nor strong bodies, but reason and intelligence”.

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