HOW TO......IMPROVE YOUR WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY

There are some simple things small and medium organisations can do, and they don't include time and motion assessments; but first, let's be clear about a few things:

Don't confuse productivity with effort! Productivity is the ratio of the output of goods and services to the number of labour hours required to produce that output. Effort is simply an attempt.

High productivity generates business growth and all the good things that come with that. Low productivity (Yes - you've guessed it), will, over time, destroy a business and the people in it.

Some organisations are bucking the trend and have increased their productivity. They are the ones that have reacted quickly, are still investing in training, and are embracing the digital world.

THE GOOD NEWS - there are some simple things you can do.

1. Productivity measures

Many organisations measure performance but not productivity, so won't even know whether they have an issue until it's too late. You don't need a complicated measure – but you need to be able to know if you are getting better or worse. Remember - productivity is the ratio of the output of goods and services to the number of labour hours required to produce that output so this is what you ned to measure.

2. Understand the skills in the business

And utilise them. By 2020 more than half the people in work in the UK will have a degree or equivalent. Clever employers will be thinking about how they can use such skills as a competitive advantage, but before they can they will be making sure they understand the skills their people have. Taking this approach may also mean they don't have to invest in extra training. Is this something you can do too?

3. Investing in training

Consider the business case for investing in training, especially of a vocational nature. This can increase the skill base, enabling the business to respond and adapt more quickly than its competitors. Evidence shows that businesses that stop investing in training become less productive than those who continue to invest.

4. Ensure effective workforce planning.

Too many employees?? Not enough?? Are they working in the wrong place at the wrong time and/or on the wrong activity?? Check if you have the right people in the right place at the right time. If you don't have the right number of people you may need to recruit, but if you do it may be a case of seeing if your employees will change their hours or learn new skills.

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5. Effective people management frameworks

If you haven't done so already implement people management policies and procedures, and make sure they encourage and reward high performance.

Examples include:

- ✓ Clear job descriptions so that people know what their job involves

- ✓ Training so that people have the core skills they need to do their job well

- ✓ Appraisals and personal development reviews so your employees know how well they are doing and where they can do better

- ✓ Simple recognition policies and performance-related bonus schemes so you can keep your employees engaged, even during the hard times

- ✓ Good communication channels so that your employees know how the business is doing, what the targets are and what else needs to be done to achieve these

The list can be endless, and you don't necessarily need a complicated framework – just something that encourages and engages your employees to work well. If you do have these in place, the next question you should be asking is whether they are supporting or stifling productivity. Frameworks that are too complex can prevent productivity by taking up too much time to understand and implement.

6. Keep an eye on the workplace culture

Your 'culture' is reflected in the physical environment in which people are working, the systems you use, and the way people in your organisation behave, and all are key to achieving business growth. In simple terms, to make sure your culture is not a barrier to productivity check the following:

- o Is your workplace well-organised, safe and clean?
- o Are your processes effective, efficient and are they being following?
- o What's leadership like? Is it engaging or controlling?
- o What are the core beliefs and values (implied or clear) like?

If any one of these is not quite right, it's likely productivity is lower than it has to be. Changing organisational culture is not easy but you may not need to change all the ingredients to make a difference.

I hope you found this guide useful. Contact me at karen@KDHRSolutions.com if you would like more information.