

Pathways News



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Oh no ! Not the dreaded Christmas office party

While it's important staff can relax and enjoy a Christmas party as a reward for their hard work, you should emphasise to all staff that it is a work function and appropriate behaviour is expected.

Hold a meeting and go through relevant workplace policies, including bullying and harassment policies, in the weeks leading up to the function and explain the possible repercussions of breaching those policies or ignoring directions from managers on the night.

Ensure safe travel options are available to all staff and be sure to set a start and finish time for the function and explain to all staff that any extra celebrations outside of that time will be at their own initiative and not endorsed by their employer.

Set a limit to any bar tab and reinforce the requirement for employees to drink responsibly. If the work party is off site, do not assume that because it is a licensed venue the bar staff will comply with their responsible service of alcohol requirements. You will need to ensure they comply otherwise the employer could be held vicariously liable for any incidents that occur.

Thanks to CCIWA for this article.
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Let's appraise how we appraise

It's official - the Annual Performance Appraisal is dead ! In modern workplaces, there is perhaps no task in management that is so badly handled when it is tackled. More commonly though it is avoided as much as possible. *Performance management* may also be called 'performance appraisal' or 'staff appraisal' and refers to a key responsibility of middle management, namely, that employees carry out their duties efficiently, effectively, and completely. Many middle managers who are line managers of a group of employees feel very uncomfortable with assessing the performance of these employees especially when this involves criticism, adverse reports, or applying sanctions for poor performance (e.g. withholding wage or salary increments, or, moving employees to other jobs). This apprehension felt by middle managers is intensified when the assessment of employees is largely a one-off meeting held once a year. Of course, the apprehension felt by employees is also intensified by this model. Quite understandably, such meetings cause great stress and tension in both parties. Managers may "dump" a whole lot of criticisms on their employees at the one session which the employees weren't expecting. The latter therefore become defensive and resentful and thereafter, little that is productive subsequently emerges from the meetings. Worse, these disastrous meetings set the tone for the working relationships between managers and employees for the next twelve months. So, how can this all be done better ?

Continuous conversations

The shift away from annual appraisals has given rise to continuous performance management. The approach entails regular, focused conversations between managers and employees, and aligns the worker's individual goals with the overall business goals of the employing organisation. What makes the process so different? Feedback doesn't only come from the top down. Managers don't have a monopoly of the review system, but colleagues and clients can also comment on an employee's performance. Performance data is collected frequently and relayed in bite-sized form during informal contacts as opposed to the old employee review that unloads a year's (or half a year's) worth of performance data in one sitting.

Let's go halves

Middle or muddling along management ?

For many, if not most, middle managers, their first experience of middle management arrived suddenly and unexpectedly rather than as part of an orderly career path. Typically, lower level employees are asked to act up at short notice "just for the time being." These 'time beings' often extend over long periods as senior managers avoid the sometimes protracted process of appointing a permanent manager by competitive and merit selection, especially in the public sector. Unless the acting manager was extremely lucky, little time and effort was expended in training and preparation for the complexities of middle management.

If you or a colleague are one of these 'accidental managers', help has arrived in the form of our one-day course *You'll Just Have To Manage*. This course is a survival kit for first time middle managers. It would also be useful for those lower level employees considering middle management roles.

Topics covered include managing and motivating staff, information flows in an organisation, know how to initiate and manage change, the principles of performance management, and the politics of management.

In the last few years, Pathways ETS has developed two half-day workshops, each one addressing key workplace and personal skills needs.

Our *Risky Business* © workshop introduces some key principles of, and strategies for, risk management. Topics covered include how to create risk-smart staff and employees and a risk-smart work environment; how to compile an appropriate set of risk management practices tailored to your organisation; and, how to identify and assess risk areas associated with the policies, plans and operations of your organisation.

All In Good Time © is a half-day workshop about managing your time, whether in the workplace, in your business, or in your personal life. This workshop is a must for anyone having to meet deadlines, make decisions between competing tasks, balance demands from your boss and your clients, or squeeze a little more from the working day. Topics covered include myths about time management, prioritising a schedule of tasks, faster emptying of your pending tray, and creating time and space for yourself during the working day.

Flexibility is our keynote. We can deliver either or both of these workshops at your choice of location. We travel anywhere in the Great Southern and sometimes beyond. We can customise any of our courses and workshops to meet your particular requirements. Add to all this our commitment to after-course support and our no-quibble refund guarantee if clients are not satisfied with the training.

Email : pathwaysets@westnet.com.au , phone 9840 8817 or mobile 0411 844 420 for more information or to arrange a appointment to discuss how we can help your business or organisation. See our full suite of courses and workshops at www.pathwaysets.com.au