

IN THE SPOTLIGHT HOUSE OF CARDS

In HR your best efforts – established over many years – could come tumbling down within months.

That's because the HR function is not just a department. It's effectively the entire organisation and everyone has a role to play in the deployment and management of people.

That's why we are focusing on line managers in this issue of insideHR, because without their commitment and experience your future plans could end in an instant.

This is a big issue and the manager-staff relationship has become something of a talking point in recent months.

The Chartered Institute of Management recognises the problem, pointing towards "high profile management failures".

A report from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills this summer also suggests the performance of UK line managers is lagging behind global standards: to the point where 43% of managers say their own managers are substandard.

The causal effect of good or bad line manager practice can be extreme.

See how employee wellbeing (page 3) can multiply productivity threefold. Then find out how line managers working effectively in diverse workforces (pages 4 and 5) can irradiate bias and stereotype behaviour... so they can concentrate on ability, not skin colour, sexual orientation or a multitude of additional "differences".

In this issue, we also interview Peter Cheese, the new head of the CIPD. See why youth unemployment is his big issue for entering the fold.

There are some meaty topics in this issue of insideHR. We hope they will provide you with new insights and the inspiration to help your career in HR go further.

Best wishes



Matt Castle

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Social media has given employees at all levels the power to speak out. What does this mean for the people at the top?

Michael Silverman

Digitalised arenas for social interaction are becoming ever more fundamental areas of everyday human experience. As a result, how personal and social relationships develop, and how people come to acquire new information and take direction, are drastically changing.

The societal transition into the age of mass transparency has not only had implications on private interaction and communication, it has also altered how people operate and feel in the workplace. And as digital platforms continue to affect interpersonal processes on every level of human life, organisations are inevitably being urged to adapt their internal systems of working, collaboration and managing tasks.

Recent digital innovations, particularly the advancement of social technologies, have enabled dialogue and participation to reach new heights. This means expectations for more democratic, autonomous and inclusive organisational working practices, and leadership styles, have emerged. As a response, many organisations now have to adopt more social approaches to management, requiring leaders to willingly empower those with less power.

It is within this context that the dynamic between employees and their leaders is facing growing pressure to be renewed. But the extent to which new ways of participatory work are possible - and whether the full advantages of internal social media platforms can actually be achieved - is largely dependent upon how leaders demonstrate a commitment to change.

Information shared through social media networks is largely self-regulated, which stands starkly in contrast to many traditional organisational cultures that prioritise meticulous

control and centralisation. In other words, the question becomes: how can leaders become successful in the digital era and how can HR intervene to make it happen?

It's clear that leaders need to do things differently. But here's the problem because their lack of skills and awareness about social media often stifles their view of tangible organisational benefits, preventing them from driving change and making them dismissive and distrusting.

Social media should be led by the business and this means that leaders must be involved. That said, unlike many organisational initiatives, leaders do not necessarily need to own or champion community collaboration. They just need to "get it", maintain a close eye on the business benefits and support the approach.

In terms of leadership, this means finding an approach that fits with the concept of Leadership 2.0 (e.g. embracing change, being open to experimentation, demonstrating transparency, working collaboratively and creating dialogue).

The landscape of daily working life is changing as a cause of technology, and as such should be seen as an opportunity for organisational growth and change.

If organisations are to prosper in the world of 2.0, internal cultures and working systems must be responsive to the changes. They must also accept that technology is revolutionising the lives of employees and customers and recognise they must act accordingly to accommodate this.

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