

In this Newsletter we're looking at ensuring a smooth return to work for those who've been on extended leave, and the Peopletopia Employee Engagement Strategy Workshops.

Finding it tough getting back to work after your holiday? Imagine returning after a year of leave....

So, you've hopefully managed to take a much enjoyed summer holiday. But how did it feel to return to work after a two-week break? Stressful? Chaotic? Two days back at work, did you feel as if you'd never been away? We hope that wasn't the case for you, but it's an altogether too common scenario. If it's been stressful returning after a brief holiday, imagine the trepidation with which people may return to work after an extended period of leave. Many people who have taken extended leave (for example

maternity leave or sickness absence), return with a mixture of excitement and fear. Excitement to be back in the workplace, to return to a familiar role, and fear that everything will have changed, or that they feel ill-equipped to get back to the old job. So what can employers and managers do to lessen the fear and build the optimism for returning to work? In this newsletter you can pick up some key tips on managing a successful return to work.



Keeping absent staff in the loop

Often during extended absence, employees feel left alone or forgotten about, as their manager or business fail to keep up communication, so here are some tips on keeping your people in the loop whilst they're away.

- Agree on the communication that works for both parties right up front – you want your employees to be kept informed, but you don't want them to feel harassed by their employer whilst they're away
- Forward bulletins, newsletters and publications to let them know what's happening in the business – these often contain interesting updates that are missed in discussion with managers
- If your employee is on maternity leave, encourage them to make use of their Keep in Touch days, it'll give you an opportunity to help them feel that they are still a part of the team – invite them to key team meetings or important team days
- Keep your employee informed of changes to the business and changes to the team, many people feel that they have to return to a team that they don't recognise – at least keep them up to date with the changes
- Ask them if they'd like to keep in regular contact during their leave – a regular, brief phone call can go a long way to helping people feel included

In the next edition we'll be looking Performance Management.

Is there something you'd like to see in a future edition on Peopletopia? If so, get in touch contactus@peopletopia.co.uk

How can Peopletopia support your business?

Peopletopia offer coaching for women returning from maternity leave. There are a number of concerns and dilemmas that new mums face when having to decide to return to work.

The fear of returning to the workplace sometimes results in women resigning from a role that they'd be happy doing, and a company losing a valued and experienced employee. With the right support and coaching, many more women make a decision to return to work that they feel comfortable and enthusiastic about.

If your company doesn't have the right coaches in place to provide this service, Peopletopia can step in and provide the coaching for you. Get in touch with us to discuss how we can help your business.

Returning to work - Ten ways for employers to minimise the fear

After an extended period of absence, returning to work can be a daunting prospect – so how can a manager help an employee feel welcomed back, particularly after long term leave such as 12 months maternity leave? Here are our ten top ideas:

- Make sure that on their first day back you are there to welcome them, it can be nerve-racking to walk back into a workplace that you've not been a part of for a while
- Set aside time to spend with your team member, prepare properly for a meeting with them, filling them in on team changes, department structure, company results etc.
- Don't assume that they will just return to business as usual straight away, they will need time to get back up to speed, to familiarise themselves with business and department changes
- Give them a proper handover – fill them in on what's been done with their role whilst they've been away; what are the key projects, achievements, targets, issues that are relevant to their team/role?
- Ask them what support they feel they may need to get back into the swing of things
- Set up their desk, computer, stationary supplies etc. Returning to the office to find that you have no designated seat/desk and equipment does not help you to feel welcome
- Prepare as you should for a new employee – organise a diary of events to help them get back up to speed and introduce them properly to anyone new
- Organise access to computer systems – this includes making sure that they have working logins and passwords for all necessary areas
- Send a welcome email/announcement to the team if it's appropriate, welcoming back the returning employee
- Schedule regular updates to make sure they are settling back in

Disengagement costs the UK economy up to £64.7billion* – how much is it costing your business?

With figures like this, it's crucial that you're engaging your employees. Book your place on the **Peopletopia Employee Engagement Strategy Workshop** in Bristol on 18th October or in Reading on 25th October and find out how to build your engagement strategy. With a recent government report stating that one of the major threats to business economic recovery in the UK being a disengaged workforce, can you afford not to attend?

Many companies know that they should be doing *something* to engage their employees, but don't really know *what* to do. Come along to one of our workshops and leave with a clear plan on the steps you will take to build engagement in your business.

The workshops run from 0930 to 1230pm, and it's just £50 (plus VAT) per person. Even better news is that the cost of your ticket is redeemable against any work that you book with Peopletopia before 1st December 2011.

Get in touch with us to find out more or to book your place – it's a workshop, not a lecture, so spaces are limited!

You can find out more about us at www.peopletopia.co.uk

Email us at contactus@peopletopia.co.uk

*Gallup report

Engagement Stats – Did you know...?

Did you know that according to Gallup, UK employees who are engaged with their business take on average 2.69 sick days per year, compared to the disengaged who take 6.19.

Engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their organisation than those who are disengaged.

70% of engaged employees claim to have a good grasp of their customer needs, compared to only 17% of the disengaged.

Book your place on our workshop to build your engagement strategy!