

The Seven Essentials of People Management

Here are seven essentials I have identified that will help you develop an effective people strategy:

-  **1. The only predictable thing about people is that they are unpredictable.**
 Don't presume individuals will react in a predictable way or assume all the members of your team will think, feel and react the same as you in a given situation. Human beings are unique and whilst there may be similarities in personalities and approach, don't assume that what you would do is what someone else will do.
-  **2. One size does not fit all.**
 Teams are a collection of unique individuals. Taking an approach that presumes everyone will think and behave in exactly the same way won't work. Two people may do the same job with the same level of knowledge, skills and experience, but due to their different personalities, one may be able to work with minimal direction whilst the other will need more support in task setting. One size does not fit all, so think about how you can be flexible to better suit the needs of individuals.
-  **3. Change is inevitable and isn't always planned.**
 Organisations and the lives of people in them are always in a state of flux. You will be disappointed if you expect things to be the same for months or years. You need to anticipate and react to constant evolution as well as planned changes. Both will require regular and open communication. Poor communication about the need for change and how it will impact on individuals can lead to people fearing or resisting the change. Avoid pitfalls by remembering people are different and change needs to be well planned and openly communicated in a number of ways to groups and individuals.
-  **4. People have lives outside of work.**
 Everyone has a life outside of work that will impact upon it. We talk about finding a 'work life balance' but in reality we can't separate the two as work is a fundamental part of our lives. Along with statutory responsibilities it is good to want to be a considerate and helpful employer. However, you are not your employees 'nanny' and are not responsible for everything that happens in their lives. Effective people management is about building a supportive and caring working environment. You can achieve this by helping and supporting people when issues occur outside of work but you are not responsible for resolving employees' personal problems or managing their social and home lives.
-  **5. Prepare to be unpopular.**
 As the boss you won't please all of the people all of the time and will have to make difficult decisions for the overall good of your organisation and the people in it. The aim is to look for a balance. You can try to be a good boss who avoids the mistakes poor managers make, but you can't always predict how others will react to your decisions and judge your performance as a boss. When dealing with a difficult issue, taking an objective, ethical, open, fair and compassionate approach to a problem will help to ensure it is handled as justly, practically and sensitively as possible.
-  **6. We want to be like...**
 Some bosses read about a process or approach and want to do the same in their team. Beware of doing something just because someone else is doing it. Your organisation is different as you employ different people and you are a different type of manager. It is your people that add to your competitive advantage – be unique!
-  **7. It's the people, stupid...**
 If you want to know how to make your organisation successful, "it's the people, stupid". Successful businesses focus on their people and ensure they feel both trusted to do their jobs and pride and enjoyment in what they do. Good leaders work at engaging with their team so they feel supported, valued, productive and listened to.

How many of these seven fundamentals are you currently using? Which ones need work? For more advice on developing a strong People Management strategy, buy a copy of my book, Effective People Management.