

Cynical employees in the face of change must be managed by effective communication

Submitted by: BlueSky Education

Tuesday, 31 May 2022

Providing clear, timely explanations help minimise the damage to employee morale in the wake of adverse changes, new research from Aalto University School of Business and others reveals.

Professor Marjo-Riitta Diehl and colleagues from Vlerick Business School, Católica-Lisbon School of Business and Economics, and University of Waterloo, discovered that workers vary in their level of attachment to the organisation that employs them and this affects how they react to adverse changes.

Adverse changes such as layoffs or wage cuts can cause especially those employees who feel strongly aligned with their company's goals to become disillusioned and cynical.

Unlike workers who are doubtful but remain optimistic, cynical personnel have lost faith in the organisation, making resignations more likely and minimising the commitment to work in those that stay on in their jobs.

Attempts at reconciliation between company managers and cynical employees are often difficult, as the workforce will instinctively distrust the intentions of higher-ups.

However, the research shows that explaining the necessity of unpleasant changes to a workforce in general, but especially to the loyal and committed employees before or shortly after action is taken helps reduce the likelihood of widespread cynicism.

"When employees receive a clear explanation for the change, they are more likely to feel valued and perceive lower levels of uncertainty. Managers need to adhere to principals of truth and fair dealing in interactions with their employees. By doing so, they create an atmosphere in which cynicism is unlikely to prosper," says Diehl.

The implications of this research, published in The Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, are particularly relevant in the current climate of "The Great Resignation".

For more information, to see a copy of the research paper or to hear from Marjo-Riitta Diehl, contact Jamie Hose at BlueSky Education on jamie@bluesky-pr.com, or call +44 (0)1582 790 706

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