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Workplace wellbeing – a no-brainer for SMEs!

As a business owner I know first-hand the pressure of working under a relentless stream of initiatives and new legislation. This is not helped by the UK's usual practice of gold plating everything! Brexit will no doubt bring us a deluge of new regulations to add to our stress levels. Some recent initiatives in the area of workplace wellbeing actually reduce stress all round. They can make our businesses more productive and our organisations even more enjoyable places in which to work.

Many companies use strap lines such as 'our employees are our greatest asset' – except that if you ask some of the staff at such companies you can sadly often hear an altogether different story. 'Employee engagement' and 'employee wellbeing' are phrases which trip off the tongue easily enough but it requires a real change of culture at the top of the organisation if they are ever to become a reality. The good news though is that the changes which can bring about a profound impact in staff wellbeing and further knock on positives for good can happen naturally once those who lead the organisation decide that is their direction of travel.

One of the recent breakthroughs is in our understanding of emotional wellbeing as a spectrum, or continuum. Rather than mental illnesses being thought to exist in isolation, separate to each other, it is widely believed that they are on a line from wellbeing at one end to severe and enduring mental ill health at the other. Most of us though occupy the middle ground and some of us will move for a time towards one end of the spectrum and then move back to the middle again.

Stress is the crossover point from mental health into ill health. It is now seen as unhelpful to say that being stressed sometimes is good for us – it is better to see that being stretched is good for us but being stressed is not. Helping staff be stretched but not stressed can improve productivity and satisfaction enormously.

So convinced are we at SME Strategies of the value of this that we have linked up with Suffolk Mind and attended some of their excellent training. They are supporting workplace wellbeing for people-driven and forward-thinking organisations whose leadership see its benefits. Suffolk Mind have formed strong partnerships with both commercial and not for profit organisations to help overcome their challenges and mitigate fears and risks.



There are many businesses especially SMEs that really do want the knowledge and skills to support staff wellbeing but are unsure how to do so. Suffolk Mind is keen to work with those organisations (wherever they are in the UK) that have a clear desire and vision of being known as a genuinely 'good employer' and want to make a positive impact on their workplace. As well as working with organisations on a consultancy basis, Suffolk Mind also offer 1-2-1 coaching sessions and training in subjects such as: Effective Communication, Stress Management, Sleep Well, Work Well, Mental Health Awareness.

Suffolk Mind can also work with SMEs to:

- Measure over time, the (improved) emotional wellbeing of employees through confidential emotional need surveys – giving you confidence that you are providing the right environment to get the best from your workforce;

- Enable managers to have access to expert and confidential mental health advice, to support individual members of staff effectively – which will minimise absence and promote good employee relationships;
- Invest in the long term wellbeing of the local area upon whom the business economy depends - as well as the direct benefit to organisations there is also the feel good factor of helping to promote meaningful corporate social responsibility activity.

This might all sound like 'soft stuff' but the effect on the bottom line for organisations can be dramatic. As staff are empowered to offer their best – both energy and creativity can be unleashed with transformational effects. The directors of one medium sized company made the decision to embrace employee wellbeing and its staff surveys speak for themselves, profits rose very considerably and its share price rose four fold!

If you would like to know more or have a confidential conversation about your organisation do get in touch. It is a no-brainer!

David Eaton
Director, SME Strategies
07841 215182
david.eaton@smestrategies.co.uk
www.smestrategies.co.uk