HRInsights

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Empathy in the Workplace

Empathy is an important trait among employees, leadership and executive teams that is often overlooked. An empathetic individual is willing to help employees on a deeper level, shows interest in their wants and needs, and demonstrates compassion. Exemplifying empathy in the workplace means relating to employee emotions, thoughts and experiences—something that can greatly improve the success of a department and the company overall. In order to create an empathetic work environment, all employees and leadership should be open to discussing their personal work stressors and feelings in order to relate to each other on a personal level.

If employees' emotions are not being heard by management, teams may become unproductive, unfulfilled and may ultimately affect the company's bottom line. By promoting an empathetic work culture and leadership style, you may be able to help employees reach peak performance while increasing their overall well-being.

How Empathy Influences Work Performance

An empathetic leadership style can help employees reach their full potential, strengthen relationships among teams and increase performance. In fact, a recent study has found that empathetic companies perform 20% higher than their non-empathetic counterparts. When employees feel they are better supported and understood by management, they are more likely to take risks and collaborate, and they're more receptive to the concerns of others within their team or department. If empathy isn't exemplified at a company, employees may feel burned out, misunderstood or disengaged from

company initiatives or departmental goals, which could lead to a decrease in overall work performance company-wide. In order to encourage high performance among employees, it's imperative to promote an empathetic work culture.

Benefits of an Empathetic Work Culture

An empathetic work culture can promote understanding and support between leadership and employees that may enhance continuity between teams and overall team performance. Employees who feel cared for on a deeper level by their company tend to feel greater job satisfaction and a deeper trust with their employer. Creating an empathetic culture at your company can result in:

- Increased employee engagement
- Higher retention rates
- Stronger relationships among employees
- Increased work performance
- Greater employee satisfaction

The success of an empathetic work culture is strongly dependent on the effort of leadership teams. It is the responsibility of management to promote and execute empathy throughout the company to ensure a positive work culture for employees to thrive.

Steps to Create an Empathetic Work Culture

An empathetic work culture begins with leadership teams taking the initiative and creating deeper relationships with their employees. To cultivate an empathetic work culture at your company, assist your leadership teams in executing the following action items:

1. **Set aside time to meet with employees**—Always take the time to check in with employees and ask them about their stress levels, workloads or how they are generally feeling about work.

2. **Actively listen to employees**—When talking to employees, it's important to be attentive to what the employee is saying and not get distracted. By listening to employee concerns, issues can be more readily detected and resolved.

3. **Be compassionate**—It's important to be compassionate toward employees and their various backgrounds or differences.

4. **Utilize the gathered information**—Understanding the concerns or issues of an employee on a deeper level can be helpful when approaching different issues or challenges in the future.

Conclusion

It's important for both leadership teams and employees to be transparent about their emotions. For more information regarding empathy in the workplace, contact Insure NW today.