

## **A little more conversation, employee satisfaction guaranteed**

### **Managers need to focus on performance conversations instead of waiting for the traditional annual appraisal to keep employees engaged and motivated.**

Around 41pc of employees feel that their work-related wellbeing has not received sufficient attention, or has indeed suffered during the Covid Lockdown period.

That's according to recent survey carried out by [HR for Better Workplaces](#) and the authors of a new pocketbook about meaningful [Performance Conversations](#) between employees and their managers has found that 42pc of these respondents said what they found most difficult was the ability to juggle home/ work balance.

With the global pandemic having forced many of us to work from home whilst also playing the role of teacher, parent and friend to our children, many employees have felt a huge amount of pressure trying to find balance in their lives.

### **Worker wellbeing**

Other factors which affected wellbeing included increased workload; lack of direction and meaningful conversations with their manager; and screen fatigue.

However, despite work-place wellbeing being a concern, 86pc of respondents said they would like to see working remotely and from home becoming the norm; highlighting the need to address issues that have come to the forefront in recent months.

Worryingly, it emerged that pre-Covid, almost 60pc of respondents said they had meaningful job-related conversations with their manager every few weeks; however, this dropped during the pandemic, with 65pc saying these conversations became less frequent.

Seven-in-10 employees think that having more regular and meaningful job-related conversations with their manager would increase their motivation and productivity.

### **Managing remote teams**

Disappointingly, 37pc of respondents said they felt somewhat neglected by their leaders and managers during Covid Lockdown, a time when it appears the support was required more than ever as 54pc said their workload has been greater or significantly greater during the pandemic.

With many of us likely to be working from home not just for the foreseeable future but possibly permanently, results of the survey show that managers will have to adapt to a new way of managing their teams remotely.

The employee survey was carried out by HR for Better Workplaces. The company's principal consultants are Frank Scott-Lennon and Laura Powney with a combined 60 years' experience in the HR space. Laura has dedicated much of her career to workplace wellbeing.

Frank's daughter Sinead most recently joined the team as a communications and wellbeing consultant; and with her extensive people management experience, co-authored with Frank, a new pocketbook *Performance Conversations*, which addresses how managers can collaborate with their employees on their future and individual development.

When Frank was developing the concept for the book, it was important for him to work with someone with solid experience of successfully managing teams. A natural collaborator was Sinead, who has significant experience in performance management within the Communications industry.

"Performance conversations are two-way conversations that should take place every four, six or eight weeks to enable better productivity," Frank Scott-Lennon explained. "A manager should listen to what their employee indicates are their work priorities for the next few weeks; and ask what problems they might see in the implementation/execution of these priorities. This paves the way for a future focused and supportive conversation. From my experience, the impact on wellbeing is tangible."

The survey found that while 47pc of employees feel that traditional annual appraisals are sufficient, almost 30pc said they are unprogressive, and 10pc dread them. 79pc think that having more meaningful and regular performance conversations would enhance the annual appraisal process.

Sinead added: "By adopting the performance conversations approach, as opposed to solely relying on the traditional annual appraisal, managers can work with the individual and search for ways in which they can provide on-going support, discuss issues of personal development from both viewpoints, and agree a way forward.

"Doing this regularly and to a high standard will make annual performance appraisals ever more useful; and hopefully less terrifying for the employee," she recommended.

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