

“Changing Employee Relations during COVID – 19 pandemics”

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Abstract:

The COVID 19, which started in Wuhan China in 2019, has taken a faster speed to spread across the world and will multiply in near future. Apart from creating panic and uncertainty in general population the next victim is significantly disrupting the all set and new businesses. New norms about work from home are drastically changing the way employees and managers interact. This is particularly relevant for the human resource department from the employee relation amongst employees and manager.

The major concern of HR department is about communicating the company’s stance on the situation to employees. Numerous unreliable news is spreading false and unverified information through social media and company representative are not there to communicate face-to-face. The same is having impact on morale of the employees. So there is possibility of change in employee’s relation during this pandemic.

Due to COVID -19, All the offices around the world are working remotely, the company cannot communicate face to face with their employees, which could increase the sense of distance from the top management and the employees.

Keywords: COVID-19, Employee relations

Introduction:

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disturbed the way business works. New technique has come for working, which is working from home, for that the employees and managers are interact with each other with the help of many sources, the existing employees come to know the real situation of today’s business and hence the future / further business will take place virtually. This type of situation handles through the Human Resources Department, which is directly involved in recruiting and managing talent.

The following problems are facing by the companies are-

- Team events or open discussion with an employees are no longer possible.
- To boost the employees or keep personal touch with the employees becomes impossible for the management,
- Work done from the employees (in manufacturing industries s) becomes a challenges in front of Management.
- Management sponsor the cost of learning and offer incentives for successfully completion of work.

Concerned of HR department:

The role of HR departments is to communicating the company's stand about the COVID-19 situation to its employees. Several untrustworthy news is spreading false information about the pandemic online, which is enhancing the sense of panic and fear among employees. Today the fact is that offices around the world are now working remotely and the company cannot communicate face-to-face with its employees, which could increase the sense of distance from the management and thus from what the company actually thinks, hence management tries to minimise the distance between employee.

Another area of anxiety relates to maintaining and improving the employee morale, without physical vicinity activities like team work or open discussions with union leaders are no longer possible. This creates the personal touch to some extent, which makes it stiffer for employers to connect with their teams and help boost their feelings as employees work alone in their homes away from their team members.

Changing employees behaviour:

The New directives from governments worldwide are convincing employees at all levels to work from home which helps the boosting the productivity. Employees can use extra time to pledge with their loved ones, engage in various hobbies and interests and maintain a less hectic schedule, they are in a more stress-free frame of mind and can concentrate better on their work that they have.

Today due to modern technological advances, connectivity and coordination is an easy matter even when working remotely, working from home. Meetings are now being conducted over a call and video chat for both employees and clients.

Changing Employee behaviour:

- ❖ Employees can use the extra time or bond with their loved ones
- ❖ Engage in various hobbies and invests and maintain a less hectic schedule
- ❖ As a result, they are in a more released from of mind and can concentrate better on the work that they have.
- ❖ Meeting are now being conducted over a call or video chat.

Changing management behaviour:

During COVID-19 pandemic situation the role of management is to keeping employee morale high through continuous motivation and virtual communication. Management knows that that working from home gives employee's additional accountability and increases the companies trusts on them to make the best use of their responsibility. This is also an exceptional opportunity to encourage upskilling through online learning platforms. The HR department can support fully regarding the learning and offer them incentives for successfully completing work. However, for official messages, calls, official meetings and any other difficulties employees can share through online.

Changing Management behaviour:

- ❖ Keeping employee morale up through regular motivation and recognition of their work becomes more important than ever vital communication.
- ❖ This is excellent opportunity to encourage upskilling of employees through online learning platform.
- ❖ Management sponsor the cost of learning and offer incentives for successfully completion of work.
- ❖ Management tried to retain the talented workforce for the organization.

Legal implications on the employment relationship:**1. Protecting employees from COVID-19:****Employers' obligations:**

The employers have to take all the preventive measures to protect its employees from being infected with any virus, illness. All the working areas should be sanitized and the social distancing should be followed and wearing the mask made it compulsory for every employees and every employee should follow this rules and regulations given by the Government.

Employers' rights:**B) Annual leaves:**

The employers have the right subject to certain regulation, due to the lock down, every employee are at home or working at home in this situation, the employers may ask to their employees to consume their annual leaves during this period.

C) Reducing Salaries:

Employers may, subject to certain requirements, reduce the salaries of their employees either to 30% to 50% or to lump sum amount on a temporary basis.

D) Downsizing:

Due to COVID -19 most of the organizations are close down due to recession in the market, less market demand, excessive inventory in the organization in this situation, the employers has a right subject to certain requirements to close completely or partially the organization or reduce its workmen size on temporary basis.

Tips for managing employee relations:

During this COVID-19 pandemic situation, most employees are working from home, employee relations issues would come very closer to the employees. The employees are shifted to online or digital mode. Now a day 56% employees are working with online mode, hence it's important for organizations to ensure safe, fair treatment of employees and to do everything they can to minimize employee issues.

a) Reinforce policies: Crises like the pandemic can make people behave in ways might never expect. Everyone has to care of sanitization as well as social distancing to treat one another as though are all infected.

b) Communicate changes effectively: With distancing, leave and compensation guidelines changing rapidly should be informed employees through digital mode through mail, online meetings, so the employees should know the company's policies promptly and effectively, so that the employees are working accordingly.

C) Explain documentation and tracking processes clearly: For ER professionals, a platform can improve accuracy of documentation and tracking and provide transparency into the process for employees to make sure employees understand how these processes work and that the same workflows and significances for confirmed desecrations apply during the remote work.

d) Manage performance appropriately: Management tries to keep their employees are remaining as productive as possible, hence daily, weekly performance check-ins between employees and their managers with help of online meeting to make sure everyone's staying on task and consider deferring formal reviews.

e) Provide resources to help employees cope: Due to this pandemic situation every employee is worried about their jobs, their health, their family's financial stability. Providing resources and training to help them traverse this new situation can be unbelievably beneficial and even help to board off any potential ER issues.

Conclusion:

COVID-19 is an unprecedented crisis which is testing personal and professional relation. It is the responsibilities of each member of organization to put in their utmost and maintain smooth business relation. Steady and positive communication from all parties will help maintains employee's morale and keep employee's relations intact as the world moves through this challenge.

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