Managing availability for work using performance appraisals

Objective

Availability for work refers to

- how bound the employee is to the workplace outside the normal working time (such as breaks during which it is virtually impossible to leave the workplace)

- restrictions on leisure time due to work (for example, requirement to reply to work emails and telephone calls outside of regular working time, and travel time that is not counted as working time).

Managing availability for work well can increase the employee's ability to disengage from work and recover sufficiently in their spare time. The change is reflected in the amount of stress and sleep, as well as in the quality of social life.

Excessive stress caused by availability for work can be prevented by effective performance appraisal practices. That is why practices should be evaluated and developed, and those that are found to be good should be adopted more widely.

Steps

1. Start developing performance appraisal practices by evaluating the current practices.

    a. Does the current performance appraisal form cover the relevant areas of availability for work? These include:

    *   actual average hours worked per week in the previous 12 months

    *   number of overtime hours in the last 12 months

    *   being available outside actual working hours

    *   management of stress related to work that involves travel.

    b. Are performance appraisals carried out often enough to manage stress related to availability for work?

2. Based on the evaluation, develop your performance appraisal practices to include the key areas. Ensure that the performance appraisals are held often enough to be useful in controlling stress related to availability for work.

3. Start a trial period of sufficient duration and scope to assess the renewed performance appraisal practices.

4. Familiarize supervisors with the revised performance appraisal practices. Communicate the policies to the entire personnel.

5. After the trial period, evaluate the revised performance appraisal practices among the participants of the trial and make any changes that seem necessary based on the evaluation.

6. Adopt the revised performance appraisal practices more widely in the organization and develop them further, if necessary.

Impact follow-up

*   Gather employees' experiences regarding the new practices in connection with performance appraisals by conducting a survey, for example.

*   Use your hours tracking to assess how common overtime and long working hours are, as well as how well employees are able to recover after travelling days.

*   Assess how well employees are able to separate their work and leisure time, by repeatedly conducting surveys regarding well-being at work and/or work atmosphere.