**Notes from Discussions with Owners**

**Topic**: What conversations have you had to have with staff that could have been avoided if it was in the contract?

**Context**: review of employment contract and update of job descriptions

Updates:

* Chain of command, reporting
* Communication

**Daniel Carpenter (ZeroW Southside)**

* Feels that staff often unclear on what their job is. The updated job descriptions and contracts will help to fix that
* Feels that there is issues around communication and lines of reporting.
* Gave the example of Rick taking orders from Daniel, Thomas, and Sue. Rick himself had said that he felt confused as to who he was to take instruction from.
* I generally agree that the front line staff should take direction from the manager. If the owner or other stakeholder wants to engage the strength trainer or other front line staff member, then it’s appropriate to at minimum make sure the manager is aware of it, or preferably to ask the manager to communicate it to the front line staff member.
* Raised concerns about staff not to receive coaching from outside the ZeroW group. Gave the example of Rick (who has this in his contract) and Jessica who does not and receives coaching for body building.
* Daniel was concerned about how this policy might be applied across the group.
* My response was that I think there is no issue with staff receiving coaching from outside the group for things that ZeroW does not provide. For example, ZeroW in Brisbane does not have BB coaching that I am aware of, so no issue if Jessica receives such coaching. However for skills/disciplines that ZeroW does offer, I do think it’s appropriate to ban coaching from outside the group. Example might be technique on SBD. This is a core product offering for ZeroW. For the staff member to receive external coaching would be to dilute the product or to create drift.

**Wes & Brooke Vick (ZeroW Cairns)**

* They think it’s a good idea to have more clarity for employees both in the contract, the job descriptions and the Policies.
* Raised some concerns about non-compete aspect, specifically an employee not only training at another gym but also posting regularly about it, apparently promoting another gym on social media
* My own view is that while it is OK for a member to train at another gym, I have a major issue with an employee actively promoting a competitor on social media. I think that’s unacceptable and the employee should be spoken to.
* I understand that my view is perhaps hard-line. I am happy to take other views
* Wes & Brooke raised concerns about consistent enforcement of the policy across all ZeroW gyms.
* We discussed the examples of James Hendry who trains BJJ. I don’t see that as a competitor because ZeroW does not offer BJJ training.
* Similarly I don’t see Jamie Timm training at a climbing gym as a conflict because ZeroW does not offer climbing facilities
* I do believe that it is entirely different to actively promote a gym that directly competes with ZeroW while also being employed by ZeroW.
* I agree that the policy needs to be enforced consistently across the group.
* Wes & Brooke raised concerns about deals with contractors, which I explained were outside scope at this time but would be reviewed in due course.
* Wes & Brooke also raise the issue of member Toby and his assistance dog. I have asked for the related correspondence and have done a review of the relevant statutes and contacted assistance dogs Australia for clarification.

**Kahn Stephenson (Mackay)**

* Keen to have something prescriptive about drinks, e.g. 2x per week FOC or something else, as long as it’s clear.
* Keen on the idea of setting clear expectations. Likes the idea of KPIs and performance management, but wasn’t so clear about what kind of KPIs he’d like.
* Would like some clarity and latitude around what owner/managers are allowed in relation to additional recognition.
* Specifically thinking about things like bonuses, merchandise, additional time off etc.
* I said that in general the documentation was meant to provide a framework, not shackles. Owners/managers should retain a degree of flexibility that allows them to reward/recognise staff who are outstanding.
* Would like to avoid too much negativity and negative wording in the contracts and policies.
* Would like clarity around reporting lines; lines of communication. If you’ve got an issue, who do strength coaches, managers and owners go to?
* My response is that it should be made clear that strength coaches report to the manager, who in turn reports to the owners. The communications should reflect that. It’s not appropriate for staff to go direct to Thomas unless there is a really good reason. The manager should have the opportunity to resolve the issue in the first instance. If it needs to be elevated, then the next stop is the owners. The court of final review is Thomas.
* Would like apparel to be given at the discretion of the manager or owner.
* Reinforced his believe that their needs to be sufficient latitude for each gym’s owner/manager.

**Jordan Helyer (Wales)**

* Talked about one employee doing off-book work (nutrition) for his family members. Told the employee that it was basically stealing, and that in future he should get permission for doing pro-bono work
* Need to adapt slightly to match Welsh law
* Talked about the same staff member doing extra-curricular stuff that he feels in gradually getting closer to the line of things that are a conflict of interest.
* I encouraged Jordan to talk directly to the staff member, before he crosses any lines. Raise his concerns and make it clear where the lines are.
* Has a strict rule about no phones when PTing, but is thinking of being a bit more strict as it drives him nuts when people are doing the vacuum cleaning and stopping every 30 seconds to check their phones. Would like to include personal social media and messaging on the phones policy.
* Personal presentation at work is an issue for him. Cardiff is cold so people often have their hoods up, but when it’s a staff member it kinda closes them off to members and walk-ins.
* He has a pro-active approach to managing time in lieu. He makes sure that it is accrued properly and he has to give approval about when its used.

**Rhys & Chloe Kingsford (Sunshine Coast)**

* One of the few things that they’ve had to talk to Cooper about has been prioritisation of tasks.
* Doesn’t agree with the ½ price drinks or 2 free drinks per week policy. Feels that it adds an additional administration task to track.
* Asked if there is a grievance policy/procedure. I told her that there is one in the works but hasn’t been released yet.
* Asked about a probation period and a 3 month performance review.
* Feels that it would be a good thing to have employee signatures on contracts, JDs and policies. I pointed out that it becomes important to file those documents… an extra admin task?
* Raised a question about working out during work hours. Rhys and Cooper do it now. Thomas has said its OK. Not consistent with what’s in the draft policies / JDs etc.
* Having talked to Thomas its not OK
* Doesn’t necessarily disagree, as Cooper is distracted from his job when he’s working out. Wonders if there is a compromise solution, along the lines of “Can work out during work hours, once all other tasks have been done and with the permission of the manager”.
* Social media code of conduct is good
* Asked if there are appropriate steps to protect customer data and privacy. There isn’t at this point but it’s something we can look at. It’s a legitimate point
* Asked about a policy for handling cash. Knows that we don’t get a lot of cash but it does happen occasionally, so feels that it’s something that needs to be covered off.

**Matt Stenzel (ZeroW Brisbane)**

* The issues around the gym in terms of management and dealing with problems is quite overwhelming for Thomas and the owners
* There should be better & more delegation of tasks
* Who can you go to in order to get answers? It should be the manager.
* Managers probably need to have access to the membership data.
* Transparency
* Would like to see the chain of command and communications work better. Feels there is a lot of wasted communications.
* Would like to manage performance expectations with employees better
* People need to be more replaceable, which comes (partly) with a clearer understanding of performance expectations
* Need to depersonalise people management
* Would like faster on-boarding
* Would like to see consistency with social media and answering emails