**High performance working practice**

**What is 'high performance working'?**

*High Performance Working is a group of People management practices that deliver improvements in organisational performance and productivity by enabling employees to work smarter, rather than harder.*

**The key elements of HPW include measures to improve:**

**What is high performing working?**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recruitment and selection**  **Training & Development** |  | **Employee competence** |  | **Enhanced employee performance** |
| **Job Design**  **Involvement Process**  **Communication** |  | **Opportunity to participate** |  |
| **Appraisal Goal Setting & Feedback**  **Financial & other rewards** |  | **Motivation** |  |
| **Fair treatment & single status**  **Internal promotion & job security** |  | **Employee commitment** |  |

*From: PerformHigher.com*

* **Employee commitment and motivation** through effective appraisals, goal setting, feedback and reward
* **The opportunity for staff to utilise their skills** through good job design, team working, employee involvement and good communication
* **The capability of staff** through effective recruitment, retention, training and development practices
* **The ability of the organisation to innovate**, learn and adapt to change, and become more vigilant and agile in dealing with future opportunities and threats

**Business Benefits of High-Performance Working**

% Organisations with above average people turnover (>15%)

Number of HPW practises

Research evidence accumulated over several years, has shown significant business benefits from adoption of HPW practices. These are:

* **Organisational performance** - demonstrated using a wide variety of financial and success measures.
* **Innovation** - the generation and implementation of new product and process ideas, enabling a business to continually stay ahead of competitors.
* **Recruitment and retention** - the ability to attract and retain the best people.

Ultimately, ‘high performance working’ (HPW) is about creating a culture where there is transparency, trust and open lines of communication for all. It is about eroding the traditional hierarchical structure which many organisations still operate under, and instead creating a flatter structure where employees are happy, engaged, motivated and share and understand the vision of the organisation.

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills defines HPW as ‘a general approach to managing organisations that aims to stimulate more effective employee involvement and commitment in order to achieve high levels of performance’. HPW is fundamentally a series of processes, practices and policies which can be put into place, and when integrated together can result in improved performance of employees.

It is widely accepted that HPW practices fall within three broad areas. These are:

* High employee involvement.
* Human resource practices.
* Reward and commitment practices.

HPW practices are often most effective when used in ‘bundles’. This means organisations have the freedom to pick and choose the practices which best fit with their needs, strategies and overall objectives.

Research into the effectiveness of HPW practices indicate that as much as a 20-40% increase in productivity can be seen in organisations that adopt HPW practices compared to those that do not.

Other findings suggest that the implementation and uptake of HPW practices within an organisation positively correlates with the rate of organisational growth, increased organisational profitability, higher job satisfaction, lower staff turnover and greater innovation and creativity within the workplace.

So, how do organisations go about adopting a high-performance working culture?

Below are six key practices that can be used as a basis to introduce HPW practices into your organisation:

1. Allowing employees’ autonomy over their work styles, i.e. a decentralised structure and reinforcement of self-management.
2. Sharing information with employees, i.e. regular communications detailing organisational changes so that employees feel informed and consulted.
3. Enforcing a people-focused culture, i.e. recognition and reward of hard work and honesty.
4. Adopting family friendly policies, i.e. flexible working.
5. Emphasising learning and development, i.e. providing employees with opportunities to learn new skills and enhance the skills they already have.
6. Introducing employee support systems and people management processes, i.e. regular appraisals and multi-source feedback.

**Thought Piece**

**What are High Performance Work Practices?**

Lacey L. Schmidt, Ph.D. · Jun 19, 2014 ·

High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) are employee management tactics that increase the productivity and profit of organisations. When these tactics are applied systematically and fairly throughout the organization over time, they increase employee engagement, support high performance and productivity, build customer trust and loyalty, and in turn, increase profits.

**Some examples of HPWPs include:**

* Realistic Job Previews (RJPs).
* Using psychometric and validated employee selection tools.
* An employee on-boarding strategy.
* A continuous mentoring and leadership development strategy.
* Regular performance appraisals (with SMART goals co-designed by employees).
* Current and flexible job descriptions and job specifications.
* Calibrated job classification and compensation systems.
* In-house problem-solving and work-improvement groups/ teams.
* Employee Suggestion or Innovation Programs.
* Employee Reward and Award Programs.
* Structured team briefings and debriefings at every level within the organization.
* Competence or performance-based pay.
* In-house Knowledge Management Systems.
* And there are many more!

The good news is that while you may not be able to implement all, or even most, of the HPWPs in your organisation, you can implement some NOW that fit your organisational needs and priorities, and then build on them later.