

Wellbeing and the workforce

AWARDS

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ENTHUSIASING your workers, rewarding them and engaging them is key to them realising their full potential – and driving your business forward.

And the firms around the region which know how to encourage their staff are urged to enter the Chartered Institute of Personal Development Awards 2014.

The CIPD has teamed up with The Journal to shine a light on the best companies to work for in the North East, where the workforce go the extra mile for their bosses.

The Engagement and Wellbeing Award – one of eight categories in the competition – recognises the efforts the organisation has made to look after their people in order to achieve the goals and objectives.

Elouise Leonard Cross, chair of CIPD North East of England branch, said: “The Government’s national wellbeing programme highlighted that employment was one of the factors most strongly associated with personal wellbeing.

“It is important for employees to feel their wellbeing is important to their employer and that they are engaged with both the work they do and the organisation they work for.

“HR&D has a key role in enabling both wellbeing and engagement. This award offers organisations the



➤ **Neil Thomas, HR manager at Walkers Snack Foods receiving the award from Sarah Salter, HR director, Northumbrian Water**

opportunity to demonstrate how they have successfully supported staff wellbeing or engagement.

“Previous winners have impressed judges by being able to show the impact any activities have had for both people and business performance.”

Last year’s winner was Walkers Snack Foods Ltd of Peterlee, which pipped Arriva North East and The Gateshead Housing Company to the top prize.

The snack food firm offered its staff a gym-subsidy as part of its wellbeing programme, a scheme which saw all membership payments refunded if employees went to the gym twice a

week. So what type of submission is suitable for this category? Examples that cover either or both engagement or wellbeing can be submitted.

The types of activities may be innovative approaches to engagement and how employees are enabled to play a key role in shaping business activity and direction and initiatives that HR&D have implemented and initiated to increase wellbeing of employees.

Judges will be looking for a clear rationale for the value of activity, collaboration with people in engagement or wellbeing and clear evidence of impact and value on a people and business level.

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IT IS estimated that poor levels of engagement at work costs the UK economy around £26bn in GDP each year. The Government-backed initiative ‘Engage for Success’ which was launched in 2012 aimed to address this issue and ultimately provide employers with practical information and tools, which they can utilise to help improve levels of engagement at work. The 2013 Engage for Success report confirmed that by injecting an extra 10% in funding to improve employee engagement, using strategies such as business participation and career development, company profits could be increased by £2,700 per employee, per year.

While engagement has been a significant factor influencing HR strategy for many years, our understanding of its true value, as well as its symbiotic relationship with the concept of wellbeing, is beginning to deepen. HR debates over the last twelve months, for example, have increasingly moved towards highlighting the distinction between what we mean by engagement and wellbeing. Generally speaking, engagement refers to workplace characteristics that support the organisation’s goals. Wellbeing on the other hand, is related to an employee’s perception of their overall welfare, which is influenced by workplace interventions (or lack of).

An over emphasis on promoting engagement initiatives, many argue, will likely result in a poor understanding of why employees are underperforming. If businesses want to optimise productivity at work, it is further argued that putting the individual’s experience of their work firmly at the centre of engagement strategy, will achieve better results. Studies have in fact shown that productivity can double when engagement and wellbeing are jointly considered when implementing new work policies. As a result, increasing numbers of organisa-

tions now consider employee wellbeing as a strategic advantage.

Last year’s winner of the CIPD Engagement and Wellbeing award, Walker Snack Foods in Peterlee, certainly understood the importance of this critical factor. There are obviously a number of actions organisations can take to make a difference to the wellbeing of employees. Implementing policies that seek to improve the environment, shift patterns or personal development are good examples. Although there are universal factors that will make people happy and motivated at work, each organisation is uniquely different and will need to establish its own ‘context’ for change.

As a snack food business, Walker chose to focus its wellbeing programme on health and offered its 350+ employees a gym-subsidy, which ran as a ‘go more, pay less’ scheme. Providing employees, on average, visit a gym twice per week, all membership monies are refunded. Over a third of employees at the Peterlee factory took up the scheme with 90% attending regularly. The scheme was extended to include a healthy-eating canteen programme as well as affiliations with local health service providers.

Communicating clearly the intention to promote employee wellbeing as well as how the organisation seeks to improve engagement in the business, at the same time, will ensure that any strategy is a success. Research has shown that quite often, the most important factor is the extent to which employees believe that their organisation has a sincere interest in their wellbeing.

At this year’s awards we expect organisations with clearly defined, bespoke and well-communicated strategies that demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between engagement and wellbeing, to be in contention for this award.

Celebrate the profession, celebrate the region – CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards

THE 2014 CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards are the regions most prestigious HR&D Awards. Delivered in association with The Journal and associate sponsor Nigel Wright, the Awards recognise and celebrate outstanding HR&D achievements and impact on business success. The Awards are open to all types of organisations, regardless of size or sector and the winners will be announced on 22nd May 2014 at a glamorous awards dinner at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead. The categories are:

- Excellence in Developing People Award
- Innovation in Social Media or Technology Award
- Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Award

- HR&D Team of the Year Award
- Engagement and Well-being Award
- Change Management Project of the Year Award
- Talent Attraction and Management Award
- SME Excellence in HR&D Award

The deadline for nominations is April 10 and it’s completely free to enter!

TO ENTER OR FOR MORE INFO

To make a nomination and for more information log on to www.thejournal.co.uk/cipdawards or contact Lesley Hampson, event manager, on 0191 2016435 or email lesley.hampson@trinitymirror.com



BEHIND EVERY BUSINESS LEADER STANDS THE PERSON WHO HIRED THEM.

The 2014 North East of England CIPD HR&D Awards will take place on 22nd May 2014 at the Newcastle Gateshead Hilton.

Nigel Wright Recruitment is once again delighted to be the associate sponsor for this year’s event.

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