Stress, strain and recovery

If you want to ignore the effects of stress on your workforce, suggests Glenys Bridges

Mental health professionals frequently highlight the causes and effects of stress in the workplace. This is particularly relevant in the current financial climate as many employers need to balance their books by reducing the size of their workforce.

Whether workforce downsizing occurs through natural wastage or redundancies, we all know people whose workload has increased substantially to cover the duties of one or more colleagues who are no longer employed. We also know that increased workload and resulting stress, will before long take its toll on our wellbeing.

Protecting staff

Although the harsh realities of business finance cannot be ignored, neither can the effects of stress as a result of overstretching the workforce. Many employers would be wary of making a job offer to an applicant suffering from a stress-related condition.

Therefore, it makes sense that once they employ someone they take care to provide a healthy working environment in which they can thrive, rather than one which will result in them becoming ill. Having said that, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), in 2007/2008, 237,000 new cases of work-related stress, will before long take its toll on our wellbeing.

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Grim reading

The figures are scary. In small businesses, the impact on staff performance and reliability, even before an individual takes time off.

Therefore, when they are severely undermined. Savvy employers are aware of how to take appropriate measures to control the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities.

It is important to note that in civil law an employer owes a duty of care to the individuals who work for them, including their employees. There can be no doubt, that the forces leading to workplace stress are here to stay for the time being, and the teams who have really mastered the ability to cooperate and support each other will emerge from the current financial climate in the best shape.

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