

Address what is going on. Sometimes it is hard to put your finger on what is actually going on and it's easy to think that things will just improve in time. Or as a businessowner it's difficult not to get distracted; managing a difficult situation can take up a lot of time and energy and other things take priority. However avoiding tackling potential issues and nipping it in the bud, can often just make things worse!

Identify the issues. Once you have addressed that there is a potential issue, you need to identify what the issue is and gather information and evidence to support. For example sales data, timekeeping, number of customer calls, details of any complaints, feedback from colleagues/customers and any examples you have witnessed.

Have confidence in tackling difficult employee issues to ensure the success of the conversation. Unaddressed issues can also affect your team and the respect they have for you and the company, so the sooner you address the issue, whether informally or formally, the sooner it will be resolved. The act of addressing the issue may help to turn the situation into a positive one!

Line managers must consider whether or not they are the appropriate person to have the conversation with the employee. If they are involved in the issue, for example where the issue relates to misconduct, their personal opinion might cause bias. Or the employee's conduct has put the company at risk of legal liability, it might be more appropriate for an HR representative or another manager to have the conversation with the employee.

Educating line managers. Difficult conversations with employees are part and parcel of the role of a line manager. Often, the issues that line managers need to address are important to the company's performance, for example delivering feedback to an employee that will improve the employee's productivity. Addressing issues helps to find a solution!

Make it easier for people to talk. Give employees direct feedback as they may be unaware of the impact of their behaviours. Try to dig deeper and make it easier for them to talk. Is there something that is causing their behaviour? Are they unhappy at work or struggling in their personal life? Talk to them and if there is an underlying reason you as an employer may be able to offer counselling resources or signpost to other help.

The consequences. Failing to address the issue could have a number of consequences such as interfering with work which may lead to problems with productivity and stress, employees thinking poor performance or misconduct is acceptable making it harder to impose sanctions at a later date causing problems with colleagues morale and stress, a loss of respect for line managers and potential reputational damage for the business.

Look at your processes but ensure you are treating employees fairly based on the situation. Have a conversation in the most appropriate way. Prepare for the meeting looking at what the ideal outcome would be, adapt styles accordingly and communicate the issue clearly providing specific examples and evidence. Being positive and listening to what employees have to say are really effective tools to achieving a successful outcome. Document the discussion and agree on actions.

If you're unsure about how to implement any of these strategies or need HR advice and support reach out to natalie@hr2goconsultancy.co.uk 07779 508972 01279 771098