FACTORS THAT AFFECT EMPLOYEE MORALE

There are physical and psychological factors that affect employee morale. Among the first group, the physical conditions at the workplace: (comfort, lighting, changing rooms, dining rooms, reasonable working hours, wages paid on time, etc.) can either make the workforce feel that are within a good company which they are proud to be a part of, or the reverse.

Among the many psychological factors at play, it is important to highlight that the workforce must feel they can trust the Management of the company, and that the relationship must be a friendly one, where demands that the Management place upon the staff will be respected.

The Management has a decisive role to play in determining the morale of the workforce. Any unplanned, inappropriate or unfair requests or policies, any unjustified dismissal (even if it merely appears so to the staff), or neglect or poor treatment extended to older staff members, can have a catastrophic effect on the morale of the workforce.

Through their middle management channels of influence, the workforce should be able to take part in the day-to-day decision making and be able to enjoy the satisfaction when set goals are achieved thanks to the improved quality of their work.

The workforce should be well informed about matters of interest to everyone, and above all be made to feel that their activities are of importance within the organisation.

Unity and harmony within the workforce are essential and can be achieved by a good selection of personnel, not by indiscriminate dismissals.

When recruiting personnel it is advisable to assess the applicant as a person, placing more value in their human qualities and personal worth than on their actual CV (the recruitment officer must be well versed in psychology for this). There is less risk in relocating well-known, long-serving members of staff from subsidiary companies than recruiting new personnel.

It is particularly important to grant an "early retirement" at the request of any interested member of staff when at a legally appropriate age, even though it may result in a substantial cost for the company, as by doing so we achieve two important things: we fulfil our social commitment and boost morale amongst the workforce.

When there is unity and harmony within the group, it is easy to create a good team spirit which encourages a positive working relationship between the staff members, so that they are more willing to provide support to one another, thinking more about "We" than "I".

Considering all of the above, it is plain to see that "EMPLOYEE MORALE" (the subject of this article) is more important than policies on pay rates. As MASLOW states in his hierarchy of needs: "Once the basic needs have been reasonably satisfied, one is able to develop higher levels of needs and desires". This does not mean that we should forget about policies on pay rates and incentives, which are also very important. However, due to the competitive nature of any business, there are budget limits, which everybody generally understands. Nevertheless, these matters must be treated in the fairest possible way.
Management must aim to create the best possible work environment in order to maintain and improve the team spirit that has always been present in our Company.

With warmest regards, Pere Gallés.