

WHAT'S INSIDE:



2019

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICERS & STAFF IN THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE

### EXTINGUISHING NEGATIVITY FROM THE WORKPLACE:

The typical workplace has its ups and downs in terms of employee negativity. A negative employee is someone who always seems to be in a bad mood, unproductive, difficult to work with, unwilling, pessimistic just to name a few. Employee negativity may result from an excessive workload, concerns about management's ability to lead the organisation successfully, anxiety about the future- specifically job security, insufficient recognition for the level of contribution and effort provided and concerns that remuneration is inadequate. A negative workplace culture can result in employees becoming disgruntled and expending little effort in achieving work targets. If management does not act quickly, staff morale may decline, creativity may be stifled, communication may be hampered, there may be less collegial relationships and ultimately, organisational results may suffer.

Human Resource (HR) may combat negativity by taking a customer-centric approach. A customer-centric approach focuses on the needs of the employees and places value and recognition on the human resources of the organisation. When employees feel valued, this helps to create a positive culture that is engaging and esteems the values and objectives of the organisation. Clear HR policies and procedures also help to extinguish negativity in the workplace by establishing a common direction with goals, values and a mission that promotes employee engagement.

Leaders have to model the behaviour they want to see. Negativity can be contagious and if a change in attitude is the goal, leaders have to lead by example. Leaders have to be genuinely concerned about their direct reports and about their personal and professional development as well as their overall mental health. This plays a key role in extinguishing the flames of negativity in the workplace as they naturally instill a sense of direction and drive in their employees. Although perfecting the art of leading will take time and consistency, it is by far the best method to curtail negativity in the workplace.

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#### Sources:

Retrieved from SRG Workforce Training: <https://srghr.com/how-to-reverse-negativity-in-the-workplace-2/>

Retrieved from Discouraging Negativity in the Workplace: <https://appliedpsychologydegree.usc.edu/blog/discouraging-negativity-in-the-workplace/>

## Taking A Customer-Centric Approach to Human Resources



Customers are an important asset to any organisation. Human Resource professionals know that while their customers are employees, they still have a responsibility to provide quality customer service to them. With this in mind, HR practitioners are raising their standards and are becoming customer-centric.

HR being customer-centric, will involve them implementing strategies that may be used to revolutionise the way they interact with and serve their internal customers. Integrating HR practices and providing quality customer service requires a partnership with a two-way communication system that goes far beyond customer satisfaction surveys and suggestion boxes; it involves anticipating and exceeding the needs of employees. Every time HR interacts with their customers, they should be engaged with a view to uncovering the steps that can be taken to inform future practices and make future interaction and visits to the department more enjoyable, with the main aim being to improve employee experiences. Customer-centric HR sustains valuable relationships with employees.

Here are six (6) strategies that may be used in creating a customer-centric approach to HR:

### CLARIFY ALL EXPECTATIONS UP FRONT

Once an employee decides to work with an organisation, it is important that the organisation clarifies and explains the resources that will be made available to him/her, as well as the level of performance that is expected. The onboarding process is an integral aspect of welcoming new employees and HR must use this process to communicate the importance of the contributions that the new recruits will make to the organisation.



## 2

### DELIVER WHATEVER YOU PROMISE

Once the organisation promises a certain package of resources to its employees (e.g., information, training, access to rewards, etc.), the organisation has a responsibility to provide those resources. Being transparent about those promises and delivering on them are critical because it ensures that everyone feels they are treated fairly and with a high level of respect.



# The SIX PILLARS OF



## 3 CONSISTENT MONITORING AND ADJUSTING

HR can ensure consistent monitoring and adjusting by employing the use of an internal HR audit. An internal HR audit would involve a review of all HR policies, practices, and procedures, to identify the policies, processes and procedures that are not being followed, outdated, not user friendly. HR may use the audit to also identify opportunities for new policies or procedures and detect where additional training or communication would be helpful for compliance.

Timely feedback can assist HR in driving performance improvements. HR, however has to remain committed to acting on the results of the audit, whether that means performing a detailed review of policies, putting together special teams to create or update policies and procedures, designing training courses targeted to increase conformity to norms/practices or finding new ways to communicate and disseminate information to employees.

**Internal Audit**  
compliance risk  
independent effective improve  
add value efficient assurance objective

## 4 REWARD AND RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEES

It is imperative that HR takes a leading role in recognizing and rewarding high performance.

Performance management and appraisal systems that recognize and reward high performers should be instituted by HR.

Openly recognizing employees who exceed performance standards helps in creating and fostering customer-centric cultures!



## 5 OFFER AN ATTRACTIVE VALUE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

As employees continue to work with an organisation, the resources they offer will evolve – as will their hopes and dreams. The external environment will also evolve, with customers demanding a different kind of experience. To sustain employee relationships, HR must offer benefits that meet the future needs of employees, benefits that include but are not limited to awards banquets, retreats/getaways, and other systems that recognize and reward customer service exemplars.

## 6 PROVIDE RECOURSE MECHANISMS THAT PROTECT THE RELATIONSHIP WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

No matter how hard everyone tries, there can and will be misunderstandings and HR is not exempted from making mistakes. HR must therefore put systems in place for coping with errors. This will prevent collegial relationships from unravelling in the long term and help to preserve healthy and lasting relationships. HR can preserve relationships by always having an open door policy, always encouraging feedback from employees and apologising to employees when they are wrong.



## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

# Human Resource Policies & Procedures Manual

A **Human Resource Policy and Procedure Manual** is a document detailing an organisation's policies regarding employee management and relationship between managers and employees. It is essential that the HR Policies and Procedures Manual and the Employee Handbook are developed in order to foster standardisation and equilibrium within the organisation. The HR Policies and Procedures Manual should be used as a reference tool not only for HR Practitioners but also for managers and supervisors throughout the organisation.

While compiling a HR Policies and Procedures Manual, you should keep in mind the following:

- The organisational culture
- Statutes and regulations (Staff Orders and Public Service Regulations) that govern employments in the Public Service
- Current trends

Even though there may be varying HR Policies and Procedures Manuals, they somewhat have a standard format. The following shows an example outline of the standard headings that should be included in a HR Policy and Procedures Manual.

### 01- COMPANY'S ORGANISATIONAL CHART/STRUCTURE

### 02- INTRODUCTION

- MISSION
- VISION STATEMENT
- SCOPE

### 03- MAIN HEADING ( Chapters to be covered )

- POLICY STATEMENT (Introduction/Aim)
- OBJECTIVES ( Expected Outcome/What to do?)
- PROCEDURES ( How will it be done?)
- RESPONSIBILITIES ( What is the duty of the employer/employee?)

### Suggested Chapters for HR Policies & Procedures Manual

Chapters in the HR Policies and Procedures Manual aim to provide guidelines for HR transactions such as Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Appointments, Performance Management and other portfolio areas. These guides are essential for communicating an organisation's workplace policy and because they are often referenced in legal proceedings, they must be thorough and accurate. The information given in each chapter should consist of all the details regarding the treatment to be given to the employees within the organisation and help employees recognize the culture of the organisation.

*Join us in the next issue as we take an in depth look at the proposed chapters that should be included in a HR Policies and Procedures Manual.*



#### Sources:

Prachi,J. 2015. HR Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook: Management Study Guide Content Team. Available at: <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/managing-downsizing-in-organisations.htm>

Heathfield, S. (2019). Sample Human Resources Policies and Procedures: available at: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/sample-human-resources-policies-and-procedures-1918876> . 2014. Human Resource Management Policies and Procedures Manual: Ministry of National Security. Kingston, Jamaica (pp.ix)



# MENTAL HEALTH



## AND YOU

**Mental Health** is about being able to work and study to your full potential, cope with day-to-day stress, feel connected to others, and live your life in a free and fulfilling way.

According to the Ministry of Health and Wellness, one in every five persons in the workplace has mental-health issues. These issues range from anxiety to depression. It is very important to examine all of the factors that support mental health by looking at the issues that make a workplace mentally friendly.

**Dr. Kevin Goulbourne**, Director of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in the Ministry of Health and Wellness, analyses the impacts of Mental Health in the workplace.



### What is mental illness?

This deals with a wide range of conditions in which persons experience disturbance in their speech and thought process, mood, perception and behaviour which may cause some impairment in their functions.



### What causes mental illness?

Changes in life circumstances, brain damage, stroke, stress, substance abuse, personality traits or even family history are some common factors that may cause someone to be mentally ill.



### What are some mental conditions that may affect people?

Psychotic conditions such as depression or manic depressive symptoms, anxiety disorder, panic disorder, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorders and neuro-cognitive disorder (dementia) are different types of mental conditions that may affect people.



### What are some observable signs?

With mental conditions, there is a disturbance in a person's reality. As a result of this, there is a change in the way they talk, how they view life and its environment, their behaviour, appetite, mood, dress, self-care and interpersonal interactions.



### Can someone recover from mental illness?

Some mental conditions are temporary and allow for persons to recover and return to their normal self without lifelong intervention. Others require persons to be on permanent treatment in order to prevent relapse in their conditions.



### How can mentally ill employees cope?

Mentally ill employees are encouraged to ensure that they attend their clinic appointments and inform their managers so that they can be assigned to less demanding functions as well as provide appropriate support to facilitate recovery.



### How should employers deal with mentally ill workers?

Employers are encouraged to provide a supportive, caring environment for persons who are experiencing mental health issues. They should also consider doing peer-to-peer mentorship and assistance programmes for mentally ill employees. It is also very important to educate the entire staff and encourage them to avoid labelling and being judgmental of mentally ill persons.



### What is the Ministry doing to assist mentally ill persons?

Information is often skewed to view mentally ill persons as violent and feared. The Mental Health Unit in the Ministry of Health and Wellness has embarked on a campaign to educate the public on mental health illness. They have also opened a 24/7 phone line that caters to persons who are suffering from mental illness. The Ministry will be launching an education programme in schools and is currently in the process of creating a workplace policy on mental illness. Mental health week which is recognized annually, is slated to be held during the week of October 7 with World Mental Health Day being celebrated on **Thursday, October 10.**



# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders

"Boss contrã Friend"—What's my place?

Imagine you were given a task by your supervisor to complete and you tried your best to get it done before the deadline. You even worked overtime and on weekends just to get the job done. But in the end, you missed the deadline and now cost the organisation. Instead of rewarding your efforts of going beyond the call of duty to complete this task, your boss withholds your incremental payments!

There are many leadership styles within the public sector in modernised Jamaica. However, they are narrowed down to two groups: dominance and prestige leaders.

## *Dominant Leader*

Dominant leaders are managers who value power and ensure that employees stay in line through order and structure; ensuring that policies, practices, regulations and procedures are maintained, is a top priority. The dominant leader will use a reward system like promotion or incentives if the employee exceeds work expectations. Transactional, autocratic, bureaucratic and task-oriented leaders are considered dominant leadership styles.

## *Prestige Leader*

The prestige leadership style is one which encourages employee innovation and creativity strategies to ensure organisational success. Prestige leaders build relationships, invite opinions from team members and inspire employees to bring out their talents and skills. Laissez-faire, democratic, charismatic and transformational leaders are examples of prestige leadership.



## *What leadership style is prominent in Jamaica's public sector?*

In an era of globalisation, decentralisation, and knowledge-based economies, governments are having to reshape public sector leadership to cope with new challenges. Jamaica is no exception. Public sector leaders are working in an environment that requires them to become change agents, promoters of enhanced performance, coordinators of government policies, and keepers of public service values. The most important role of public sector leaders has been to solve the problems and challenges faced in a specific environment.

## *Know your employee*

Encouraging a culture of modernisation requires change. Leaders are encouraged to embrace millennial employees who are helping to shape Jamaica's public sector. Leadership plays a very important role in today's modern economy and age of technology.



A leader is someone who has followers with multiple personalities. In the public sector, leadership styles should vary according to the situation and depend upon the availability of resources and scenarios. Whether, a dominant or prestige leader, it is important that managers get to know the employees and their skills in order to use the most appropriate leadership style or a combination of styles.



# EXTINGUISHING FIRES



Fire is one of our biggest threats; it can easily destroy an organisation that has taken decades to build in a matter of minutes. That is why it is so important that individuals are armed with the knowledge of **EXTINGUISHING FIRES!!!!**

A fire is the visible effect of the process of combustion – a special type of chemical reaction where one or more substances are changed into different substances. When combustion happens, substances like wood, paper, oil, or coal combine with oxygen in the air to produce water, carbon dioxide, waste gases and heat.

Oxygen, fuel and heat are needed for fire to occur. This is known as the fire triangle. A fire will burn when all these things are present; however, putting out a fire involves breaking the fire triangle—which means removing either the fuel, the heat, or the oxygen. A fire is the most common type of emergency for which an organisation must plan. Employees who have been designated to use fire extinguishers as part of the emergency action plan, must be trained on how to use the fire extinguishers appropriately in the workplace.

## USING A FIRE EXTINGUISHER

The following steps should be followed when responding to a fire:

- 🔥 Sound the fire alarm and call the fire department, if appropriate;
- 🔥 Identify a safe evacuation path before approaching the fire. Do not allow the fire, heat, or smoke to come between you and your evacuation path;
- 🔥 Select the appropriate type of fire extinguisher;
- 🔥 Discharge the extinguisher within its effective range using the: **P.A.S.S. technique (pull, aim, squeeze, sweep).**
- 🔥 Evacuate immediately if the fire progresses.



# EXTINGUISHING “PEOPLE FIRES”

There are times when HR will witness conflict between employees. This conflict creates uncomfortable tension at work, and no matter how hard others try to avoid it, the fire continues to burn, greatly affecting the atmosphere, which in turn affects employee's productivity. The truth of the matter is that “people fires” are unavoidable.

Here are six (6) ways HR can extinguish “people fires” and find a resolution in a quick and professional manner:

1

Put out the fire immediately and address the situation as soon as possible. Extinguish the flames before the fire spreads to the rest of the office.

2

Provide your undivided attention and focus on listening. Escalating anger is often slowed down when you lend a sympathetic ear to each party.

Identify the underlying issue. If the root of the problem is not easily determined, ask probing questions to help identify the underlying issue.

3

4

After identifying the root of the problem you will need to make a resolution that is fair. To make sure your resolution is aligned with the company policy, review the Grievance Procedures and Employee Handbook.

5

After assessing the situation from an unbiased standpoint, create a resolution that refocuses the employees from the conflict to the resolution.

6

After a few days, have a follow-up meeting to see where the employees now stand with each other. Also, have a plan of action ready just in case nothing has changed.

## In the News:

### Government Pushing for Pension Plan Regulations to be in place early 2020

Senator the Honourable Parnell Charles Jnr., Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, announced on Friday August 2, 2019 that regulatory amendments aimed at safe guarding the assets of **pension plans** should be in place by early 2020. The regulations require each pension plan to have an investment policy. Among other assets, pension plans will now be permitted to invest in bonds issued by companies that have an investment grade rating from a recognized rating agency; and bonds issued by companies listed on the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE). The investment is said to provide higher return investment opportunities for pension funds which may increase individual and organisational assets.

Source: <https://jis.gov.jm/govt-pushing-for-pension-plan-regulations-to-be-in-place-early-2020/>

## Upcoming EVENTS

**28  
OCTOBER -  
1 NOVEMBER**

### CORRECTIONAL SERVICES WEEK

For more information please visit:  
<https://www.dcs.gov.jm/>

### HRMAJ 39 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Knutsford Court Hotel

11 Ruthven Road, Kingston.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.hrmaj.org/>

**15-19  
NOVEMBER**

### CIVIL SERVICE WEEK

For more information, please visit:  
<http://mof.gov.jm/csw.html>

**13-22  
NOVEMBER**

DATE	EVENT
Nov. 13	Civil Service Week Media Launch
Nov. 15	Civil Servants of the Year Award Ceremony
Nov. 16	Civil Servants Walk/Run Event
Nov. 17	Church Service
Nov. 19	School Sensitization Tour
Nov. 20	Jamaica Civil Service Long Service Award
Nov. 21	In-House Activity, MDA Quiz Competition & JCSA-Secondary School Quiz Competition
Nov. 22	MDA Quiz Finals & After-Work Lyme
Nov. 23	Charity Handover

## next issue

- Sexual Harassment in the workplace
- Opening of the new HR Shared Services Centre
- Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual
- 'Tis' the season for giving back
- Christmas Traditions

**SEE YOU AT**  
 **CHRISTMAS**

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