Take disciplinary action where necessary.
Meet with the staff involved to identify
Ensure you meet all legal obligations to
Deal with conflict as soon as it comes to your
Checklist
• Ensure staff clearly understand:
• Developed a timetable for introducing the
Checklist
• Clearly identify what you propose to change.
• Involve staff by discussing the proposed
Draft the proposed change(s) in writing and
develop a timetable for introducing the change(s), allowing for a period of transition,
Explain to staff what is expected of them as a result of the new policy/procedure/system.
Monitor and review the progress and impact of the change(s).
Note:
Simply separating the staff involved may not be the answer as you may just be transferring a problem to another area.

Introducing change at work
Change comes in many forms, from a simple roster change to the way people work, such as the introduction of new systems and procedures. How the change is introduced into the workplace is important. The difference between a smooth transition or one filled with opposition and challenge can often be a simple process of consultation and communication.

Checklist
• Clearly identify what you propose to change.
• Involve staff by discussing the proposed change(s) with them. Explain the reason for the change(s) and seek their input and suggestions before making your decision.
• Draft the proposed change(s) in writing and provide staff the opportunity to comment and suggest changes.
• Develop a timetable for introducing the change(s), allowing for a period of transition, and training where necessary.
• Explain to staff what is expected of them as a result of the new policy/procedure/system.
• Monitor and review the progress and impact of the change(s).

Managing People
Managing staff requires an employer to be more than just ‘the boss’ in the workplace. You effectively take on the role of counsellor, guide, leader, taskmaster, coach and mentor to your employees.
A key challenge for employers is to keep staff motivated and performing well in the workplace.

Motivation
Keeping your staff motivated
What motivates employees to keep performing and to stay with their employer?
Contrary to popular perception, motivating employees doesn’t always have to involve financial rewards.
Countless studies have shown that employees often rank recognition and open communication well above all else when choosing a job or staying with their current jobs.
There isn’t a single approach to motivating staff. You may need to identify a range of motivational drivers for your workplace. Focus on different strategies to tap into the different needs of your staff. One size may not fit all.

How do I motivate my employees?
Your greatest challenge is to work with your staff to align their individual needs, interests, career aspirations and learning goals with your business needs of high performance and results.

What sort of methods should I consider?
Adopt strategies to retain, reward and recognise your employees who make a positive contribution to overall business performance, such as:
• Opportunity for advancement
• Challenging and interesting work
• Job security
• Showing respect
• Employee recognition

Need more information on the topics covered in the Employment Essentials series?
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Experienced, motivated and productive staff can significantly increase profitability by retaining and satisfactorily reward their efforts. In turn, you may also wish to draw up a workplace policy so that it is clear who the proposal applies to, when it is applied and how it is applied.

**STEP 1** Find out what motivates your staff

**Consider:**
- what interests them?
- what are they looking for in the job?
- what are their career aspirations, development and individual learning needs?
- are they looking for cash incentives or non-financial incentives, such as flexible working hours, time off for personal or family responsibilities or greater decision-making responsibilities?

**STEP 2** Work out how staff needs fit with your business needs

**Consider:**
- the ability of your business to pay cash incentives and how these could be organised
- the nature and operation of your business, for example, could you introduce non-financial incentives, such as flexible hours or rostered days off
- the impact of introducing workplace flexibility in your business.

Staff may value opportunities for professional development, flexibility or personal independence over monetary bonuses. While such non-material incentives may cost less than a raise, they will probably require a greater investment in terms of time and energy from you. However, the benefits are substantial. Your staff will value the fact that you recognise their needs and satisfactorily reward their efforts. In turn, you can significantly increase profitability by retaining experienced, motivated and productive staff.

**STEP 3** Review your proposed arrangements/incentives with your staff

**Discuss:**
- options being considered

- how they will work for the business
- potential impact on the business and staff.
- work with staff to develop strategies to address unplanned absences
- redesign, eliminate or reduce ‘boring’ or repetitive jobs
- widen job responsibilities and increase promotional opportunities
- recognise and reward your employees’ contribution to your business
- improve the skills of supervisors
- provide training and development opportunities
- implement preventative occupational health and safety strategies to minimise workers compensation absences
- monitor annual and long service leave data to ensure your employees are taking adequate recreational breaks.

**STEP 4** Implementation

Once a proposal has been agreed you may wish to introduce changes for a trial period. You may also wish to set a time for the trial period and review the arrangement within that time frame.

**STEP 5** Review and evaluate

Set a time for the trial period and review the arrangement within that time frame.

**Managing absenteeism**

Absenteeism represents a major cost for businesses. Unplanned absences can cost businesses in:
- paying the employee wage/salary and/or benefits while not producing
- juggling other employees to cover the work of the absent employee
- overtime for those covering the work of the absent employee
- casual labour to replace the absent employee
- production losses and inefficient material usage.

**Four causes of absenteeism**

Common causes of absenteeism include:
- work/life issues
- stress
- entitlement mentality
- personal needs and family issues.

**Strategies to reduce absenteeism**

There are many strategies that you can initiate that will help you to reduce absenteeism in your business:
- promote a high performance work culture which emphasises why and how your staff fit into the culture
- provide flexible work practices which enable employees to take planned days off
- set a time for the trial period and review the arrangement within that time frame.

**Other strategies**

Look at the culture of the workplace and find out why staff may not want to go to work. Measure sick leave and unauthorised absences rather than all absences due to other leave.

If you’re introducing systems to reward staff for not taking sick leave, ensure fairness and equity for those staff who are genuinely sick or with carers’ responsibilities. Reward systems must not undermine sick leave provisions in the relevant award.

Care should be taken when introducing reward systems. While these systems may reduce the levels of absenteeism and sick leave, it may also encourage staff to be at work when they are sick. The outcome may cost the business in further productivity losses as illness is spread throughout the workplace.

Review and evaluate the impact of introducing workplace flexibility to see how flexible work practices can help improve employee performance.

**Grievance handling**

To solve problems as they develop, you need effective grievance handling procedures tailored to the needs of your workplace.

**What is a grievance?**

A grievance is a formal expression of dissatisfaction about a work situation usually by an individual employee, but it may sometimes also be initiated by a group of staff or a union acting on their behalf.

Grievance procedures are based on the principle of natural justice and it is recognised as good business sense to have effective grievance procedures.

**Handling a grievance**

Deal with the grievance promptly

Avoiding the matter creates anxiety. Initiate discussion quickly, investigate and double check all the facts.

**Conflict in the workplace**

Conflict may arise from time to time which may have significant adverse effects on your business. This may include loss of productivity and customer confidence. Conflict occurs for a range of reasons. It may be the result of personal differences, differences in approach, an action at work, or even outside the workplace. Ignoring the problem may potentially lead to something more serious, such as a physical conflict between staff or significant impacts on work performance.