



WELLBEING POLICY IN RODDA'S

1. Organisations involved

Rodda's - A.E. Rodda & Son Creamery

National Health Service

British Heart Foundation

2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

Rodda's creamery in Cornwall is a family-run business founded in 1890, currently employing as many as 150 workers. Over five generations the factory buildings have been extended and renovated to house the growing business, and to comply with Health and Safety, and Hygiene guidelines. However, the principles of the production of clotted cream have hardly changed at all.

The company realised that what made their company different was the dedication, motivation and commitment of their staff. It is the employer's responsibility to invest time and effort in human resources management and establish a reputation as a top employer in order to be able to attract and retain talent which will protect the company's future. They recognised that the highest overhead in most businesses relates to 'employment', and therefore dedicated themselves to analysing and improving recruitment processes and the training and retention of staff. Fierce competition on the market necessitates well-trained staff, to enhance productivity. Demographic changes result in a diversified workforce that needs special attention to age (young and ageing), gender, faith, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and parental status (children and/or parents need care). To face these challenges requires planning ahead.

As a family business itself, Rodda's understood the importance of family life and getting the balance right. They were also aware of the facts that:

- the population faces severe consequences of preventable ill health;
- sickness absence and presenteeism poses a huge burden on the society;
- workers seldom go to the doctor unless unavoidable;
- sixty percent of waking hours are spent at the work;
- workplaces seem to be excellent settings to promote healthier lifestyle;
- for every pound invested in health & wellbeing you got three pounds back.

2.2. Aims

The company wanted to adapt and prepare for the changes of the world by recruiting and retaining staff that were in good health and felt good about themselves and their work environment. The goal was to create a holistic approach in a sustainable system. They realised that you might have low absenteeism: but did you have a healthy workforce or were you actually just paying for employee presence? It was obvious to the management that it made good commercial sense to ensure that whenever possible, the people who made up the company were happy and healthy.

The company understands health and wellbeing at work as a: "State of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing". They wanted to challenge that when it came to staying fit and healthy, responsibility fell solely with the individual. They believed that employers can also make a positive impact on this area; people do not generally go to their doctors for wellness advice, so why not use the workforce?

Picture 1: (Right to Left) Dawn Hedger Co. H.R. Manager, Chris Quelch Operations Manager and Nicholas Rodda Managing Director at Rodda's Creamery



Source: Roddas

2.3. What was done, and how?

All directors and staff dedicated themselves to actions as they realised that no matter how good the ideas were, without the backing and commitment to carry and continue with the lifestyle changes being introduced it usually was deemed to failure.

The company considered occupational safety and health as of utmost importance and was always striving to improve the conditions. The Operations Director also invited the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to audit the company. This involved both parties working together *going the extra mile* for example, getting staff involved in the selection of their personal protective equipment (PPE), footwear and listening to their opinions. By doing so aided employees to become more conscious of the importance of PPE and lead by example. HSE was so satisfied with the work environment that they enlisted the company into their possible training sites.

A carefully designed questionnaire assessed staff needs by asking what would help them improve their working environment, ranging from travelling to work, social events, training requirements, health and wellbeing and the barriers faced regarding these activities. Based on this invaluable feedback the company introduced services and distributed educational information based on nationwide public health campaign topics on the basis of the surveys and certain nation-wide public health data (e.g. according to surveys only the third of the population in the United Kingdom eats the recommended 5 portion of fruit and vegetables; Therefore, the company provided free fruit throughout the site in order to enhance healthy eating habits).

From the questionnaire they were able to recognise there were a small number of smokers at the company; the questionnaire successfully identified their need for help in quitting. An NHS (National Health Service) advisor was invited to the company to give one-to-one sessions, on average 6 sessions per smoker with a 90% success rate. All this took place in company time ensuring there was no loss of pay or benefits.

The actions can be grouped into three main categories: physical health, mental health and gratitude. However, they are highly interwoven: and the offered services all show how the company appreciates their staff and these actions strengthen the links between the enterprise and their workers. For example, something as simple as acknowledging an employee's birthday can have positive effects on mental health, just like a healthy body facilitates a sound mind.

Initiatives on physical health

The company believed that it was their responsibility to help the staff to find ways to include fitness and nutrition in their day.

The Human Resources Manager Dawn Hedger, contacted the local private health care hospital to see if they would be interested in working together with the aim of offering to the workers free Health & Wellbeing check-ups (paid by Rodda's), initially for a trial six month period. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, the staff were informed that the results of the check-ups were entirely confidential. This public/private co-operation (that was the first of its kind) became a massive success. Staff were engaged fully with the scheme with many comparing the results of their checks in the staff canteen, creating a real buzz in the company which in itself further emphasized and highlighted the healthy message.

Meanwhile the health checks were backed by an active promotion campaign in which the company ran in-house monthly campaigns. These covered a wide range of topics,, some included the National Health Trust (NHS) programme:

- stress awareness
- alcohol awareness
- healthy eating
- recycle week
- cervical cancer prevention week
- eating disorders awareness
- Raynaud's awareness
- etc.

The company promoted taking up healthy lifestyle habits by encouraging several actions, e.g.:

- Cycle to work schemes
- Using the stairs
- Walking groups
- Virtual walking challenge
- Coaching for healthy eating
- Diet Buddies
- Weight Management Club

To achieve this they had support from the government cycle-to-work scheme, NHS Health at Workplace, outside advisors and using the facilities at Rodda's for the Weight Management Club / healthy eating and *Step-o-meters* for virtual walking groups... But most importantly these activities were endorsed from the top down validating the importance of Health & Wellbeing in the workplace.

Picture 2: "Tickled Pink" The administration department with Valerie (Cow) all dressed in pink supporting the breast cancer awareness



Source: Roddas

Mental health promotion

The Company Human Resources Manager was convinced that just by taking the time to listen and help where appropriate could make a tremendous help to your employees mental health.

The company provides a 24-hour call line which is made available for all staff and their immediate family who live with them. The counselling service offers free and confidential professional help in areas ranging from e.g. personal / employment / debt...

With the help of C-A-B (Citizens advice bureau – a charity network) the company also provided a money management advice service, because several studies showed that money worries were a significant cause of worry, anxiety and stress in the UK.

Gratitude

As known from psychology, regular enforcement of the appreciation of the other person is a key point in any lasting relationship. It was applied in the company by social days out and gifts, all that created a sense of belonging. A remarkable part of the company's traditions and working culture was that they treated staff as individuals and tried where possible, to cater for the circumstances and needs of the individual.

The management recognised the length of service by valuable gifts and benefits (pieces of art, additional holidays, etc.).

As some employees started their shift in awkward hours, there were free newspapers available for all staff.

The barbecue event when directors and senior managers picnicked together with all members of staff proved to be such a success that it became an annual occasion. Here where all celebrate together length of service awards, some employees exceeding 30 years service.

There are so called Treat Days when seasonal food is given to the staff. For example, pasties or ice cream in hot summer, and mince pies at Christmas. The company also had a party to celebrate the Queen's jubilee to which all staff and their families were invited.

The company considers its Open Door Policy essential to the growth of the enterprise and in taking care of the mental and physical wellbeing of the staff.

An internal newsletter was published on a regular basis to help all members of staff feel included in what was going on company-wide. The staff themselves were also encouraged to take ownership of the newsletter with staff offering information about activities and achievements both within and outside of the workplace which were always eagerly awaited. The 'good-feel' factor that the newsletter generated became noticeable within the workforce.

Induction, training and return to work

The company HR Manager pioneered a whole new outlook towards recruitment, training and retention of staff in the region. As a first step, she wanted to understand the problems facing those who were unemployed. She discovered that everyone (education authorities, government bodies, agency/recruitment workers and employers) had responsibility and initiated a groundbreaking recruitment seminar with them.

All new employees/agency workers were made aware of the working culture: "We are so proud of our staff; we work together as a group of friends with pride in what we have collectively achieved." The buddy scheme helped new staff in what could be a daunting factory environment. All new employees were appointed a carefully chosen 'buddy' to help them integrate into the team, find their way around and to have an immediate feeling of inclusion. Networks were also in place to ensure that staff continued to have the support required to enrich their growth within the company.

The company adopted the simplest form of continuous improvement techniques possible, by embedding a common sense approach in the 'grass roots' of the shop floor. It was company practice to provide one-to-one support where there was any mandatory test (e.g. the official state Basic Food Hygiene test). All those who required it could make advantage of this help to encourage, support and develop them through the process. Standardised test could be horrendously difficult for those with learning disabilities thus the HR Manager started working with the government body to transform the test for those with e.g. reading problems. Further to this, the managers responsible for employees with disability (either learning or physical difficulties) received customised training to ensure that they were best able to both understand and meet the varying needs of their staff.

"Being deaf hasn't affected my employment at Rodda's. I'm not a number but a person; not a person with a disability but part of the team and treated equally."

KJ - Hygiene operative

The company introduced back to work interviews in 2006 because they considered that this extra point of contact could significantly help in getting to know the staff as individuals and understand the whole picture. The one-to-one meetings were objectively carried out by the company HR Manager and not the departmental managers. The interview, which also helped prevent sickness presenteeism, was carefully conducted so it wasn't perceived as '*big brother*' but a caring working culture. Greater flexibility was used to encourage employees return to work, such as varied working hours or a phased return.

The HR Manager also formed a group which included regional health and wellbeing coordinators as well as a local doctor. The team aimed to deal with time off work in a radical new way, looking at the issues faced in all sectors enabling all bodies to work together encouraging where possible a quicker return to work. The company was the only company in the region to participate with the Centre for Pain Research and Work, Health and Wellbeing group Department for Health regarding their research into managing sick leave in the workplace for people with chronic pain.

Regional leadership

The company stepped ahead and promoted its good practice among regional enterprises with a vision of every employer aiming at the highest health and wellbeing at work standard. The HR Manager firmly believed that changing the attitudes, stitching together the talents and weaving different strands of knowledge together could create something new. By broking existing knowledge a partnership among enterprises could produce a win-win situation for every player concerned. This so-called Mentor Award is the standard for companies that have started the journey of Health & Wellbeing at work and have dedicated themselves to help other companies to take their first steps.

The company HR Manager supported the NHS Health Promotion service by sharing ideas on how to motivate staff to live more healthily with the launch of a series of workplace forums. The NHS project provided any business or workplace across the region with free support and advice on improving the health and wellbeing of staff.

With the help of NHS, colleges and local businesses they launched a “Cook Well be Well challenge”. The objective of the competition was to encourage teams of people from the workplace who may have never cooked before to have a go at improving their cooking skills and awareness of healthy foods. They all strived to make it as much fun as possible but also educational so everyone could learn more about the use of different ingredients, creation of meals and how flavours work together. The aim of this challenge was to help employees to understand that their healthy menus could be reproduced in their home to start eating healthy using as much local produce as possible.

With the backing of the organisers, the company HR Manager introduced the first Health & Wellbeing stand at Expowest, one of the most successful regional business exhibition shows in the country. Beforehand, a dedicated eNewsletter promoting the Health & Wellbeing area was e-mailed out to their entire visitor database of over 9,000 verified contacts, to advertise and invite visitors to the stand. The stand proved to be a tremendous success where visitors also had the opportunity to participate in some health measurements such as body mass index, blood pressure, and receive health & wellbeing promotion materials...

As the company was run on good old fashioned ethics they were also dedicated to corporate social responsibility in environmental protection. In a bid to reduce waste of the core raw material they investigated alternative ideas around clearing cream residue out of the pipework and various tanks on the site. All employees' ideas / suggestions regarding reducing waste / environmental issues are always welcomed. The winning idea spared 480,000 litres of water a year and also recovered 220,000 litres of previously lost product. With the continuous improvements they use 1/6th of the water of the average milk producer. Analysing the possibilities of waste reduction the company placed different bins for segregation and thus reduced also the land fill by 70%. Employees sort the waste at source, which is then collected in its segregated format and sent off for recycling. 280 photovoltaic cells were also installed to produce enough electricity to power their entire milk bottling operation.

2.4. What was achieved?

- The Health & Wellbeing questionnaire helped to monitor staff satisfaction. (“We are lucky enough to now have a waiting list of potential employees; the benefits of long service employees; training reviews showed employees giving positive feedback regarding their job satisfaction...”)
- A massive drop in sickness levels (average sickness rate is lower than the national average); the company enjoys a sickness level lower than 2.37% even during peak production
- Positive corporate image: Staff turnover is almost zero and there is even an employment waiting list
- Gold Healthy Workplace Award 2012 (first company in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly to get to Gold directly)
- Food Manufacturing Excellence Awards – Diversity in Recruitment award, 2009
- Dairy Manufacturer of the year, 2011
- Drastically reduced waste output

2.5. Success factors

The success mainly depended on the Human Resources Manager who had decades of experience and was highly committed to changes and sought for opportunities. The dedication and leadership of the company management was essential. The involvement of workers in the selection of activities enabled the activities with the most impact to be implemented. The public health service also provided a lot of possibilities and a positive environment.

2.6. Further information

Mrs. Dawn Hedger
Company Human Resources Manager
Rodda's, The Creamery
Scorrier, Redruth, Cornwall, TR16 5BU
United Kingdom
Telephone: int+44-1209823300
Email: dawn.hedger@roddas.co.uk
Web site: www.roddas.co.uk

2.7. *Transferability*

The approach is transferable to any organisation. The key element is a dedicated, agile and highly qualified person on management level who is trusted and has the capacities to foster changes.

3. References, resources:

- National Heart Foundation – Health at work: Employee health and wellbeing in focus at Roddas. Available at: http://www.bhf.org.uk/THINKFIT/success_stories/roddas_health_at_work.aspx
- Workplace Health (Health Promotion Service – Cornwall). Available at: www.behealthyatwork.org
- NHS National Awareness Days. Available at: www.national-awareness-days.com.