



IMPULSE 2

MANAGING EMPLOYEES

IMPULSE 2

MANAGING EMPLOYEES

A discussion series on what the Bible has to say managing employees – God’s way!

01 _ Vision for personnel	6
02 _ Shared vision and motivation	10
03 _ Recruitment and selection	14
04 _ Co-workers or co-owners	18
05 _ Rights and duties	22
06 _ Personnel effectiveness	26
07 _ Performance	30
08 _ Encourage to good works	34
09 _ Business and family priorities	38
10 _ How do we sort this out?	42
11 _ Conflicts	46
12 _ When you have to let go	50

IMPULSE 2

Impulse is intended to help inspire discussions with other managers over the appreciation of relationships in and around the business. These short “talking papers” are intended to be a stimulus for reflection on decision-making in business, with a focus on relationships. The centre of every important activity is formed by people, and people bloom through strong relationships!

One of the most important aspects of the capital value of a business is its reputation. According to the Bible, a good name is “more desirable than gold or silver”, and that is formed by relationships, protected by strong relationships and can even be ruined by handling relationships badly.

The relational capital of a business can be increased by giving plenty of attention to developing healthy and healing relationships. Every business consists of a complex network of separate relationships and the ability to manage these well, is the basis for a fruitful enterprise.

There is no aspect of managing a business which is not influenced by relationships. Budgets consist of figures, but they represent a series of decisions about the priorities of different activities and they have an impact on relationships in a team. Project management is demonstrated on charts with columns and boxes, but it governs the tasks, responsibilities and timing of the relationships between team members. You can write a report in an afternoon sitting behind your computer, but what you write can drastically change your relationship with your customer or your manager.

Managing is a relational activity; coordinating, leading, and competing are relational activities. The work of a manager is actually governed by a series of relationships (with clients, employees, suppliers, consultants) which we use to motivate, negotiate, coach, resolve conflicts etc.

In this series of studies, we look at relating to employees, human resource management, the improvement of human potential to help the business grow.

This takes on four levels. Strategically, culturally, operationally and personally.

On a strategic level we see that it becomes difficult to differentiate between the products and services on offer. What makes a difference is the quality of relationships with clients, productive teamwork, and helping employees to manage the tensions between work and private life. The value of a brand depends on the trust between the customer and the people in the business who provide the required services.

On a cultural level, the quality of the mutual relationships is controlled, when a positive, attractive and robust culture develops that works for you whenever there are difficulties, changes must be made, the work pressure increases or new people are brought in.

On an operational level, the implementation of the necessary systems and procedures is governed by the relationships between people. If people can't get on with each other, then you can't rely on systems. Relationships are the glue that binds individuals and teams together into one organisation.

On a personal level, the relationships at the office or on the work floor, make work enjoyable and meaningful. Confronted with bossy managers, bullying or elbowing, people lose their effectiveness and costs go up. A relational work environment that is not managed well has a direct impact on motivation and productivity. Whenever there is insufficient attention given to the private wishes of individuals, this can lead to a decrease in productivity.

Day in, day out, the quality of life is dependent on our relationships. We function best when we feel “loved”. Not much is written about the concept of love in management courses. Nevertheless, we cannot separate work and life from each other. Functioning well in your work is dependent on how you function in your life as a whole. Growing up in a loving and caring environment creates a state of well-being and self-confidence, and the potential to develop healthy, meaningful relationships.

Thus, the second sentence of the Great Commandment, love your neighbour as yourself, is as relevant for our work lives as for our private lives.

One of the most pointed life rules regarding how you handle your personnel is this; you must handle your employee as though they were your son or

daughter! That is certainly a statement that provokes discussion. It does however, show the intention of the Christian manager to work in a company environment that gives plenty of room for building healthy relationships that help the employee to fully bloom, to help them learn and grow.

In the end, it is the mission of every Christian to obey the Great Commission. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

We have a beautiful opportunity, whilst doing business, to help our employees to be disciples, and to give to them all that we ourselves have learned from Jesus!

In this series about personnel management, we shall look at the decisions that two directors of a trading company have to make. Eric and Simon run E.S Supplies Ltd. They have recently become Christians and have a management meeting every Monday to discuss their business problems with each other. They are of course keen to know what influence their new faith should have on their running of the company!

A friend and fellow Christian businessman has said to them the name of their company should no longer be E.S (Eric & Simon) Supplies, but El Shaddai Supplies! From now on they are in direct service to the Almighty! Eric and Simon want to know what that involves!

The following studies will provide material to serve as a guide to showing God's heart to our employees! First read and discuss the Business problems and the guiding principles and then discuss with a friend or your group. Then, read and discuss what the Bible has to say and see how the Biblical principles could be applied in your HR policies.

Peter J. Briscoe

© Peter J. Briscoe, 2014

Cover, Layout, typesetting: romanundbraun

Printing and binding: TLAMA design

Picture: ©istockphoto.com/GlobalStock

1 VISION FOR PERSONNEL

CASE STUDY

“Eric, now that we’ve managed to get two big contracts from the government, our workforce is going to seriously increase. Can you remember how we began with just the two of us? Then it was easy. Now we’ve got to sit down and draw up a personnel management policy.”

“Yes Simon, I think if we now take the time to put in place a good strategy, then future decisions over personnel issues will be a lot easier to make. Since the Bible has become our management book, I would really like to discover what God says about how to deal with employees. A good friend of mine said that it begins by treating your personnel as family and dealing with an employee as though he or she is your son or daughter!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Personnel management begins with the “Great Commandment” to “love your neighbour as yourself.” In other words, “treat everybody how you would want to be treated!” Making decisions on personnel issues begins then with the question, “What would I, if I was in the same situation, consider to be fair and honest treatment?” Our task as Christians is to make “disciples”. A disciple is someone who learns from Jesus. This is the same for our employees – we want them to learn what Jesus would do!



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement “treat an employee as though he/she is your own son/daughter.” How would this affect your decision making on HR issues?
2. Think of a recent occurrence where you could have applied the “Great Commandment” – love your neighbour as yourself.
3. How could you apply, what is called the “Golden Rule” from *Matthew 7:12* in your relationships with personnel?
4. Jesus gave us a so-called “Great Commission” in *Matthew 2:18-20*, wherein we are called to “go out and make disciples”. Discuss what this means for your employees. Does it matter if they are believers or not?
5. Love is a word not often used in personnel management. How can you love people who are difficult to handle?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say ...

2 SHARED VISION AND MOTIVATION

CASE STUDY

“Simon, how can we really motivate our workers to get behind the business? I don’t want them to be just ‘employees’. Sometimes it seems like they do the minimum and can’t wait until they can go home. I wish that they could share our passion for the business and that there would be some progress. What steps can we take to best motivate them?”

“Yes, I know what you mean, Eric. We’re receiving more and more complaints from customers that it takes too long to get an answer to their questions. Now we’ve got these big contracts, the whole company seems to be grinding to a halt. On the financial front, things are still going okay, but I know from experience that there are changes around the corner. How can we ensure that more than the very minimum gets done?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

People are motivated by having an attractive, achievable goal, working alongside people who share their values and live them out. The discovery of an inspiring vision for achieving such a worthwhile goal motivates people to go on a mission to achieve it! When this mission is carried out alongside others who appreciate your personal worth, it gives meaning and a point to your work and you team up for the business! Values form the heart, which gives the hands determination to realise the vision!



DISCUSSION

1. Share with each other, your own vision for your business. How has it come into being?
2. How much do the employees share your vision? How do you communicate your vision within the business?
3. Discuss the following three steps for forming a vision
 - a. Describe the problem – what?
 - b. Find a solution – how?
 - c. Give reasons– why?
4. Do you operate in your business from out of a set of core values? Describe them.
5. How much are these values experienced throughout the whole business?
6. Discuss this quote from Antoine St. Exupery out of “The Little Prince”
“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea!”

Now look at what the Bible has to say about motivating employees through pursuing a shared vision ...

3 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

CASE STUDY

“Simon, we’ve had loads of responses to our advertisements. It’s going to be a major operation to pick out the right people. I’m finding it really difficult to know what criteria we should be using. Suppose we make a bad choice! Then we’ll have to start all over again. The successful delivery of the new contracts depends on getting this right! In my previous company, either I recruited the wrong people, or they had soon had enough of the work. It cost me loads of money! How can I get more assurance that I’m making the right choices?”

“Eric, I know what you mean. Let’s pray for wisdom en see what the Bible says about this. It won’t tell us who to recruit, but hopefully it might give us some ideas to consider.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Selecting employees begins even before a position is advertised, through writing a clear description of practical factors such as job requirements, experience, skills, salary level, personality etc. The Christian manager will pray for wisdom, make an accurate job description, and make choices once a candidate has been tested on all elements of the job description ... The most important element is someone’s heart!



DISCUSSION

1. What parameters do you use for selecting employees?
2. “The most important factor is someone’s character.” Do you agree with this?
3. Describe answers to prayer that you have received in the process of recruiting personnel.
4. What are your weak points in the area of personnel recruitment?
5. How could these be compensated for?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about selecting new employees!



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Character comes first!

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

(1 Sam 16:7)

2. Reliability

“Many claim to have unending love, but a faithful person who can find?”

(Prov 20:6)

3. Hard worker

“Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labour.” (Prov 12:24)

4. Respect for your faith

“All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered.”

(1 Tim 6:1)

5. Proficient – competent

“Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.” (Prov 22:29)

6. Tells the truth – check the CV!

“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.”

(Prov 12:19)

7. Four requirements for selecting managers – strength, God-fearing, reliable, incorruptible

“But select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.” (Exo 18:21)



SUMMARY

Building up human resources begins with prayer. God emphasises the importance of the right choice of colleagues, in that Jesus prayed for a whole night before he chose his disciples! Good preparation for the selection process is necessary in order to make good choices. Looking through the window into someone’s heart is essential for the selection process. The Lord can give insights there!

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 4

Simon and Eric want to get their colleagues fully motivated in order to get them behind the business ...



APPLICATION

Here is a checklist for managers in the selection process, alongside regular prayer:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| > Clearly-written personnel policy | > Accurate job description |
| > Personality test | > Competency test |
| > Check CV for truthfulness | > Check and query references |
| > Prepare well for interview | > Test reliability |

4 CO-WORKERS OR CO-OWNERS

CASE STUDY

“Eric, I’d love to put aside money to make a good personnel management policy, but that eats into the profits. A budget for training, rewarding good performance and improved working conditions are fine if you can pay for them, but isn’t that going to seriously reduce our profitability?”

“I still think that if we want to make employees responsible for the financial results of the business, we need to let them be involved in this, Simon. I’d love to get all our colleagues to be internal entrepreneurs; working as though they are serving their own business. I’m convinced that the productivity would increase and make us better able to react to changes in the market. Maybe we need to investigate this.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to remain successful as an organisation, it is increasingly necessary to be innovative. Leaders give direction and point to specific production goals. Subsequently, the workers have freedom to achieve these goals. It is expected that they manage this independently, whereby they are responsible to learn and to be innovative. This gives dignity to their work. Instead of just offering employees a contract, a covenant is made by all in the business with, defined duties, rights, and rewards.



DISCUSSION

1. God has a ‘covenant-relationship’ with us. What does a ‘covenant-relationship’ with employees entail?
2. What is the difference between a contract and a covenant?
3. Discuss the pros and cons of internal-entrepreneurship.
4. Should the employees also be able to enjoy the financial results of the business?
5. Discuss the pros and cons of letting them enjoy the financial results of their efforts.
6. How does this work with personnel in supporting roles (secretaries etc.)? How do you get them involved in the whole?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about co-ownership!

5

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

CASE STUDY

“Simon, we’re making good progress with our personnel handbook. We need to put in quite a few rules. We’re asking a lot from our employees. Alongside their duties, they do also have rights. I find this a real jungle. How can we make a policy over the rights and obligations of our employees? It’s easier to talk about what we expect of them than the other way round.

“Yeah, sometimes I get fed up with people moaning about rights. Linda spoke to us about her right to privacy and do you remember how Frank complained about his salary? He said that he had a right to the same treatment as others in this team. Of course we want to treat our colleagues well, and I understand that they want to know what they can expect of us, but it must not be one-way traffic!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Every human being is made “in the image of God” and we should respect their value as such. One aspect of God’s righteousness is the respect for rights. Having rights also implies duties; they are two sides of the same coin. A right is a legitimate, moral claim on another. That lays a duty on the other. A right to privacy implies the duty to protect details. The right of an employer to expect quality from an employee entails that the employee fully devotes their gifts and talents to the task. The covenant between employee and employer serves to implement the mutual rights and responsibilities. The setting out of rights is an expression of what we expect from each other and clarifies the relationship.



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the following list of rights for employees of a furniture manufacturer
 - a. The right to be needed
 - b. The right to be involved
 - c. The right to a covenant relationship (covenant or social contract)
 - d. The right to clear information
 - e. The right to choose their own assignment
 - f. The right to accountability
 - g. The right to appeal
 - h. The right to appropriate compensation for work delivered
2. How could you fit these into a personnel policy?
3. Are there other rights that could be recognised?
4. What duties do these require from an employer?
5. We have the duty to support the rights of others. Are there situations where rights of employees and employers come into conflict with each other?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about employees’ rights and duties ...



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Paying attention to rights is an important task for a manager**
 “Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.” (Col 4:1)
2. **You are entitled to demand your rights**
 “If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!” (Acts 25:11)
3. **First, check what the rights of the other are**
 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others ...” (Phil 2:3-4)
4. **The rights of refugees, widows and orphans have priority with God**
 “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow ...” (Deut 27:19)
5. **The rights of families should be protected**
 “A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.” (1 Tim 3:12)



APPLICATION

In an open and honest conversation, discuss a number of “fundamental” rights that your employees desire and the resulting duties for an employer. Do the same for your rights as employers. Put these together in a sort of covenant to form the basis for mutual righteousness in relationships. This forms an expression of the righteousness of God in your relationships.



SUMMARY

The definition of mutual rights and privileges serves to clarify relationships and avoids the non-fulfillment of (sometimes unspoken) expectations that can lead to conflict.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 6

Eric and Simon want to know how they can give their workers more responsibility and in doing so, increase their motivation.



6 PERSONNEL EFFECTIVENESS

CASE STUDY

“Simon, I read recently a definition of leadership; ‘leadership is releasing people to do what is asked of them in the most effective and humane way possible.’ We do of course want the highest possible productivity and to make sure that the workers are happy, but what does it mean to release them to do this?”

“Good question, Eric. They’ve got complicated tasks to fulfill in a constantly changing market with new technology for customers whose demands are increasingly high! How can we find a balance between following procedure and rules and giving room to innovation, ideas and creativity?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Leaders of businesses or departments should give people room; room for personal and professional growth, for creativity and ideas, for diversity. Employees want to be involved in a creative process, a work process that gives room to developing their full potential, and having the opportunity to make decisions and enjoy the results. Employees must feel free to take on problems, to generate ideas and use their gifts and talents in coming up with solutions. An increase in room to be creative raises personal efficiency and employee satisfaction.



DISCUSSION

1. What are the obstacles for creativity in the organisation?
2. How can ideas be used?
3. What stifles new ideas?
4. How can you find a balance between following procedures and giving room to creativity?
5. By which group could giving more freedom for creativity cause problems?
6. Why is training and coaching so important?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about involving employees in the creative process ...

7 PERFORMANCE

CASE STUDY

“Simon, of all the management tasks, I find performance evaluations the most difficult. We have a form that we fill in, but I’m skeptical that it really tells us much about how the employee is really performing. I’m wondering why we use it? What do the results actually mean?”

“If there’s one thing that causes controversy, then it’s the conclusions of a performance evaluation. It often damages the relationship between a manager and an employee instead of improving it! Eric, I don’t want to make more work for the head of personnel! It should really improve the individual performance of an employee! How can we achieve this? We need to get a sense of progress and be able to take the necessary steps towards personnel improvement on time.”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A performance evaluation is an important tool for a manager in communicating the philosophy of the business, promoting mutual trust, recognising achievements, assessing decision-making skills and a place where mistakes can be turned into positive lessons. All this should lead to better performance from both the manager and the employee! When this is done well, it plays a role in building strong teams and effective communication. Mutual accountability is needed for the completion of the undertaken projects. The way in which God deals with us is a model for how we handle others.



DISCUSSION

1. Do you conduct performance evaluations? If so, what do you find the most difficult about doing them?
2. What points should you evaluate?
3. What are the most important elements of such a conversation?
4. What lesson have you learned from conducting evaluations with employees?
5. Should a performance evaluation be linked to some form of reward? Why yes/no?
6. Discuss the statement “The way in which God evaluates us, is a model for how we assess others.”

Now look at what the Bible has to say about performance appraisals!



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. God holds us responsible for performance

“So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Cor 5:9-10)

2. God asks for accountability

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.” (Matt 25:19)

3. God rewards good performance

“The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’” (Luke 19:16-17)

4. Nehemiah kept an eye on the efforts of his workers and adjusted his plans accordingly

“The people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the labourers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.’ ... Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows.” (Neh 4:10 en 13)

5. Recognition for good results

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’” (Matt 25:21)

6. Correction should be done out of love

“... because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?” (Heb 12:6-7)

7. Assessment must be fair and accurate!

“The Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favour with him.” (Prov 11:1)

8. Failure can be an important step on the way to better performance

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Gen 50:20)

9. The focus is on the development of the employee in relation to their task

“The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.” (Luke 6:40)



APPLICATION

1. Are there clearly formulated and well-communicated performance goals? (Minimum standards, stated goals and expectations)
2. Ask the employee for their own self-evaluation of their task
3. Put the emphasis on progress in current projects rather than looking too much into the past. Evaluate the progress of a project with periodic reviews.
4. Keep an eye on the level of freedom allowed and the decision-making powers of the individual.
5. Conduct the discussion in an open atmosphere whereby both parties want to learn from the conversation.
6. Keep a written account of the conversation and any resulting actions to be taken.
7. Give recognition to good results.



SUMMARY

Many employees and managers do not look forward to a performance evaluation. It is essential to regularly evaluate the progress of a project and the contribution of an employee therein. When this is done right, it is a very useful method for improving performance and fully motivating the employee, in learning from mistakes and to focus on mutually accepted objectives.

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 8

Simon notices that some members of a team have become discouraged by problems in the project. How can they encourage the workers to carry on?



8

ENCOURAGE TO GOOD WORKS

CASE STUDY

“Eric, I notice that the quality issues with the de Jager & Co are causing the team to become discouraged. The new problems that have come up seem to be too much for them. Even so, I’m convinced they have the capability to come up with solutions! Dick has nearly given up; he is very frustrated.”

“Simon, last Sunday in church, I heard the pastor speaking about Barnabas ‘the encourager’. I think that one of our most important tasks as management is to encourage our people. They need to see that they can do it, and these problems provide an opportunity to show the client that they are the best team in their area of expertise! It seems to me that we first need to regain them their self-confidence, before they can fully commit themselves to the task again!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Encouragement is a condition for continuing involvement. We are very demanding of our employees and ask for dedication, commitment, discipline and quality. Managers encourage workers to remain focused on the vision and to commit themselves to completing the mission. They do this by letting the staff see that the management listen to them, understand them, are behind them and trust them to complete the job with complete dedication. Cultivating a positive self-image and encourage them to reach their full potential, increases the employees attachment to the company. Managing performance begins with encouragement!



DISCUSSION

1. What is “encouragement?” Why is it so important in interpersonal relationships?
2. Discuss the statement; “Encouragement is a condition for involvement.”
3. Why do employees need encouragement? In what ways can you encourage them?
4. Actively listening to another is the beginning of encouragement. How good are your ‘listening skills?’
5. What are the enemies of encouragement?

Let’s look at what the Bible has to say about encouraging employees!



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. Encouragement to good works

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching..." (Heb 10:24-25)

2. Encouragement is giving something of yourself

"Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet..." (Acts 4:36-37)

3. Encourage those who are not able to join in

"Back in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. They didn't trust him one bit. Then Barnabas took him under his wing. He introduced him to the apostles and stood up for him ..."
(Acts 9:26-27 – The Message)

4. Encouragement is an incentive to carry on

"News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord ..." (Acts 11:22-24)

5. Encouragement is striving for unity

"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." (Rom 14:19)

6. Encouragement is a good answer at the right moment!

"A person finds joy in giving an apt reply – and how good is a timely word!"
(Prov 15:23)



APPLICATION

Plan in time to actively listen to employees to find out what's going on in their lives and in their work. Put together a list of questions, such as: What problems are you struggling with? What are the obstacles to people functioning at the best? Where would they like to see improvements in their working environment? Seek opportunities to praise them and thank them for good work! Seek an open relationship with employees whereby leaders and workers trust one another in mutual dependence and desire to see each other succeed.



SUMMARY

Collaboration in the market is full of disappointments. New problems emerge all the time. Everyone has a need to be valued; to know that they are recognised, to be listened to, and that their opinion counts. The job of the manager is to encourage his staff, to help them to flourish, to reach their potential and to grow as individuals.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 9

Eric and Simon are incredibly busy and working long hours. The workers also often have to work late and families are complaining about this. How do they find a good balance between work requirements and the demands of people's private lives?



9 BUSINESS AND FAMILY PRIORITIES

CASE STUDY

“Simon, we have got a number of complaints from our employees to deal with. Dick is complaining that he has to work too many evenings, Bob says that he is busy every evening catching up on email and phone calls. Lois suspects that her husband has begun a relationship with someone else because she is never home. She’s considering looking for other work that doesn’t involve so much travel. My wife is also complaining about the fact that I’m never at home. Finding a balance between work and home life is proving difficult!”

“Yeah, Eric, two people in the shipping department have a part of their salary going directly to pay off debts, and I know that Jan has got problems at home. It’s massively influencing his work; he doesn’t seem to be able to concentrate. It seems like personal problems are negatively influencing the performance of a lot of our staff. I find it a really difficult issue. What should be our policy for this? Am I my brother’s keeper?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The family is the cornerstone of society. God intends the business to provide a contribution to the economic well-being of the family and (through this) of individuals. A personal policy should focus on a healthy balance between work and family priorities. Personal development and growth takes place at work and in social relationships. A lack of respect for family demands and private time can diminish the motivation, dedication and productivity of employees. A business can make a good contribution to the health of individuals and families by having a consistent policy that focuses on actively promoting healthy personal relationships. In fact, a company is also a family!



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the statement “a company is a family.”
2. Share with each other what measures you’ve found to keep a healthy balance between work and private life.
3. How does this apply to your employees? Think about working hours, overtime, travel, weekends etc.
4. A cornerstone of any policy regarding treatment of employees is “love your neighbour as yourself.”
5. How far should you go in “getting involved” in the private concerns of employees and in respecting their rights to privacy?
6. How do you protect your employees when they do have an unhealthy work/private life balance? (Think about workaholics)

Now look at what the Bible has to say about balancing work and family priorities!

OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **A primary task of the employer is the welfare of families**
 “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tim 5:8)
2. **Well-organised and thought out working conditions bring rest and peace**
 “The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence for ever.” (Isa 32:17)
3. **The manager pays an appropriate level of attention to the welfare of employees.**
 “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Where is your brother Abel? ‘I don’t know,’ he replied. ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’” (Gen 4:9)
4. **Pastoral care for the weak, strengthens the whole**
 “But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.” (1 Cor 12:24-25)
5. **God gives us a special responsibility towards widows and orphans**
 “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)

APPLICATION

Put together a personnel policy in which a healthy work/private life balance is respected and where pastoral care can be offered. This allows for good communication with employees over both work demands and personal needs. Investigate if the demands of the work are realistic for the capabilities of the individual. Involve the employee in designing his role.

Offer help and pastoral care in situations where the employee would value help in sorting out personal issues.

SUMMARY

The welfare and vitality of employees benefits their dedication to their work. The manager can also make a positive contribution to the family life of the employees by giving them challenging tasks, but not making unnecessary demands on a healthy family life.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 10

Eric and Simon have masses of dilemmas over personnel issues – can they find guidance in the Bible for making decisions and choices?



10

HOW DO WE SORT THIS OUT?

CASE STUDY

“Eric, we’ve got so many difficult decisions to make every week! It was a lot easier when it was just the two of us! Marie came to me to complain that she just can’t work with Kees. Both of them are on temporary contracts. I would like to keep Kees; he is a good worker and Marie can’t manage the work, but she is a single mum and desperately needs the work.”

“I know Simon. Harry got a raise after his performance evaluation and Wim is complaining that he does the same work. I suspect Wim of cheating on his expense claims, but I don’t know for sure. The team that is dealing with the de Jager contract is not functioning well. It seems that Bert doesn’t listen to the customer and pushes his own will through. I need to confront him with this, but how do I handle it? Does the Bible give us principles for dealing with difficult choices?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Bible doesn’t give us any rules for sorting out personnel dilemmas. Guidance can be found in the character of God. We are made in order to have a relationship with him and guidance for sorting out the problems in interpersonal relationships comes through reflecting on the three main characteristics of God – his holiness, righteousness, and his love. These can be translated into integrity, doing right and showing compassion. It forms a trinity; all three need to be in balance with each other.



DISCUSSION

1. Holiness has to do with absolute ethical and moral purity. What does this mean for personnel issues?
2. Righteousness has to do with mutual rights and responsibilities to one another. Every human carries the “image of God” and as such has basic rights that people in a community are duty-bound to respect. What does this mean for human resources policy?
3. Love is the hinge on which every decision turns and makes the importance and welfare of the other a priority. How do you apply this to decisions over personnel issues?
4. If you see holiness – righteousness – love as a whole, how do these three aspects of God’s character interact with each other in decision-making?
5. Discuss a personnel dilemma and how ‘holiness-righteousness-love’ could be applied to it!
6. How do you deal with precedents? (Same job, same pay?)

Now look at what the Bible has to say about handling difficulties with employees!

11 CONFLICTS

CASE STUDY

“Simon, the atmosphere in the team working on the de Jager contract is really bad. Dick and Jan have been at each other’s throats for some time now; yesterday they had a blazing row. I’ve heard that they also blame me for the quality issues. We need to do something about it, the customer has been aware of this for some time. You’re responsible for the contract! If we don’t take action now, then it’s only going to get worse! You know this kind of thing makes me really angry!”

“Yeah, Eric, you’re right. It’s carried on for too long. Dick and Jan are both strong characters and I find it really difficult to confront them over it. I’ve told them a couple of times that they need to listen to one another, but they are so stubborn and just push their own opinion through. I don’t understand what it’s all about!”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When a conflict isn’t dealt with directly, it can be damaging to the business. The relational manager seeks a positive and constructive solution, whereby lessons are learned and a good working relationship can be restored. A conflict is a good opportunity to show love for those involved by finding a fair solution. The wise manager brings healing to relationships and looks for a win-win result. He bases his judgment on facts and draws lessons from the situation that will benefit collaboration.



DISCUSSION

1. How do you react to conflicts? Ignore them? Angry? Upset?
2. How do you sort out conflicts?
3. What consequences can result from ignoring conflicts?
4. How can you discover the root causes of a conflict?
5. How would you apply the three character traits of God – holiness, righteousness and love – to a conflict situation?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about handling conflict at work!



OPEN THE BIBLE

1. **Conflict begins with a focus on your own agenda, or with clumsy communication**
 "Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice." (Prov 13:10)
2. **Conflict destroys effectiveness**
 "If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." (Gal 5:15)
3. **Conflict brings division in an organisation**
 "Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.'" (Matt 12:25)
4. **Conflict can have positive results**
 "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (Prov 27:17)
5. **Conflict can reveal the need for change**
 "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out." (Prov 18:15)
6. **In assessing a conflict, base your judgments on facts and not emotions**
 "One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offence they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. (Deut 19:15)
7. **The manager should look to bring healing**
 "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Prov 12:18)



APPLICATION

Follow six steps in conflict resolution that you can find in the conflict involving Paul and Barnabas in Acts chapter 15

1. Conflict resolution is a job for the leadership – verse 2 'put it before the apostles and leaders ...'
2. Listen to both sides in a dispute – verse 5 'the party of the Pharisees stood up ...'
3. Discuss the issue – verse 6 'the apostles and elders met to discuss this question ...'

4. Focus on the facts and what has actually occurred – verse 8 'God, who knows their heart, has accepted them ...'
5. Ask for the input of others – verses 13,14 'James spoke up ...'
6. Present a solution - verse 19 'James said, therefore it is my judgment ...'
7. Write up a policy that brings clarity- verse 20 'we should write to them ...'
8. Delegate to a team who can explain the policy – verse 22 'some of their own men ...'



SUMMARY

Conflict creates tension in teams, stress in individuals and decreases performance. It is import that a Christian manager does not avoid conflicts, but uses them to heal and strengthen relationships, raise the effectiveness of teams and to put the necessary changes in place.

NOTES

NEXT TIME ... IN MANAGEMENT MEETING 12

Eric and Simon are confronted with a dismissal process. How can they best handle this?



12

WHEN YOU HAVE TO LET GO ...

CASE STUDY

“Eric, I’ve had it up to here with Wim! He is a bad influence on his team and really on the whole business with his arrogant attitude. I was really angry with him and then he started to criticise me as well. Louise is threatening to resign or to make a complaint against Wim for undesired intimacy. It’s not even as if his work is that amazing ... I want to get rid of him!”

“Yes, I’ve had the same experience with Wim. Last week I confronted him about it, but he left the room angrily. I wanted to find a solution, but it’s as if he doesn’t want that. Simon, as a Christian, I find there is a tension between discipline and forgiveness. The Bible talks about forgiving another seventy times seven and showing patience. But we also read about people who were removed from the community because of bad deeds. What lessons can we learn from the Bible about a policy regarding the dismissal of employees?”



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Jesus was described as being “full of grace and truth”. (John 1:14) As a Christian manager I can show grace and also truth. Grace means giving a second chance, looking for forgiveness and restoration. Truth means gathering the facts on which a clear evaluation of the problem can be based. After following a proper procedure, it can be the case that an employee must be dismissed. Therefore, as Christian managers, we serve best by showing grace after judgment has been passed. In a relational business, the goal of discipline and restoration is to ensure that the employee is doing his best for himself and for the business.



DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the tension between forgiveness and dismissal in Proverbs
 - a. “A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offence.” (Prov 19:11)
 - b. “Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.” (Prov 22:10)
2. How do you find a balance between grace and truth in a disciplinary process?
3. Discuss with one another how you organise a dismissal process. What are the potential pitfalls?
4. Do you have a clearly written procedure that you can use when an employee doesn’t function?
5. What reasons have you had to break off a dismissal process?
6. With what help can you send people away after dismissal?

Now look at what the Bible has to say about managing a dismissal process!

EUROPARTNERS

EUROPARTNERS IS A MOVEMENT OF BUSINESS LEADERS AND (YOUNG) PROFESSIONALS WHO DESIRE TO HELP THEIR FRIENDS AND PEERS TO CONNECT TO JESUS CHRIST

OUR DREAM

It is our dream that all business leaders, -owners and (young) professionals accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Moreover, that they will reflect Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God in the way they behave, speak and do business, so that all people will honour and glorify God for who He is.

OUR STRATEGY

We mobilize and train Christian business leaders, -owners and (young) professionals to be an ambassador of Christ in their everyday life. We do this according to 2 Corinthians 5:20: "As Christian businesspeople we are marketplace ambassadors of Christ. God is making His appeal through us; to beg the world on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God."

OUR ACTIVITIES

- **Resources and training programs** to help businesspeople and (young) professionals grow spiritually and reflect the Kingdom in the way they do business.
- **An Annual Conference** where businesspeople, (young) professionals and ministry leaders can meet for friendship and encouragement. It is a place of inspiration, reflection and training.
- **The Young Professionals Academy** to equip and inspire young professionals to become a marketplace ambassador and a ministry leader in their nation. With mid-weeks or weekend meetings, trainings and a mentoring program.
- **Personal support and coaching** of business leaders and their teams on spiritual growth and achieving their goals in the best possible way.
- **CBMC training and support** to start a national CBMC ministry based on teams, prayer, leadership, evangelism and discipleship.
- **Event support** with a network of volunteers, professionals, speakers and businesspeople that can serve the various national ministries in outreach and in reaching businesspeople and (young) professionals in their nation.

TARGET GROUPS OF EUROPARTNERS

We focus on business leaders, business owners, (young) professionals and ministry leaders in business.

More information: www.europartners.org

Europartners is part of the CBMC movement





The Netherlands
Phone: +31 85 485 21 20

info@europartners.org
www.europartners.org