

REORGANISATION

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DURING REORGANISATIONS

Business reorganisation is more drastic than an 'everyday change' in working methods. Expansion, downsizing, internal reorganisation, mergers or takeovers: they all throw the normal course of events on the shop floor into disarray. This, of course, has an effect on the well-being of the employees concerned.

Clear communication with the employees involved is indispensable for the reorganisation to run smoothly. Clarity is the key word here. In addition, it is important that employees receive the necessary support to process the impact of a reorganisation, both individually and collectively. The challenge is to keep your employees motivated and healthy both during and after an organisational change. For this you can call on the professional support of POBOS.

Impact on the organisation

Reorganisations are a challenge for the social relations in an organisation. The perceived support of the manager usually decreases during a reorganisation. Conflicts between employees and managers, and between employees themselves, actually increase. This decrease in social support lowers the well-being of employees. Reorganisations very often lead to more job insecurity, especially if there are also redundancies.

Effect on employees

Changes and uncertainty on the shop floor worsen employees' perception of their work. They are less satisfied with their work, less committed, experience poorer general health, more emotional exhaustion and there is a risk of increased absenteeism. At organisational level, it leads to a decrease in employability of employees.

If redundancies occur, a difficult time awaits the dismissed employees, but there is also an impact on the well-being of those who are left behind. Each employee experiences this in his or her own way.

WHAT CAN POBOS DO?

- Advice during the development of a reorganisation plan in the field of well-being: communication plan, possible impact and reactions, and how to deal with this.
- Presence during and after a collective bad news report.
- Developing a permanent service to support the employees involved.
- Psychosocial counselling and support, both for employees who are at risk of being laid off and for those who are left behind and their managers.

Preparation

- Timely contact without obligation to discuss reorganisation and possible impact on co-workers. (confidential approach taking into account the Renault law).
- Discussing possible guidance and support by POBOS: form, content, timing, etc.
- Agreements concerning information exchange: confidentiality, type/timing of reporting, etc.
- Concrete agreements with the SPOC (and/or other key persons within the organisation in the field of welfare) about the specific assignment/setting.

Reorganisation

- Preliminary contact with effective implementer(s) - counsellors of POBOS.
- Defining the guidelines concerning the discretion and confidentiality of the assignment.

Implementation

- Clarification of the general context: successive phases in the reorganisation process, taking into account transparency towards all parties involved.
- Concrete definition of the assignment: expectations, objectives, etc.
- Practical arrangements:
 - Reception/welcoming of the POBOS counsellors.
 - Consultation of the POBOS counsellor with the (local) SPOC.
 - Accessibility and accessibility for the target group involved: location, timing, facilities, ...
- Attention for the most vulnerable:
 - Who is most vulnerable?
 - Some groups of employees are more vulnerable than others to the negative effects of reorganisations. Employees who are more at risk are:
 - Employees whose well-being was already low before the reorganisation.
 - Employees who have fewer personal resources, that is:
 - i. Employees who are not confident that they have the necessary work-related competencies and skills;
 - ii. Employees who use an emotional coping style to manage negative emotions such as stress, fear and anger, rather than a more task-oriented coping style aimed at improving their situation;
 - iii. Employees who think they will have more difficulty finding a new job.
- Group meeting
 - Being present when 'bad' news is announced - supporting the manager who announces the 'bad' news.
 - Counselling groups of employees: expressing and framing emotions, providing information, possible individual counselling,...
- Individual follow-up
 - Individual psychological counselling.
 - Taking a personal balance sheet / a professional balance sheet.
 - Assistance during the integration in the new work environment.
 - Support with administrative processing (e.g. in case of dismissal).

Follow up

- Immediate feedback to the client: form, content, ...
- Centralised reporting via POBOS: form, content, frequency, ...
- Follow up in time:
 - Next phases within the reorganisation process?
 - Individual aftercare/guidance and/or collective follow-up.
 - Monitoring at different levels: employees, managers, leavers, those left behind, etc.
- Organising follow-up meeting(s), telephone counselling, etc.

By using POBOS' welfare offer, the company/organisation emphasises its attention and interest in the well-being of its employees, even during the difficult moments inherent in a reorganisation.

POINTS FOR ATTENTION FOR MANAGERS

Communication is the key to eliminating possible dissatisfaction in the context of a reorganisation. The manager has an important role to play here! Each team leader must ultimately be able to answer the following questions:

- Why is the reorganisation necessary? Be clear about the vision and the objectives of the reorganisation. Indicate why certain choices have to be made.
- How will the reorganisation be carried out? What needs to be done may be fixed, but how it is done can be discussed. Listen to your employees: give them the chance to give input.
- What are the consequences of the reorganisation? Be clear about this, insofar as they can be foreseen. Be open and address the situation of your employees as concretely as possible.

Give advice before the reorganisation begins:

- Situation of the problem.
- Job insecurity and psychosocial (un)well-being: an exploration.
- Forms of uncertainty: in individual employees, team, organisation.
- Employee management styles in the face of uncertainty.
- Exploration of the roles that different actors can take in situations of uncertainty: information, support, negotiation, motivation and coaching.
- Possibilities and pitfalls in these roles.
- Caring for those who care in these uncertain times.