

People Matters



Issue 20, August 2006

Avoiding Stress Claims

WorkCover Victoria has reported an increase in the number of people making a stress claim, of more than 200% since 1996.

Workplace stress can be divided into three components*:

- Physical and environmental – such as work demands, internal relationships and conflict on the job
- Physiological and psychological – the reaction to the stressors, which may be physical such as increased blood pressure and heart rate or physiological such as increased anxiety, depression and aggression
- Worker perception and processing of the physical and environmental stressors.

In a new employee stress can be caused by the role not living up to expectations. These are formed through research, ie your web site, the interview process, and induction. Therefore consistency across information given and the work experience is important.

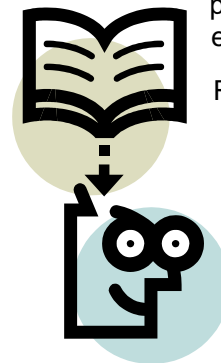
Book Launch

The launch of our book “Human Capital Management” was a great success with over 65 people joining us on the evening.

For everyone clarity around their role, responsibilities, and how performance is assessed is crucial. When moving someone into a different role ensure they have the skills or provide assistance (such as training).

Relationship breakdowns with the manager can create uncertainty as the employee may believe they are being treated unfairly, for example continually working longer hours than other people. In some cases claims of discrimination or bullying may also be made so it is important to make sure your policies on these issues are well known and acted upon.

Managers need to be aware of the signs of stress and look for them. For example changes in employee behaviour, such as aggression or increased personal leave, can indicate stress. Systems also need to be in place to deal with these issues promptly, and in a supportive way so they do not escalate.



Regular

Do you have a question you would like answered? Let us know - your suggestions for topics are welcome.

If you know someone else who would be interested in People Matters let us know and we will forward a copy to them.

T 03 9533 0923

* HR Monthly June 2006, p 25