

TALENT

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NEWS FLASH

JOBS CREDIT SCHEME TO BE EXTENDED ON STEPPED-DOWN RATE

Singapore - The Jobs Credit Scheme has now been extended to another six months but at a stepped-down rate, with two more payouts until June 2010. And it will cost the government an additional \$675 million, on top of the \$4.5 billion already set aside for the scheme. Presently, employers receive grants of 12% of the first \$2,500 salary of each eligible employee. For the next payout in March next year, the grant will be reduced to 6% of the worker's salary, and then to 3% for June's payout. unemployed workers to 210 million by the end of 2009.

LETTING STAFF GO WITH GRACEFUL EXIT

Singapore - Badly-managed staff exits can prove detrimental to a company's brand as well as its efforts to recruit and retain talent. According to Josh Goh, The GMP Group's assistant director for corporate services, given enough impetus, dissatisfied employees can sue the employer for unmerited dismissal, instigate smear campaigns or leak confidential company information. However, affected employees should also not burn any bridges with their ex-employers if a pink slip is issued.



M'SIA CONFIDENT INDON WILL LIFT MAID BAN

Malaysia - Malaysian authorities are confident that Indonesia will lift a ban on sending women to work as maids. While the talks, which began in June, to resolve all issues over the ban have been unsuccessful, Human Resource Minister S. Subramaniam said issues such as welfare, salary and leave had been resolved. There are plans to change its labour laws to give domestic helpers a weekly rest day and other benefits such as compensation for accidents at work.

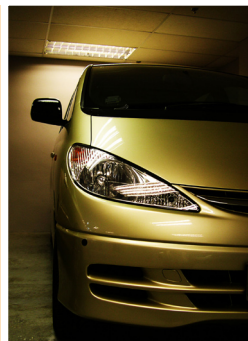


DUBAI'S MIGRANT WORKERS DEMAND MORE PAY

Dubai - Asian foreign workers staged a protest on the streets of Dubai, demanding higher wages and overtime pay from their employer, Al Habtoor Engineering Enterprises LLC, the company responsible for the emirate's sail-shaped Gulf shore hotel. Despite steps taken by the Emirates government to improve workers' living conditions and regular monthly payments, workers still face low and frequently delayed pay. The Ministry of Labour found that the company's records showed that it had been paying salaries on time. The plight of foreign workers in Dubai has worsened since the economic crisis.

TOTOYA TO RECRUIT CONTRACT STAFF AS SALES RECOVER

Japan - Toyota is hiring 800 contract workers in Japan in its first job increase in more than a year buoyed by brisk sales of its Prius hybrid. The automaker had shrunk the headcount of its contract workers amid the global slump in automobile sales by not renewing their contracts or progressing them to full-time positions. Toyota now employs 1,300 contract workers in Japan. Such workers are hired for limited periods unlike the 70,000 full-timers who are guaranteed "lifetime employment".



FEATURE STORY

ARE YOU BURNED OUT?

Employee burnout can spell trouble for a company's bottom-line

According to a study done in the UK, 48 per cent of respondents had reported increased individual workload against the backdrop of today's global recession. The study, conducted by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and KPMG, also showed that stress levels had risen among workers who had survived the axe. Because of a leaner headcount, employees are expected to work harder and perhaps, even clock longer hours.

Such circumstances, combined with other stress-inducing factors, govern the occurrence of employee burnout. And like any high-powered machine, highly stressed staff can quickly lose steam and break down when put under constant pressure.

Caution - burnout ahead

General feelings of malaise at work can take root from a host of reasons - monotonous routines, heavy workload, office politics, and dissatisfaction with management. However, while these issues are often written off as part and parcel of working life, they do impact employee productivity.

A chief cause of burnout is poor leadership and its danger lies in its influence over other factors. Irresolute leadership effects confusion where managing expectations are concerned. Vague job descriptions and unclear expectations can initiate feelings of insecurity among employees about how their work and worth is measured. And when an individual's unrealistic expectations about the organisation jars with actual organisational experience, it can produce a "reality shock".

Leadership that lacks awareness in preventing and spotting such situations often aggravates employees' growing discontent. Employees will feel increasingly unappreciated of their efforts, uncertain in their positions, and disappointed with management. Additionally, employees who feel they are constantly being policed and unable to exercise personal control over their daily tasks can fall victims to burnout.

And in jobs and industries with high "crunch times" - where staff are required to work longer hours and handle more intensive workload - employees would become easy victims of burnout if there is little "down time", and their extra efforts go unrecognised and

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EXPERT ADVICE

HOW TO DEAL WITH A DIFFICULT BOSS

People join companies but leave bad bosses. Does your boss make you cower in fear or dread going to work every day? Here are 5 quick tips to make the office a better place by managing your superior well.

1. Do not get emotional.

Do not react to verbal abuse or harsh criticism with emotion as it may get you into trouble. Remain calm, acknowledge it and move on. If needs be, take a walk or distract yourself to cool down.

2. Discuss but do not confront.

Use criticism to engage a discussion on interests, goals and problem-solving, or even ask for advice.

3. Manage expectations.

Clarify from the start how your boss wants things to be done so there is no miscommunication further on.

4. Be professional.

You do not have to like your boss but you must remain professional and get the job done. Keep work separate from your personal life to avoid stress.

5. Document everything.

Keep records of communication between you and your boss. Also document interactions with them as well as your own activities. This will become your main ammunition should things get messy later on.



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uncompensated. Coalesced with lack of communication between staff and their leaders, staff will grapple with work stress while companies face dwindling employee engagement.

Burnout is hazardous to organisational health. Organisations are never perfect; job burnout is inevitable for some. What is more critical is employers understand the serious bearing of workplace stress and burnout, and employees recognise the signs.

With stressed and burned out employees, productivity dies a long and painful death. The signs may emerge subtly, such as employee withdrawal – late arrivals at work, long breaks and early departures. Employees generally stay away from the office as much as possible and the frequency and length of absence would only lengthen with time. And even if they are sitting at their desks, the quality, if not quantity, of their performance will diminish. Managers who become burnout victims are especially harmful to organisations because such managers create a ripple effect, spreading burnout to their subordinates and co-workers.

Burned out employees would also lapse into general lethargy and apathy and show little enthusiasm at work. Work relationships become more strained as they develop short tempers and grow more impatient with their colleagues. Highly-stressed and burned out employees are more prone to falling ill, insomnia, and more drastically, depression.

Maintenance required. While employers can take steps to prevent staff from burning out, employees should also not suffer in silence the stress they face at work.

Communicate. Be informed of your job expectations, scope of responsibilities and opportunities for career advancement. Have constant dialogue with your manager to better manage everyone's expectations. Managers are also able to identify career growth opportunities and recognise your work and contribution through regular communication.

Manage your workload. If you think you have enough on your plate, politely turn away projects to give yourself breathing time in between deadlines. If you are working with a team, delegate the work. Otherwise, set realistic deadlines to avoid overloading yourself.

Have fun at work. Find little pleasures at the workplace that helps you to relieve tension and put you in a more relaxed state. Socialise more with your colleagues, go for short coffee breaks or increase tasks that you enjoy doing.

Take time off. Take a short break from work to rejuvenate yourself. Time away from the office can help to revive motivation, seek new inspiration and refresh your attitude towards work.

Find support. Build a support system with those whom you can talk about your problems and help you look for solutions.



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