

# Culture & Environment

Call Centre Briefing



## Background

This briefing is based on the results of a special survey conducted by PAYdata that reviewed culture and environmental issue in call centres. This survey formed the basis of a discussion at a subsequent Call Centre HR Group meeting organised by PAYdata that was attended by the participants.

The participants include many of the major UK call centre employers. Broadly speaking, they operate in the following main industry sectors:

- ◆ Telecommunications
- ◆ Retail
- ◆ Finance
- ◆ Travel

## Culture and environment – why is it important?

When an organisation thinks about its reward package the primary focus is nearly always on pay followed by the benefits package. However, for most employees the total reward of working for a particular employer is much more complex. It is made up of the four elements:



*Pay* comprises all the cash elements. This includes base pay, variable pay (bonus and incentives) and any pay related to company performance (for example profit share).

*Benefits* include tangible things like company cars and private medical but also less tangible things like holiday entitlement.

*Personal Growth* includes both training specific to the role and general personal development. It is not just about promotion, it is also about job design.

*Environment* is about both the physical environment and the culture of the organisation (the psychological environment).

For any employee at any time the total reward they get from coming to work is made up of these four elements. But each organisation can make a choice about what it sees as important.

As an example, a business that concentrates on personal growth and environmental issues can “trade off” the reward impact against the cash side of the package. At a practical level, for some groups of employees flexibility to meet caring commitments might be worth more than a higher pay package.

## Practice in call centres

The PAYdata survey found that most (94%) call centres have focussed on making their workplaces fun, with strong team-working a key feature. If this is true then these two elements may no longer provide for any strategic differentiation in attracting, retaining and motivating employees.

However, in some key areas there appears to be opportunities to improve employee satisfaction. The main areas for review include:

- ♦ *Job design* – The work is highly structured (94% of organisations) with people given restricted freedom to act (57%). Employees find the pressure they work under to be a source of dissatisfaction (60%).
- ♦ *Management style* - While employers believe that their managers are people focussed (81%), management style is seen to be a source of dissatisfaction for employees (40%) and could be improved in a further 60% of organisations. Interestingly, not one of the organisations surveyed believes that employees were “very satisfied” with the style of their managers.
- ♦ *Career progression* – This area provides a big gap between employer perceptions and employee satisfaction. Employers believe that they provide the opportunity for career progression (94%) and that call centre work provides opportunities for personal development (88%). However, career progression opportunities are felt to be a cause of dissatisfaction to employees (53%) and lack of personal development opportunities compound this (40%).

Pay came top of the list but subsequent discussions with survey participants suggest that while few people leave for less pay, pay itself is not the main reason people start to look for a new job. Personal development opportunities, career progression, pressure of work and management style are again identified as the main areas of concern.

## Further information

To learn more about this topic or PAYdata's services, please call 01733 364070, or email [info@paydata.co.uk](mailto:info@paydata.co.uk)

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