

Managers: Good people person? Or a result of promotion?

1 year ago



Insight from Elliot Foster, wellbeing strategy consultant at [SuperWellness](#).

Since the pandemic, the expectations that many employees have of their managers and organisations has hugely increased. Whether that be more support, flexible working, or career development, this is no different within all areas of FM. But how can you ensure your line-managers have the skills to support your employees? And what are the risks if you don't?

The role of the line-manager has become increasingly more important over the last few years. Employees expect more support from their line-managers, and not only on work-related tasks. There is now a heavy expectation from many employees for line-managers to be able to support their health and wellbeing, whether that be through creating the right environment to thrive, preventing ill health in the first place, or supporting them once they become ill. With this being the case, organisations are accepting great risk if they are asking individuals to undertake management responsibilities without any formal training or an understanding of how important people-skills are as a line-manager.

Surely the health of my team is their own business?

Some individuals may not want to speak to their line-manager about their health, what is making them feel stressed, etc, and this is fine. But many of your staff will want to!

Management style is the second highest cause of work-related stress in the UK, only after heavy workload¹. This combined with the fact that stress, depression and anxiety is the biggest cause of long-term sick leave in the UK, accounting for 17.1m days lost in 2022/23², you can see why many organisations

are now taking action to upskill their managers to better support their staff before they get ill.

More and more organisations are now beginning to see the link between healthy staff and productivity, staff retention and employer brand, all of which have an impact on the financial bottom line. And what are they seeing as the key link between these? The people-skills of their line-managers.

The proportion of organisations training their line-managers on how to support employee mental health has been steadily increasing since 2018¹. But being a supportive line-manager goes beyond mental health awareness, they need to understand how their every-day actions impact their team's working culture, as well as how they can make changes to their team's jobs to reduce undue stressors.

What do you mean by 'people-skills'?

People-skills are skills that help individuals to better communicate and engage with their colleagues, allowing them to work together to avoid misunderstandings, solve conflict and achieve common goals. Importantly, you can see how by having these skills you can not only promote more productive working practices, but also a healthier culture to work in.

With more and more individuals wanting to be supported at work by their line-managers, this means that they are expecting them to have these people-skills, and be "wellbeing-centred".

We have pulled together what we believe are the key skills and knowledge a line-manager requires to be able to fully support their team. These are:

1. Understanding how work affects employee health

How do the demands of work impact your team's wellbeing? How can you change these as a manager? How can you increase the different types of support that staff have so stress can be prevented?

2. Being Authentic

Being authentic builds hope, trust, and feelings of positivity, leading to improved motivation, job satisfaction and positive psychological outcomes. How can you be more authentic as a line-manager to build better relationships between you and amongst the team?

3. Role-modelling and practicing self-care

Employees perceive their leaders as individuals who set the standards for acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. How can you better role-model desired health behaviours and work boundaries? How can you show that you practice self-care when it comes to your own health?

4. Being adaptable

Organisations and teams are filled with different types of people, each having their own preferences when it comes to work. How will you ensure that you're getting the best out of your team and supporting them in the way that they need?

5. Practicing open and supportive communication

Open and supportive communication helps build mutual respect and resolve issues and conflicts early, that could later lead to decreased engagement, job satisfaction, and increased. How will you communicate with your team to build psychological safety and that healthy working culture?

Summary

The world of work and the expectations from employees has changed, and so follows the need for organisations to train their line-managers to be more “wellbeing-centred” to be able to support these expectations. Organisations within FM that are proactive about this will not only see a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of their workforce, but also increased motivation, engagement and overall productivity. All of which can only lead to good things for them as an organisation and give them that edge over their competitors.

- 1 - <https://www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/2023-pdfs/8436-health-and-wellbeing-report-2023.pdf>
- 2 - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/dayslost.htm>