

Employees pay today, but employers'll pay tomorrow

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Date : October 5, 2009



PEARSON INTL AIRPORT – What's remarkable about travel is the extent to which you see the same things in very different places. People are not really all that different, and nor are organisations. Wherever I go recently I hear about businesses that have lost the respect and support of people. These people have dedicated most of their waking hours to their employer. And now they have lost that lovin' feeling.

Businesses think that they can survive without employee loyalty. They rationalise that they stopped being loyal to employees a few generations ago, so it's only fitting that people should catch up with their own behaviour: employees should stop being loyal to their employers. But the full force of employee disassociation has not yet begun to be felt in most businesses. And when it is, it won't be pretty.

'Irrational' businesses (and let's be honest, businesses were never set up to be 'rational') will have to adjust quickly to irrational employee behaviour.

Why now?

What I hear is businesses quietly chipping away at things that employees took for granted:

- Christmas closings
- overtime pay
- weekends free
- travel perks

And more. I heard this week about a business that imposed a 'crisis' pay reduction. Only to announce 6 months later that it would never be reversed. As with most things, most of these emotional issuers are lost in the communications. Employees say things like "if they had just been honest about it..." or "I can understand the need to do this, but it would have been nice to be consulted."

It's a shame because when companies can not rely on people to stay through everything, to put in the extra effort, to give up their weekends and do so with out complaint or reward... Then companies will start to see what they had been taking for granted. And that will affect productivity and profit.

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