

Bad-bosses undermine talent retention

The old saying that people leave managers, not companies is confirmed by findings from the latest Chartered Management Institute, CMI, study. Almost half of those who have left jobs in a 3,000 respondent study did so to get away from their managers. A similar proportion even said they would take a pay cut if this meant that they could work with a better manager.

The facts behind these headlines go a long way to explain the sorry state of affairs. According to the CMI results:

- More than two-thirds say they have ended up in a managerial role by mistake
- Two in five managers claim they would prefer to be without managerial responsibility
- Almost two thirds have had no management training
- Only 28% have some kind of formal qualification.

As a result, these 'accidental' managers end up alienating staff. Unsurprisingly, half the respondents believe that they could do a better job than their current bosses.

“The sad truth is that UK managers are no longer regarded as professional, competent or accountable,” says CMI chief Ruth Spellman.

As part of its fightback, the CMI has launched its 'Manifesto for a Better Managed Britain' asking Government, employers and managers to pledge to turn round the situation.

Assessing the talent implications

Whether the CMI is overstating the case when it says that the situation adds up to a national crisis, the underlying facts point to an unhealthy state of affairs. Although the focus falls on the shock-horror findings and leaves unsung those companies and managers who represent the healthier part of the picture, the implications for talent management are clear. Staff retention may be challenging in the current economic climate, but losing star performers because of poor management is avoidable.

Reed Elsevier is one company that has put high-quality management at the top of its talent management agenda. A good while before the CMI painted its gloomy UK management picture, the company concluded that inspirational management was key to motivation and retention. For Reed Elsevier, the management factor is at the heart of a great place to work – by implication, a place where talent will want to stay. The company's recipe for quality managers calls for them to be: challenging and fair, credible, clear, collaborative and innovative.

Not a bad set of criteria to start the job of rescuing UK management's reputation and giving talent management a fillip in the bargain.

Sources:

Chartered Management Institute: www.managers.org.uk

Reed Elsevier case study in *Creating the Talent-Driven Business*
www.business-intelligence.co.uk