

# THE THREE P'S OF MANAGING PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS

Why do people find it so difficult? I guess it usually comes down to one of three things

1. Avoidance of conflict
2. Hope that things will improve
3. Don't know how

From my experience the first can sometimes masquerade as either the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the 3<sup>rd</sup>, however, what it is important to remember is that along with a manager sized salary comes manager sized responsibility. And it is a managers responsibility (that includes you the business owner) to ensure that staff are performing to their best.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> point may just be wishful thinking. Or it may be that the reasons offered up as to why performance is not at an acceptable standard seem reasonable. However over time and a few grey hairs I have learnt to distinguish the improbable and the impossible. Some are easy such as "there is bad energy and the place needs



to be cleansed by a Psychic" and some less so "everyone in the market is experiencing a downturn".

The 3<sup>rd</sup> is the most common. With case law seemingly stacked against an employer it is hard to know exactly how to tackle a problem without the risk of litigation. What it does take is preparation, process and patience.

At the time you may just want to shout at the employee "my office - now!" but the process will fail as you did not provide the employee with the opportunity of having a representative with them.

At the time it may seem obvious - you caught them with their hand in the till, so why not save time and have their final

pay made up when you meet them. Unfortunately that would mean that you hadn't given them a real opportunity to explain or refute the allegation, nor have you given an unbiased consideration of that explanation.

They may have said that their supervisor hadn't told them that it was against policy to leave machinery unguarded. Well that is just rubbish as you know that it is part of all safety briefings so there is no point in asking the supervisor is there? Well that would mean that you hadn't investigated all the facts properly.

Case law isn't stacked against employers but an employer does need to be prepared, follow a proper process and have patience as it is not something that will be over within five minutes.

*Leanne Welsh is a consultant and Director of BOSS Group. If you would like more advice on managing performance problems, or anything employment related, please contact Leanne on (06) 8343071. The comments in this article are for general information purposes only and are not a substitute for legal advice.*