

Better involvement, participation and communication in an elderly care organisation

COMMENDED

VitaS, Belgium

www.vitas.be

The issue

Over five years, elderly care company VitaS grew rapidly, extending from one to three sites. The changes brought about some challenges. Unclear communication to employees during this expansion sometimes resulted in a tense atmosphere. Absenteeism increased and conflicts in the workplace occurred. In certain cases, existing employees were worried by the growing number of new employees and became uncertain about the content and security of their jobs. The management noticed that in some cases workers became less motivated and even stressed.

Action taken

A risk assessment on psychosocial risks was carried out focusing on three main areas: organisational structure, personnel policy and the promotion of workers' wellbeing.

Action taken focused on involvement, participation and communication from and towards the workers. Job descriptions were prepared and work instructions and other relevant documentation were digitised and made easily accessible to the whole workforce. Conflict management sessions, an attendance policy, regular performance appraisals and team-building sessions were introduced and a monthly newsletter was set up to improve the flow of information. Based on survey results, workers were actively involved in changes to roster planning, shifting to a more participative approach based on self-scheduling.

A diversity plan, to improve recruitment and training of lower-skilled workers and to overcome possible glass ceilings, was put in place.

The success of the project can be credited to involving the entire organisation and the step-by-step approach taken in various areas — such as infrastructure, personnel, training and teamwork — to make the overall implementation more achievable.

VitaS has brought change to the structure and culture of the organisation, its management and staff welfare. VitaS found that results can be achieved from inside the organisation, often simply by engaging workers, making them feel involved and allowing them to actively participate. The company discovered that developing a large base of increasingly motivated workers within an organisation allows greater goals to be achieved.



Workers were actively involved in changes to roster planning, shifting to a more participative approach based on self-scheduling.

Results achieved

VitaS found that improving the issues identified by the employees themselves had a direct impact on individual empowerment. In turn, empowering individuals led to a more motivated and productive workforce keen to help resolve issues at an organisational level.

