

Connect in Vodafone

'Wake up and smell the coffee!'

'OK, time to wake up and smell the coffee!'

This is how one Vodafone regional manager opened a memo to store managers seeking KPI improvements.

It typifies an approach which also sees the use of disciplinary procedures as a first resort to improve sales and KPI figures.

Connect, the union for professionals in communications, believes that this heavy-handed management-style is leading to low staff morale and high staff turnover.

Here's one example why.

Recently Vodafone disciplined a long serving shop manager for poor sales and KPIs in his store.

After receiving a final written warning, the manager has now found a job with a rival company, taking with him years of experience and

training built up in Vodafone. In arriving at its decision the company ignored the following:

- under-staffing - consistently below the "ideal" set by the company
- that the manager consequently worked regular unpaid overtime, and never took a lunch break (also unpaid)
- high staff turnover - staff were often made up from other stores and agencies
- low stock levels for reasons beyond the shop manager's control
- that other stores in the region had also not achieved many KPIs.

The shop manager told Connect that before these events he was committed to Vodafone and thought it "a good company to work for." Faced with this treatment he changed his mind and voted with his feet.

Connect has years of experience in representing and supporting professionals and

managers. We have developed considerable expertise in dealing with performance management systems. Crucially, disciplinary procedures should be a last - not a first - resort.

Connect's experience is that performance systems centred on training, development and support are both the fairest and the most effective. They maintain morale and minimise staff turnover, keeping valuable skills and experience in the company.

Store managers and sales people start voting with their feet

Connect is getting reports from around the country of managers and sales staff alike leaving as a result of KPI-related issues.

Some stores are struggling to stay open staffing is so low.

This is only going to get worse.

"What am I meant to do? Train someone up because they are not meeting the figures, only to have to discipline and maybe fire them down the track when they still do not get the figures. And then what? Another person without training who also might not make the figures? At what point will people be right and the figures wrong?"

- what one frustrated Manager told Connect

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