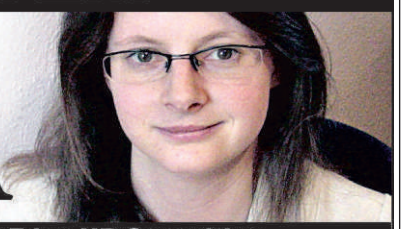
ASK EVE...

HR Q&A



with Eve Clennell of Eden HR Consulting

"Recently when networking the term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CRS) was discussed – why does it matter to my business? and why would someone tell me it impacts on the people within my business – how?"

CSR covers all aspects of corporate governance. It is about how companies conduct their business in an ethical way, taking account of their impact economically, socially, environmentally and in terms of human rights. This moves beyond traditional business stakeholders such as shareholders or local suppliers. CSR includes social partners such as local communities, and global responsibilities such as protecting the environment and ensuring good labour standards in overseas suppliers. CSR also includes relationships with employees and customers.

Why does CSR matter?

CSR has grown in importance in recent years, which has meant increased demands from customers, employees, statutory bodies and the general public for detailed information about whether companies are meeting acceptable standards. Increasingly companies have to take account of how their actions impact on society. The 'employer brand' has become an important way to add value but it is also more vulnerable to scrutiny and suspicion. CSR is an issue in which we all have a stake. Our actions today will influence the lives of future generations through for example, trying to protect the environment. It is changing the way business is done.

Being proactive about CSR will increasingly provide a competitive advantage both externally through protecting company reputation and the accompanying publicity, and internally through employee engagement.

Successful CSR can bring benefits such as a distinct position in your marketplace, protecting your employer brand, and building credibility and trust with current and potential customers and employees. It can help significantly with recruitment, engagement and retention of employees.

Why does HR matter in CSR?

HR has a key role in making CSR work. CSR needs to be embedded in an organisation's culture to make a change to actions and attitudes, and the support of the top team is critical to success. HR already works at communicating and implementing ideas, policies, cultural and behavioural change across organisations. Its role in influencing attitudes and links with line managers and the top team mean it is ideally placed to do the same with CSR.

HR is also responsible for the key systems and processes underpinning effective delivery. Through HR, CSR can be given credibility and aligned with how businesses run. CSR could be integrated into processes such as the employer brand, recruitment, appraisal, retention, motivation, reward, internal communications, diversity, coaching and training.

The way a company treats its employees contributes directly to it being seen as willing to accept its wider responsibilities. Building credibility and trusting their employer are seen as being increasingly important by employees when they choose who they want to work for. People, especially Generation X and younger, don't want to work where there is a clash with their personal values. Present and future employees are placing increasing value on the credibility of an organisation's brand. Employers are using the positive aspects of their brand in recruiting, motivating and retaining highly-skilled people.

For further details please give me a call on the number shown below.

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Eden HR Consulting provides the full range of HR Services.

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Jum Vaughan digging the kitchen garden

Pub is 'greener' than most

AN award-winning pub near Shipley is 'greener' than most, both environmentally and in its kitchen garden.

The Countryman Inn is run by Alan Vaughan, an enthusiast of all things local, the community, the environment and fine food.

He combines these passions at his rural restaurant to great effect, and is the proud recipient of a number of awards including uktvFOOD Local Hero 2009 and three times winner of Les Routiers Dining Pub of the Year.

The green credentials of the business are highly regarded with food miles 'kept to an absolute minimum', said Alan.

The Countryman Inn has its own van which does a daily collection from local businesses, reducing truck deliveries to the rural pub along country lanes.

"We source all our produce locally, and always have done," said Alan, "because it is a way of keeping the community together."

And such an ambition has always been high on Alan's agenda. "Many of our suppliers are also our customers and many of our customers also deal with our suppliers," he continued.

"So it is a case of we buy from you, so you can buy from them, they can buy from the others, the others can buy from us, so that we can buy from you!"

But his community spiritedness does not always revolve around hard cash.

The Countryman Inn is renowned in the local area for its Community Digging Project.

Not only does the pub's vegetable garden further reduce food miles as much of the produce is served on the premises, but for the last eight years it has also provided a bartering/exchange system for members of the local community.

"We welcome members of our community to grow their own produce in our kitchen garden," said Alan. "Our community members then take all the produce they like for themselves, with any surplus being exchanged with us to use in our pub and we then give them meal vouchers."

The scheme proved so popular it was extended when Alan bought more land behind the Countryman Inn and urged volunteers to help him tend the land in exchange for dining in the restaurant.

With a much-reduced carbon footprint due to seasonal menus, with all produce acquired from a 20-mile radius, The Countryman Inn, with its community initiatives and award-winning record, is an exemplary 'green' business in West Sussex.

Alan Vaughan