


Chapter 5

Developing a Performance Management Support System

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ABSTRACT

Hidden disabilities such as ADHD, depression, and dyslexia produce unique challenges that significantly reduce employee productivity. The hidden nature of the disabilities lends itself to the issues and difficulties not being recognized, and subsequently not receiving the support and accommodation needed from their work environment to be successful. Creation of a work climate that is supportive, inclusive, and engaging requires companies to execute strategies to accommodate employees with hidden disabilities. Research identified methodologies of customized accommodation in the form of flexible work schedules, workspace enhancements, assistive technology, and psychological service availabilities substantially improved both employee performance and happiness. Implementation of successful accommodation strategies aligns with regulatory compliance with the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) as well as drives a culture of engagement, respect, and inclusivity.

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SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Employees with hidden disabilities that manifest, such as ADHD, dyslexia, anxiety, or depression, experience unique workplace difficulties that can impact productivity and job satisfaction. Tranquillo & Lowman (1998) and Wolf (2001) declare that although physical and sensory disabilities are readily recognizable, hidden disabilities often go unnoticed, impacting the perception and support of disabled individuals by their coworkers. Identifying and acknowledging hidden disabilities is key to providing understanding and accommodation; its absence exacerbates the difficulties and hurdles these employees face, directly impacting productivity and well-being. Understanding these unique issues and difficulties is the starting point for developing a supportive and inclusive work culture capable of mitigating the challenges faced by employees with hidden disabilities.

Effective support of employees with hidden disabilities requires organizations to deploy a strategic plan of accommodations and intervention. Tailored interventions and accommodations can substantially improve productivity and job satisfaction for employees with hidden abilities (Davies et al., 2022). Organizations that understand their employee's challenges are equipped to implement the effective reasonable accommodations suggested by Cavanaugh et al. (2016), which are imperative for empowering employees with hidden disabilities to achieve their full potential in the workplace. These unique needs can be mitigated through intentional, strategic planning and targeted support. Businesses that enhance the work climate for employees with hidden disabilities subsequently improve organizational objectives. Research has recently found a reduction in stress and an increase in productivity correlated with implementation of flexible schedules and hybrid work environments (Parker, Horowitz, & Minkin, 2020). Execution of a strategic plan to expand accommodative solutions benefits the employees directly affected but additionally creates a wholistically inclusive and productive work environment.

Reasonable workplace accommodations are imperative for employees with hidden disabilities to be effective workers (Cavanaugh et al., 2016). Accommodations might include flexible work time, workspace modification, assistive technology, and psychological services (Cavanaugh et al., 2016). Modifications in the form of ergonomic furniture, customized lighting, and noise mitigation substantially improves comfort, reduces distractions, and improves focus and efficiency (Xiao et al., 2021). For example, utilization of noise-canceling headphones in open office spaces can facilitate concentration for employees with ADHD or anxiety. Speech-to-text tools, accommodating applications, and specialized keyboards support employees with dyslexia and ADHD perform more efficiently (Milasi, González-Vázquez, & Fernández-Macías, 2021).

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