**Dwellant**

As smaller businesses grow, their leaders often realise they need to change their processes, but the challenge is deciding when – and how to do it. Managing operational issues can often take the focus away from people – yet it’s vital not to lose essential skills when they are needed the most.

Dwellant, a growing SAAS business, anticipated that growth would bring resourcing challenges and wanted to take a pro-active stance to create a people strategy to support their growth.

For this reason they made the strategic decision to engage external consultants HR Influence to ensure HR compliance and create the people plan to attract, motivate and retain the right talent to underpin the Company’s ambitions for growth.

**The challenge:**

CEO, Dave Piggin, explains the challenges they were facing. “We found ourselves risking the very people that played such an important part in our service delivery. Without the bandwidth to manage the people issues, our longer-term potential was under threat.”

The challenges facing Dwellant looked like this:

* Minimal investment in the company at inception required careful timing of additional headcount and support structure.
* Lack of management bandwidth and HR support put more pressure on the CEO to juggle people issues and retention whilst growing the company.
* Essential people management activities such as employee development plans, staff reviews or salary reviews were at times lost to the day-to-day operational pressures.
* A lack of HR strategy, employment contracts and policies posed a compliance risk.
* Recruitment of replacements was expensive, affecting profitability.
* Employee benefits and support needed to be put in place for a growing workforce.
* The organisation’s culture needed strengthening so as not to negatively impact staff engagement and retention.

So what tactics did HR Influence propose, and what were the results?

**The approach:**

Following the CEO’s invitation, Gesa Grabis of HR Influence carried out a review of the people support.

Her personable approach included:

* An audit of the existing HR systems, processes, agreements and line management provision.
* Light-touch conversations with employees to offer independent support, improve morale and increase employee retention.
* Informal staff feedback to understand the existing culture and support structure and where improvements may be appropriate.

**The changes:**

As a result of her findings the business implemented a number of tailored changes:

* HR involvement in board meetings providing strategic guidance to ensure risk management, compliance and creation of a people strategy that supports the company’s vision and goals.
* Reviewing the Company structure and adding leadership, line management and staff capacity at relevant stages of the Company’s growth.
* Align employee contributions to the Company’s goals through the implementation of vision and values, one-to-one reviews and performance objectives.
* Creating a positive people culture and engagement through effective company communication, collaboration, defined structures, employee engagement surveys and feedback.
* Implementing a robust reward framework with regular, structured and consistent salary reviews and a cost-effective benefits system.
* Ensuring legal compliance – updating employment agreements, policies, health & safety setup and advice on people challenges.

To support and embed the new people strategy, HR Influence introduced ongoing quarterly meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss, plan and agree people initiatives.

**The results:**

Over the two years to December 2018, with HR Influence’s support, staffing grew from 14 to 24 with improved team performance, morale, and retention, increased sales and better cost management (including reduced expenditure on agency resourcing) resulting in increased profitability. In particular, direct resourcing saved c. £15,000 for 4 hires compared to agency fees.

The improved company structure and additional leadership capacity has supported the Company’s key talent and allowed the CEO to focus on running the business, improving sales revenue and growing the Company.

The employee initiatives and additional line management bandwidth have helped build a positive company culture, which has meant that the voluntary staff turnover decreased significantly from over 20% to 5% in that time.

Regular staff surveys indicate an increase in staff engagement from a score of 7.7 out of 10 in September 2019 to a current score of 8.4 out of 10. And the employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) increased from 17 to 30 in the same period. These results show a measurable improvement in employee engagement and satisfaction with a greater proportion of employees recommending Dwellant as a great place to work.

Dave Piggin sums up the benefits of the people strategy and leadership capacity. “The HR guidance over the past 4 years has helped us grow the business, comply with our regulatory obligations, create a people plan and implement effective employee initiatives. We now have motivated and engaged employees committed to the objectives of the company and supported by an effective management team and processes. As CEO, this is a tremendous comfort and will be vital for the continued growth of my business.”

**About HR Influence**

HR Influence are a strategic partner to leaders who want to achieve their vision by optimising staff performance, maximising efficiencies & reducing cost. Led by MCIPD qualified Gesa Grabis, we offer guidance for people issues and find pragmatic solutions to difficult situations. We typically support SME’s with 10 to 150 staff who have aspirations to grow their companies through their talented people.