

Scottish employees expect more empathy and understanding from bosses in post-pandemic world

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Business

Nearly half of workers in Scotland believe their bosses are out of touch with what's needed to ensure their team is happy and productive, according to a new report.

By Emma Newlands

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Theta Global Advisors, which describes itself as a consultancy and accounting disruptor, has unveiled the research looking at the “newly emotive underpinning for productivity”, finding that employees now expect empathy and understanding.

It found that north of the Border, 30 per cent of a nationally representative pool of workers – equivalent to 1.6 million people – agree their employer’s failure to apply empathetic leadership with regards to their personal circumstances has resulted in their relationship worsening, meaning they are less inclined to work hard for them.

That comes as 44 per cent agree that management where they work is out of touch with what is required to ensure their team are happy and productive – and 41 per cent would rather have flexible working options than a pay rise.



Some 30 per cent of Scots say their employer's failure to be empathetic regarding their personal circumstances means they are ultimately less inclined to work hard for them. Picture: Getty Images/iStockphoto.

Theta Global Advisors said the findings show that traditional conceptions of what is needed for productivity and effective working culture have "forever shifted".



Scottish business confidence hits highest level for almost seven years

It also sees that “employees do not need to simply return to a 'surviving' business, but require empathetic bosses that display understanding of what has happened to them during a year that has ravaged the nation”.

The survey also revealed how 18 per cent of Scots agree that despite working effectively over lockdown, their employer still doesn't trust them to work flexibly or from home, while a quarter say they now feel that returning to the office with pre-pandemic norms would hinder their performance, as they don't find that environment conducive to their productivity.

Additionally, more than a third say they have seen the quality of their work or their productivity improve due to increased flexibility and working from home over the last year.

Theta Global Advisors added that with law firms seeing a major jump in divorce enquiries, and YouGov reporting that more than 8.5 million Brits have lost a loved one during Covid-19, “a lack of empathy and trust from employers is proving to further disenfranchise a large portion of the British workforce”.

Shift

The firm said that it believed the “cultural shift that has emerged in the UK workplace upon our return to the office has seen a seismic shift, with employees seeking empathy from their employers, and productivity increasing as a direct return when such empathy and trust is applied”. It added the research showed that empathetic bosses are essential for a happy and productive workforce.

Chris Biggs, partner at Theta Global Advisors, commented: “Attitudes to the future of work have affirmatively shifted, and to ensure people are at their happiest and most productive, flexibility is needed in both where and when they work.

“Working culture and expectations have changed, and if approached with empathy and flexibility, will result in a far happier, more productive workforce delivering work of a higher standard than before Covid-19.

“What we need is for businesses, organisations and companies to shift to flexible working in the long term and catering to everyone in their flexi-working policies – they must outline structured flexibility approaches to allow people to adapt as they need or want going forward.”