



Do not rush into action! How can the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach, help with putting sustainable plans into place whilst keeping the workforce engaged?

Over the years' I have worked in businesses that for a long time 'remote working' has been a way of life to enable an agile workforce and reduce overhead costs. I have also worked with some great manager's and leaders who understand the importance of allowing their teams to be able to work flexibly and the loyalty that they gain from this approach.

In my experience remote working has been successful where; there are clear communication channels and a structured way of working so, that employee's understand what is expected of them because they have clear objectives in place, with regular one to one's to discuss any issues / concerns and regular team meetings to provide the opportunity to come together and have great conversations, problem solve and share best practice. Along with the right tools to get the job done!

I have been at my most productive, loyal and committed to a role when I have been trusted by my manager and the businesses that I have partnered with to know what I need to do to get the job done in the right way, had the right support in place and regular clear communication. I have been able to work flexibly with a mixture of working from home and attending the office for meetings when appropriate, to enable me to have the balance that I have wanted between my career and family life. This in turn also had a positive impact on my health and wellbeing.

Many business owners get caught up in the day to day running of their business and lose sight of the importance of their employee's and stop asking for feedback or listening to what their employees are telling them.

When I was training as a lean practitioner one of the tools that I found useful was the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach. This tool helps to promote continuous improvement and lets teams test possible solutions to the problem or issue that they have.

So, how can the plan, do, check, act approach, help with putting sustainable plans into place whilst keeping the workforce engaged?

Plan

Don't rush into changing ways of working! Keep the communication channels open, speak to your people regularly.

Create ways to ensure that everyone is given a 'voice!' Consider sending out a survey to provide the opportunity to those that aren't comfortable speaking up to have their say on a confidential basis. There are various tools that can be used to do this that are either free or minimal cost.



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Hold small focus groups for those more 'vocal' people. Ensure that these sessions are structured and constructive to ensure that they don't turn into a 'whinge' session and become full of negativity. Remember, you want feedback and ideas so, that you can develop a solution that will create 'positivity' at work.

By engaging and giving everybody the opportunity to give their view and feedback, this will enable you to collect the information that you need to develop your 'plan' before you proceed.

Do

Time to act based on the plan that you have created! If you're implementing changes, consider trial periods to be able to measure the impact against some key KPI's so, that people understand the reasons why certain ideas have been successful and others not so successful.

Do make it clear to people that you 'truly' value their opinions and input to find viable solutions that will work for everyone by regularly communicating any actions that have been taken as a result of the output from the focus groups and survey results.

Check

The check stage is vital to continuous improvement. This will, give you an opportunity to review what worked well and explore solutions to problems that may occur during the trial period to ensure that any bumps in your plan can be smoothed out.

Act

Now it's time to 'act!' Put into action your plan and the solutions that you have identified that will work for the business and bring results! Remember to regularly review new processes and amend where needed to ensure continuous improvement and an engaged workforce.

The plan, do, check, act approach will not only demonstrate your commitment to continuous improvement and enable you to embed a sustainable plan. But by taking this approach your people will feel valued, trusted and listened too because they have been involved from the beginning when thinking about what changes need to be made. Consequently, you will have an engaged workforce and will experience lower absenteeism, labour turnover and your productivity levels will increase with a continuous improvement culture.

A happy workforce is a productive one! Remember, behind a successful business are the right people working together as one!

If you are considering changes that will impact terms and conditions or may result in redundancies then it's likely that there will be legal obligations that you will need to fulfil and therefore, a more formal process will need to be applied with consultation. However, the same principles can be applied to create and manage your plan effectively. Communication is key to implementing any form of change successfully. Please do get in touch if you would like some advice.



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