

Beyond the Basics of Employee Training

Sarah Sawyer: Welcome to this week's OK at Work with myself, Sarah Sawyer, my colleague Russell Burger, both attorneys at Offit Kurman. And today we are talking about the importance of employee training. So this is a topic that, it's something that I think a lot of times folks will go ahead, do a training on employment policies or some operational issue, and then they're like, "All right. Great. We did our training." End of story. We're all done. Check. And it's Really as much as it can be a lift to do training, and it can take time, it can take time away for both those who are planning the training, but also those who are participating. Obviously it requires employees to take time away from their day and what they're normally doing, so I know a lot of employers can see it as a little bit of a headache sometimes to do that.

But why is it something, Russell, that people should not be shying away from, and should see as an opportunity and something that they should [00:01:00] be making sure that they're doing on a regular basis?

Russell Berger: Yeah. So as you're alluding to certain states, certain types of trainings are required.

Maybe your insurance company requires it, so there's a checking the box aspect to training, which if you have to check a box, like you should definitely check the box. That's a reason to do it, but that is just I gotta do it, I'm doing it, I'm going through the motions.

I think if you're gonna do it, you might as well train in a way that actually makes your organization better, and is lasting and makes improvements. For example, there's a lot of mandatory training related to, workplace discrimination and harassment, and how you handle that as, a member of the team or as a manager.

I think for it to resonate and to lower the risk levels of your organization, you actually have to roll up your sleeves and do some training where you talk about how do we performance manage? How do we document things?

What does that look like? What are our protocols when complaints are raised? Who in this organization am I going to talk [00:02:00] to? What are my obligations as a supervisor when it comes to this? So I think there's some like very discreet tactical things that you can train on that actually, might mitigate the risk as opposed to just checking the box and, where you've only mitigated the risk of, non-compliance for checking the box.

Sarah Sawyer: And it's a good opportunity if you're gonna take the time anyway to connect with your employees and with your managers, and to hear from them as well because I think a lot of times with training it might raise questions or it might, if it's done well, it'll get employees thinking about these policies or about operations or different things going on in their day-to-day.

So it's definitely a good opportunity if done right for a two-way communication. Obviously, there's certain things that you just need to express to employees that don't need to be discussed and just need to be provided to them and the information needs to be given to them. But there is a lot of opportunities for collaboration and for actually getting people to be thinking about things.

We see this a lot right now too with cybersecurity and [00:03:00] those types of trainings. That's something, we're doing. I've got one on my desk right now that I need to do for the firm as an employee here. They are important trainings, and those ones are really practical, right? They're something that we really hope that employees are taking seriously and paying attention to.

And so a lot of that is compliance, a lot of it, might have to do with your insurance company, as you mentioned, and you definitely, I agree, you've gotta do those things. But I think it's great to really think about let me take this one step further, how is this actually gonna help us with our employees, with those relationships, and with making sure that they feel empowered and comfortable to be those champions around these topics.

Russell Berger: Yeah, 100%, the goal here should be to mitigate risk, that's what we're trained, or improve performance the more affirmative positive side of it. Those things have to... should be the goals of the training. It shouldn't just be to check the box.

So you wanna do trainings that aren't just, I've seen some of these trainings where they are heavy on the law and what the definitions of all [00:04:00] these things, which again, sometimes is what you have to do from a compliance standpoint. But no one's getting that. No one's changing their behavior because of that.

If you're going to include that because you have to, of course, fine. But, what else are you doing around it? What does the rest of the training look like so that, you're actually getting through to folks and, you're changing behavior in a positive way.

Sarah Sawyer: Yeah. No, great points. Well, thanks Russell, and we'll see you next time.

Russell Berger: Thanks, Sarah.