

# The Value of Workers

(Dennis de Peiza)

Business and organizations depend largely on capital and other resources, workers, clients and customers to drive their success. Each one of these is a critical element to the success and survival of any enterprise and organization. However, it would seem that some employers and management have not made the importance assessment of what is essential to ensure that the enterprise reaches and maintains the objective of survival and the attainment of success.

It would appear that access to resources and making profits are considered as priorities. Given that this may be the case, it seemingly follows that creating a customer and client base becomes paramount. If this conclusion has any merit, it becomes evident that employees are ranked at the bottom of the priority listing of employers and managers. This is rather unfortunate, as it send a statement to employees that there is a limited significance attached to their value.

Good business sense would dictate that both employers and management personnel employees ought to recognize that their employees are the life line to their business. It is the knowledge, skill, expertise, productivity, commitment, loyalty and the offering of customer service, that are essential to the growth, development and success of the business.

For some strange reason, employees are made to feel that they are not important, and moreover are often treated in a contemptuous manner. There are not made to feel secured in their jobs, are often underpaid and moreover, have poor conditions of service. Many employees would identify with the fact that there is no scope for upward mobility, and further, that there are few benefits that come with the job. This certainly does little to motivate and inspire workers. It therefore comes as no surprise that the issue of worker satisfaction become an issue. At the heart of the problem is the insensitivity of employers and managers, who always make the fundamental mistake and take their employees for granted. The end result of the insensitivity and complacency is the echoing of complaints, to be and followed by protest action by employees.

Much of this could be avoided if employers and managers would pay close attention to small details which are of concern to their employees. The idea of dismissing workers concerns or treating them lightly will bring little joy and hope in attaining the success and survival of their enterprise or organization. There are some employees who fool themselves that workers are fearful to take action because there are unionized, that no bargaining unit or collective bargaining agreement exists. Those who are so narrow minded, ought to wake up to the fact that any industrial action by organized or unorganized workers could have the net effect of crippling the business.

It is pathetic that in some instances where workers are inclined to stand up for their rights, they are in turn subjected to acts of victimization and discrimination. As we know it, the threat of dismissal / termination, lay off or retrenchment always looms in the corridors. Employers and managers should be minded of their responsible to inspire confidence and trust in their employees if they expect to be rewarded with high level of productivity, reduced loss of man hours, negate a reduction in the high incidence of staff turnover, poor staff morale and general poor employer – employee relations.

Employee protection therefore becomes an important safeguard towards reducing unscrupulous action being taken by employers. The Employment Rights Act in Barbados is a good example of such protection, as it sets out the procedures to be followed in the termination process. This includes written warnings and minimum period notice of termination. Importantly enough, Section 27 of the Act states that an employee has the right not to be unfairly dismissed. The employee has the right to appeal to the Employment Rights Tribunal if he/she was dismissed for reason such as becoming an officer or delegate of a union, participating in trade union activities, discrimination, and for lodging a complaint of a violation of the law.