Coping with stress in the work environment

A CASE STUDY AT A.S.R. VERZEKERINGEN

An international insurance organisation which hosts 4,000 employees in a recently renovated building.

a.s.r. PARADOX

Because the organisation wants to reduce burn-out and absenteeism, it implements a standard package of interventions to cope with stress.

Because most employees do not use these interventions, a.s.r. obliges employees to use some of the interventions.

Because a.s.r. obliges employees to use the interventions, the stress level of the employees remains high.

Because a.s.r. causes a high stress level of the employees, the organisation fails to prevent burn-out and absenteeism.

VALUES of employees

Freedom

where trust is an important aspect that influences the degree of freedom.

Appreciation

being an added value and an essential part of the organisation.

CONCEPT: ‘2LINK’

The goal of the ‘2link’ is to facilitate employees to express themselves freely, by giving them the opportunity to share what they have on their minds.

Content: The concept is a digital screen placed at the pantry blocks, where employees can draw and write on when choosing a colour and/or an icon to use as a stamp.

Interaction:

Stimulate use with text, ‘What is on your mind? Write it down or draw it.’

Emoticons and symbols, to express explicit or implicit messages.

Stimulate both positive and negative expression, talk clouds with thump up and thump down.

MODEL TEST

The main goal of this test is to find out if being able to express oneself freely, helps employees to cope with stress in the work environment.

It can be concluded that the concept stimulates employees to express themselves freely. Short-term effect offers stress relief. To confirm if it helps employees to cope with stress on the long term, so when burnout cases decrease, the duration of the test should be significantly long.

As expressing oneself seems to enable the employees to cope with stress on the short-term, one can say that frequent self-expression might enable employees to cope with stress with an enduring effect.

Two examples of interventions offered by a.s.r. Fitness facilities (right), Promotion for personal development (left).

A generative session with employees from a.s.r.

The setup of the model test at a.s.r.

An example of how the model was used.