

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Personnel Management

Germain Giroux

Volume 3, Number 5, January 1948

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1023592ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1023592ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Giroux, G. (1948). Personnel Management. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 3(5), 71–73. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1023592ar>

Chaque employé a pleine liberté de formuler ses griefs à la direction, d'exposer ses plaintes et de demander aide et conseil pour toute question d'ordre personnel, familial, social ou autre. Tous et chacun sont traités sur un pied d'égalité avec justice et courtoisie. Les employés ont ainsi l'impression de faire partie d'une grande famille où il fait bon travailler, car une discipline « familiale » règne dans notre entreprise de sorte que les patrons sont heureux de protéger ainsi la santé physique et morale des futures mamans de notre race.

On pourrait aussi parler des organisations sportives et sociales qu'encourage la Compagnie, mais passons pour l'instant.

On demandera quel résultat tout ce système a produit et quel peut être le coût approximatif de ces services ?

Nous ne craignons pas d'affirmer que le taux de virement de notre personnel est l'un des plus bas du Québec, puisqu'il varie seulement de 0.8% à 4% avec une moyenne de 1.5%, d'où économie dans le coût de formation et d'entraînement. En second lieu, les taux d'absence sont de 2.7% pour les absences contrôlables, avec une différence de seulement 1% pour les absences incontrôlables, ce qui est un record dans la grande industrie du Québec. Un troisième résultat acquis : la santé de nos ouvriers a atteint un niveau supérieur à la moyenne industrielle, et chez nous, c'est l'exception qui est affligée d'un « teint d'industrie et de factorie ». Un quatrième résultat, découlant des pre-

miers : la stabilité du personnel expert, qui facilite le gain de meilleurs salaires sans l'exigence d'un rendement accru. Et la chose s'explique facilement quand on sait que l'ouvrier travaille dans un milieu invitant et propre, où il est tenu compte de tout facteur humain et de la personnalité de chacun.

Pour une entreprise qui emploie près de mille personnes, il va sans dire que l'organisation et le maintien de tels services nécessitent une dépense de quelques milliers de dollars, soit une moyenne annuelle de \$15. par employé, pour les services médicaux seulement. Le secret d'une telle réussite réside dans une franche collaboration entre la direction et le médecin, basée sur une éducation progressive du personnel.

Le responsable de cette politique vis-à-vis la direction de la Compagnie est le Gérant du Personnel. Il a son propre budget à administrer et à lui échoit le rôle de maintenir une juste harmonie dans l'industrie. Dans la petite entreprise, cette responsabilité sera cumulée avec celle des ventes, des achats, de la finance ou de la gérance générale.

Si une de nos entreprises a réussi à abaisser le taux de remplacement du personnel à son strict minimum par l'organisation de services médicaux, industriels et sociaux, pourquoi d'autres ne suivraient-elles pas la même voie ? Le succès de l'industrie est à ce prix sans compter qu'un tel procédé sert l'entente entre les classes de la société.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Germain GIROUX

The question of staff replacement causes employers a great deal of concern. In order to keep going, let alone progress, any enterprise has to be able to count on an expert and steady working force, and it is not always convenient for the employer to hire new employees that are qualified; hence the need for a given industry to train its own new employees, to school apprentices and stand the expense of their training. Considering that the cost of training an apprentice usually figures up in the hundreds, sometimes in the thousands, of dollars, it goes without saying that no employer can afford to let out an experienced workman for any paltry reason; for that would only be to see some rival enterprise profit from the money expended

by oneself. Every time an employer loses an expert workman, it represents a certain sum of money gone, along with the workman, without any hope of return. But there is something else besides.

An enterprise does itself no particular good by developing a reputation as a good training school, if on the other hand it is incapable of holding its experienced help. The reputation of a product is partly the result of the experience of the workers employed in its production; from this it follows that the loss of experienced workers causes a decrease in the profit the enterprise is entitled to expect.

Therefore, the reduction of the labour turnover to a strict minimum becomes a matter of real necessity. The objection might perhaps be advanced that this is not an easy thing to accomplish, that labour is indispensable, or that it is impossible to adapt to our environment the system so widely applied in the United States. Nevertheless, thanks to the spirit of initiative of its owners, one of the biggest enterprises in the Province of Quebec has succeeded for the past two years in emphasizing this type of industrial relations, which is so popular with our neighbours to the South. The Dominion Corset Company Limited, the largest business of its kind in the whole Empire, might well today be proud of the success achieved by the application of rational and human methods in its operational activity.

Some years ago the rate of labour turnover varied from 12% to 18%, while today it is no more than from 0.8% to 4%. How was such success obtained? Let us see . . .

It sometimes happens that the causes of an employee's leaving are hard to appraise. Nevertheless every employer can and should avoid departures resulting from misunderstanding, poor health, questions of treatment, discontent, inaptitude . . . Dominion Corset applied itself to these divers problems, seeking wherever possible to eliminate the evil at its source.

This firm does not consider the worker as a machine to be driven continually at full capacity, but rather as a rational and sensitive human being. By means of a series of industrial services, the Company takes pains first of all to satisfy the legitimate needs of its employees. It is in pursuit of such an aim that industrial medicine was introduced in this establishment.

At the Dominion Corset the working force is mostly female and therefore more difficult to handle, unless the method is altogether adequate and its application deft and tactful.

Prior to engagement every prospective employee is required to pass attitude and psychological tests, to establish his or her qualifications, and then to undergo a complete medical examination comprising :

- a) a test of the eyesight by the Keystone Survey Test method to determine the state of vision, and the Dvorine test for color perception;
- b) a dental inspection to determine not only the condition of teeth and gums but also to detect any anatomical malformation or defect which could give rise to throat or stomach troubles;
- c) the medical examination proper: X-ray of chest and boold test, for traces of tuberculosis or ve-

nereal disease; once this medical examination is completed, the doctor makes a psychological and psycho-somatal approach. It ought not to be forgotten that the worker brings to his task all his natural tendencies and that, left to depend entirely upon his own resources, he will often experience serious difficulty in facing up to this problems, whether elementary or complex.

By means of these approaches is ascertained the employee's cardiac condition, emotional reaction, and everything that might affect the internal balance at any time during the period of employment. The investigation is completed by a questionnaire on the eating habits of the candidate. Everyone is alive to the necessity of nourishing oneself, but very few know how to do this well. Here the candidate is advised as to an appropriate diet, and trained in the principles of industrial hygiene as well as in regard to the care that ought to be taken of the body.

At each of these stages of the examination a medical form is filled, not so much to inform the Company on the general health of candidates as to be of help to the latter after their employment. The candidates being declared physically fit, their future working companions will accept them in a friendly spirit, having nothing to fear on the score of danger of contamination. When the time comes to actually put new employees to work, the regulations, working conditions and wages, chances of advancement, etc., are explained to them and they are then presented to the proper party fort induction; for it is considered essential that new arrivals feel at home from the very first moment. This affords an initial satisfaction to apprentices who thus feel themselves considered as human beings and not as creatures lost in the midst of a great bewildering whole.

Apprentices go through a first course at a training center, where they are initiated into the secrets of their new occupation under the surveillance of expert companions. The new workers will have already noted the modern lighting of the rooms, completed by an ensemble of pastel tints. Before the end of their first day other agreeable surprises will be experienced; a ten-minutes rest period morning and afternoon, with free distribution of milk to everybody; conditions impeccable from the standpoint of thorough industrial hygiene; cleanliness throughout the plant and a wholesome spirit of cooperation. If they do not go home to lunch they will find at the plant a dining room where soups, beverages and fruits are served free of charge, while they may at the same time listen

to their favorite radio program during the lunch hour. Employees meeting with accident or falling sick during working hours have a nurse at their disposal, and may at any time have a free consultation with the Company doctor, who spend the whole of every forenoon in the plant. First-aid medicaments are supplied gratis; and should remedies, tonics or glandular extracts be required, the Company buy them for the employee, who makes reimbursement in small weekly installments. The same privilege is available as to the service offered by our two dentists at fixed rates, the fees being payable by the Company and reimbursable by the employee at the rate of two dollars a week. Every examination whether medical, dental or of vision, is at the exclusive charge of the employer, as is also the consultation; but the services do not stop there.

Employees are at full liberty to state their grievances to the management, lodge complaints, and request assistance and counsel on any question of a personal, family, social or other nature. One and all are treated with courtesy, equality and justice. In this way the employees come to feel that they belong to one big family where it is good to work; for it is a « family » brand of discipline which reigns in our plant, the employer being ever happy to safeguard the physical and moral health of the future mothers of our race.

We might well touch also on sports and social organizations encouraged by the Company, but let us pass that by for the moment.

It might fittingly be asked what result has been obtained by this system, and what the approximate cost of these services can amount to.

We have no fear of stating that the rate of our labour turnover is one of the lowest in the Province of Quebec, varying as it does from 0.8% to 4%, with an average of 1.5%, which represents a real saving in the cost of school and training. Next, the rate of absenteeism is only 2.7% in the avoidable category, with a difference of only 1% in that of absences which are unavoidable, all of which constitutes a record in big industry in Quebec. A third result obtained is that the health of our workers has risen to a level higher than that of the average in industry; and in our plant it is the exception for an employee to bear the taint of « industrial or factory pallor. » A fourth result, flowing of the former ones, is the stability of the force of experienced workers, which facilitates the earning of higher wages without any spurring on for greater output. And all this is readily understood when it is realized that the work is performed in a clean and inviting environment, where

every human factor, as well as the personality of each individual, is taken into account.

For an industry employing nearly a thousand persons, it goes without saying that the organization and upkeep of such services necessitate an expense of some thousands of dollars, or an annual average of fifteen dollars per employee, for medical service alone. The secret of such success lies in frank collaboration between the management and the doctor, based on the progressive education of the working force. The person responsible to the Company management for the carrying out of this policy is the personnel manager. He has his own budget to administer, and upon him devolves the duty of maintaining a due and proper harmony in the establishment. In a small enterprise this responsibility will be combined with that of sales, purchasing, financing or general management.

If one of our enterprises has succeeded in lowering the rate of labour turnover to a strict minimum by the organization of medical, industrial and social services, why should not others follow along the same path? The success of industry depends upon it, to say nothing of how such a line of conduct promotes good understanding amongst the different classes of society.

ENQUETE SUR LE PROLÉTARIAT

Dans sa livraison de novembre, la revue l'Action Nationale commence la publication d'une enquête sur le prolétariat canadien-français. « L'existence et la montée d'un prolétariat canadien-français suscitent des problèmes dans tous les ordres, mais particulièrement dans celui de la nation ». On y ajoute « ce n'est pas un thème pour exercice littéraire... Les ouvriers sont devenus la majorité dans la nation. Ils sont en même temps, de par les circonstances, le milieu social le moins enclin à reconnaître les implications du national. Pourquoi en est-il ainsi? Peut-on agir sur les causes, dont cet état intellectuel et affectif est la conséquence? »

Cette revue invite tous ceux que leur expérience et leur réflexion ont familiarisé avec la question de lui faire parvenir leur point de vue. Déjà des témoignages de milieux très différents ont été publiés, celui de M. Esdras Minville, directeur de l'École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, celui de M. Guy Cormier, rédacteur en chef du *Front Ouvrier*, et enfin celui de M. Gérard Picard, président général de la C.T.C.C.

Ce problème est très important pour tous ceux qu'intéressent les relations du travail. C'est un fait que personne ne peut dédaigner par quelque motif que ce soit: les industriels, les chefs ouvriers de la province de Québec, de quelque nationalité qu'ils soient, ont à déployer leur action dans un milieu canadien-français. Nous encourageons donc nos lecteurs à prendre connaissance de ces analyses et même à répondre à l'appel de cette revue en lui faisant part de leurs propres observations. — G. D.
