



SOLVE IT

HR MATTERS

How to handle underperformance in your business

Your best team member has started letting you down.

- They used to be reliable, now they're missing deadlines.
- The work that used to be spot-on now needs fixing.
- And you're having to chase them for updates on things they'd normally handle without being asked.

The trouble is, it's affecting everyone.

- Other staff are picking up the slack and getting frustrated.
- Customers are starting to notice.
- You're spending your days putting out fires instead of moving forward and you don't know what's wrong or how to fix it.

In most cases I've seen, there's a fixable reason behind the decline - like a system no one's been properly trained on, a busy period that never calmed down or a job that's quietly become something bigger than it used to be.

Once you identify the real cause, you can take action. Set clearer expectations, give them what they actually need or make the tough call about whether they're right for the job.

Dealing with performance concerns in your team?

Get in touch for a confidential chat today.

LATEST NEWS

Job vacancies drop as hiring costs rise

UK job vacancies fell by 63,000 at the end of spring, as higher wages and increased employer National Insurance contributions made hiring more expensive for small businesses.

Instead of expanding your team, focus on keeping your best people happy and helping your current staff to develop new skills.

It's cheaper than recruiting and you'll get better results from people who already know your business.

If you need help with creating a retention strategy for your team, we can help you with practical ways to keep your best people and develop the skills you need in-house.





What small businesses can learn from the McDonald's culture crisis

LATEST NEWS

McDonald's recently faced serious allegations about sexual harassment and misconduct across some of their UK restaurants.

Many of the reports came from young employees about other young employees – crossing lines, normalising inappropriate behaviour and lacking the maturity or training to know what's acceptable in a workplace. McDonald's didn't dismiss it as a few isolated incidents. They recognised a deeper problem: a culture that hadn't kept pace with the needs of a young workforce.

Here's what they did and what small businesses can take from it:

1: Create a culture where speaking up feels safe and normal

McDonald's found that staff weren't always sure what counted as 'harassment'—and feared they wouldn't be taken seriously. You need to make it easy, safe and judgment-free to raise concerns.

2: Use the language your team relate to

Their staff co-created a campaign called 'Red Flags'. A phrase young people already use to call out bad behaviour. Speaking their language helped to make the message land.

3: Support young managers

Many team leaders were also young and unprepared for the responsibility of handling sensitive issues. Training and support for junior leaders is essential if you promote from within.

This is a great example to demonstrate the importance of culture. As an expert HR consultant, I look at many problems and I know that it ultimately boils down to culture. So, if you have the same problems happening, it will be worth getting in touch to see if there is a wider culture problem at play.

This is where I can help. I can discuss the issues with you, audit your culture and put a plan in place to improve it.

Staff costs getting out of hand? Here's what actually works

Rising pay bills are hitting small businesses hard, but you don't have to choose between cutting jobs and going broke.

Look at your shift patterns first – you might be paying for hours you don't really need. Offer flexible working to keep good people from leaving (recruiting replacements can cost a fortune). Focus on holding onto your best performers rather than constantly hiring new people. Small changes like these can cut your wage bill without having to let anyone go.

Want to review your current setup and see where you could save? Get in touch for a chat about what might work for your business.

Proposed employment law would remove 2-year protection for dismissals

The government is planning to give all employees day-one protection against unfair dismissal from autumn 2026. Currently, you can dismiss someone in their first two years without much risk of a tribunal claim.

If these changes go ahead, your probation process becomes crucial. You'll need clear probation terms in contracts, regular review meetings and proper documentation if someone isn't working out.

Getting this wrong could lead to expensive tribunal claims, even for new starters. While nothing's set in stone yet, it's worth preparing for these potential changes now.

We can help you to get your probation process right and make sure you're documenting things properly ahead of any changes.

Your top HR questions

What's the best way to handle an employee who refuses to do tasks outside of their job description?

If the task is reasonable and clearly linked to their role, it's well within your rights to expect it. Have a clear conversation about what you need, remind them of their contractual duties and explain how this fits their responsibilities.

If their job has genuinely evolved since you hired them, update the job description to formalise these new responsibilities. This gives you the clarity and authority you need to manage expectations properly.

Can I offer a job to someone and delay their start date until business picks up?

You're within your rights to delay the start date or hold off on making a formal offer until you're ready. Just be upfront about the situation – tell them that you're interested in hiring them when business improves, but you can't commit to a specific timeline just yet.

It's smart to wait until you're confident the role is viable. This keeps good candidates on your radar without creating any expectations that you might not be able to meet or putting them in the awkward position of resigning before you're certain.

Do I have to give the same benefits to part-time and full-time staff?

Part-time staff should get benefits worked out proportionally – so if your full-time employees get 20 days leave plus bank holidays, someone working three days a week would get 12 days leave plus the equivalent pro-rated bank holidays.

The important thing is being fair and consistent. If you treat part-time staff poorly compared to full-time ones, you'll end up with unhappy people and potential legal problems.

Need a confidential chat?

If you have a problem brewing in your business, you're worried about something or you simply need some expert HR support then please get in touch with us for a confidential chat.

A quick conversation could save you from a very costly mistake and we could give you the clarity you need to decide your next steps with confidence.

I offer a free 30 min chat (without any obligation to buy from me in the future).

Contact us here: [Discovery call](#)



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