
A remedy for the use of social media: Factors significant in managing the human resource

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Abstract

Social media is increasingly being used as a business tool. However, little is known about the perceptions held by workers ahead of that tool being introduced into their workplace. In an effort to remedy this shortfall in understanding, and acknowledging that there are now few opportunities to capture data within organisations which have yet to establish a social media presence, one such organisation was identified: a large medical practice in the United Kingdom. Twenty-one in depth interviews were conducted with the organisation's workers with the intention that the gathered data might be used to ensure that those workers' needs were being accommodated into an organisational social media strategy.

This paper draws on one element of the study's findings; a fear that social media induces a complaints culture. The study identified there to be three key themes underpinning that fear: the potential for social media to empower the complainant; a risk of individual workers being on the receiving end of a negative online focus; and the ramifications arising from the increased onus placed on organisational performance. Drawing on the detail surrounding those findings, and acknowledging that the way technology is used exerts a significant influence on worker perceptions, this paper highlights factors which are significant to human resource management in the contemporary environment: the need to manage perceptions of social media, for support mechanisms to embrace the negative fall-out from social media, and for there to be a greater understanding of how users of organisational provision portray themselves through online media.
