

Up close and personnel

Happy returns

WORKPLACE CULTURE

Alexandra Economou

WORKPLACE culture can have a significant impact on a company's bottom line, an expert has warned.

Leed Consulting principal Diarmid Lee said poor workplace culture could also affect employee engagement and the ability to retain and attract staff.

Mr Lee said many businesses did not realise the potential of their staff.

"Businesses often actually have the people they need, but it's about developing them in the right way to deliver the strategic plan for the firm," he said.

"You might have a range of people who are quite capable and innovative but you don't have systems, practices or the culture that encourages people to be upfront about their abilities.

"It's really about saying, are you leveraging the potential and talent you

have within your organisation and achieving the maximum return on that?"

Another problematic area was the divide between managers and leaders and other employees.

Leed Consulting uses the Denison Organisational Cultural Model — created by US-based researcher Daniel Denison — to help businesses implement cultural change.

"There are only four companies in Australia qualified to use this model," Mr Lee said.

"It's a tool to generate data about what's going on with an organisation, which is then used by businesses for thoughtful discussion."

Research by Denison found firms with a high-performance work culture had 15 per cent sales growth in one year, compared with those with a poor performance culture whose sales rose 0.1 per cent.

It had been used by companies such as Coca-Cola, NASA and Deutsche Bank.

Clean break from misconceptions

FRANCHISING

Claire Heaney

JULIE Finch-Scally is on a mission to change the perception of cleaners.

Now 70, she started cleaning 19 years ago when she quit her job at a bank.

Ms Finch-Scally worked for a cleaning agency but soon decided she could do it better alone.

"I could see that it was not really as efficient as it could be," she said.

She founded Duster Dollies and is recruiting franchisees.

Ms Finch-Scally said people underestimated the value of a good cleaner.

"It is a real art to be a good cleaner. You need people who can see dirt," she said.

Ms Finch-Scally said there was a growing demand as people sought to outsource aspects of their lives in pursuit of a better work/life balance.

She said she was annoyed to learn some hotel chains had unreal expectations of cleaners, expecting them to clean in limited time.

"The problem is many

people don't understand how long it takes to do a thorough clean," she said. "They notice when the clean is not done well, but they cannot appreciate the time it takes to do the job properly."

She said cleaning was a hard and physical job.

"But when done properly, it not only gives pleasure to the recipient but also to the person doing it," she said.

She said cleaners needed to professionalise their industry.

'It is a real art ... you need people who can see dirt'

— JULIE FINCH-SCALLY

The professional cleaner deserved to be paid the same as people in other industries, she said.

"Only then will people realise cleaning is an art and the cleaner will gain the respect they deserve."

Ms Finch-Scally has one franchisee in Melbourne, in the Moreland area, and is looking to recruit.

Franchises cost \$22,000.

Net link:

www.dusterdollies.com.au



Keeping it clean: Julie Finch-Scally with some of the tools of her trade. Picture: JOHN FOTIADIS