



# Delaney

## Call-centre absenteeism

**A call centre wants to find ways to reduce absenteeism and retain staff**

### Background

Delaney is a Dublin-based call centre working for a major European car-hire company. Delaney employs 260 full-time and part-time agents. Most agents are European women in their mid- to late 20s, many of them fluent in English, Spanish, Italian, French or German. The car-hire company has outsourced most of its booking operations to Delaney.

In common with many call centres, Delaney has problems with absenteeism and high levels of staff turnover. The average length of service is only three years. This means high costs in terms of recruiting, selecting and training call-centre agents. Added to that cost is the fact that new agents are not as productive as experienced agents. There is also concern about the competitiveness of the Irish call-centre industry.

### Report on absenteeism

Read the report. What possible reasons could there be for the high levels of absenteeism in Delaney? How could the company try to reduce it?

### Report on absenteeism

#### Executive summary

The Human Resources Department monitored absenteeism over a 12-month period.

The findings show that there are high levels of absenteeism in the company. The average is seven days taken in sickness per agent each year. The most common causes of absenteeism are reported as headaches and migraine, colds and flu, back problems and stress.

This level of absence may be causing delays in answering calls and is placing extra work and stress on colleagues. In addition, there is the cost of finding replacement staff to cover absences and the uncertainty that absences can cause in planning services.

Ultimately, our callers and clients may become dissatisfied with the level of customer service. The imperative, therefore, is for the company to find ways to reduce absenteeism and to deal with it effectively when it occurs.

### Task 1

#### Meeting

Student A, you are a team leader at Delaney. Student B, you are a call-centre agent at Delaney and Student A is your manager. Read your information and meet to discuss Student B's sickness record.

Student A: Turn to page 151.

Student B: Turn to page 159.

#### The consultant's findings

CD2.14–2.19 Delaney recently hired a consultant to run a series of stress-management workshops. Listen and summarise the main problems based on comments that the call-centre staff made to her. How would you try to deal with the problems?



## Task 2

**Decision-making meeting**

Work in groups. You are the management team at Delaney. You have heard rumours that your main client, a major European car-hire company, is investigating an alternative supplier, possibly in Eastern Europe, where staff and operating costs are more competitive than in Ireland. The CEO and Chief Financial Officer of the car-hire company are coming to visit you next week.

Hold an emergency meeting. Prioritise the issues to deal with. Then discuss and decide how best to resolve them.

- Decide a company policy to manage and reduce absenteeism rates.
- Define good practice for the use of call recording and monitoring.
- Review staff performance targets and the bonus scheme.
- Decide the company's internal e-mail policy.
- Devise a strategy to reduce staff attrition rates.
- Decide how best to persuade our main client not to change suppliers.

Watch the Case study commentary on the **DVD-ROM**.

**Writing**

Look at this draft e-mail and decide how to improve it before you click on **SEND**.

➔ Writing file page 143

**Subject:** Monthly performance

Tricia

For the second consecutive month, you have failed to reach your target. This is simply NOT ACCEPTABLE. As I have told you in the past, all agents are expected to deal with a customer's booking in no more than five minutes. The average time you spend with a client is 6.2 minutes.

As for absences, you were off sick three days this month, and arrived late for work on four occasions. Try to do better next month.

Regards

Bernadette

