

Exploration the 7 concepts identified as constituting a circular approach to HRM

Business case: BOSTON SCIENTIFIC (Ireland)

Boston Scientific is a worldwide developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices. Founded in 1979 and headquartered in Massachusetts, USA, Boston Scientific is a public company that employs 25,000 people and is a global leader in the development of less-invasive medical devices.

Interview: Carol O'Doherty, Human Resource Manager, Boston Scientific

Date of interview: 12th November 2020

Context:

Established in Ireland in 1994, Boston Scientific has grown to be the largest medical device employer in Ireland. Through its 3 Irish sites (Clonmel, Cork, and Galway), the company exports approximately 10 million medical devices worldwide annually, including stents, balloons, catheters and pacemakers. There are approximately 4000 employees in its Galway company.

Concept 1

The design of 'work practices' and 'work spaces', emphasising maximum positive impact on a worker during his/her employed experience

BOSTON provides 4 employee upskilling programmes: a) a professional skills development programme for employees; b) technical skills training for direct and indirect employees, c) a leader development programme and d) a further education programme. Further, they support 3 worker types: Onsite, Hybrid (50:50; on-site:offsite), and Remote/Agile workers

Regarding well-being, BOSTON provides:

- an Employee well-being online portal (resource)
- a well-being leader manager resource
- an onsite occupational health team - supported daily by 2 nurses & a company doctor who comes onsite every 2 weeks
- an Employee Assisted programme (online/phone support for employees e.g., bereavement, relationship issues, work-life balance, legal & financial matters)
- a series of Well Being videos
- free virtual access for all employees to a doctor

Concept 2

Processes of understanding and responding to the needs of workers to optimise redeployment within the same company

BOSTON offers training for leaders, performance development coaching for employees and managers with resources, self-assessment with 360 feedback, annual succession planning, development assignment programme, mentoring toolkit, leader development programmes.

In terms of leader training, BOSTON offers:

New leaders: an opportunity to participate in their 6-month Leader Development Programme

Established leaders: employment law investigation skills training, adapting to change training, working at part of the virtual team etc.

Manager & Director level leaders: a corporate offering - a global programme of advanced leadership development.

Concept 3

Supporting the reintegration of a worker so he/she, following a period of leave (short/long term) can continue to be employed in his/her original function or in a new role within the same company

BOSTON have an Occupational Health team that liaise with those on leave, and they work with management through a phased and supported return to work

Concept 4

The mentorship of a worker who is considering leaving the company (e.g. due to retirement, or the completion of a project) to apply their skill-set in a different role within the company (e.g. proactive use of skill set prior to retirement, or re-orient skill set to a new project)

BOSTON have an informal mentoring toolkit, an online opportunity to seek a coach from across their global network, and furthermore, they organise a Young Professional Network (YPN) event annually.

In addition, employees have multiple opportunities to rotate across job positions and functions in house.

Concept 5

Categorising the skill set of workers with a view to planning and implementation of worker-centred strategies that optimise the categorised skills sets within a company ecosystem

BOSTON can request a 360 on the Boston Competencies (a self-assessment, manager assessment, and a report generated that would link to the assignment of a coach if

needed); Unconscious bias training is offered to support gender equality and encourage multicultural diversity.

Concept 6

The prioritisation of human centred optimisation, or, in other words, flexible working conditions, over contractual obligations

BOSTON have a global mobility organisation that support employees with international moves, be they short term or long term for the company across the globe. Re flexible learning, ergonomic assessments are enacted. Resources offered to support.

Concept 7

Supporting the transition of a worker into the external job market where a worker is no longer meeting the requirements of their current contractual obligations is considered a core component of Circular HRM practices

BOSTON would organise an exit interview, in addition to organising a farewell celebration, succession planning, internal job advertising.

Concluding remarks

Carol O'Doherty was very open in sharing the incredible circular HRM practices that Boston Scientific offer. Open conversations within and between companies in relation to these practices can only enhance the sector locally and globally.