SwitchOff Training Programme – Module 7

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Training Programme

Module 7
Implementing organisational policies to support employees' right to disconnect

Module 7	
Module 7	Implementing organisational policies to support employees' "right to disconnect" – UNIVR
Short description of the module/abstract	This module provides a comprehensive understanding of the development and implementation of organisational policies to support employee well-being, with a specific focus on the right to disconnect. Participants will learn how to conduct needs assessments, define organisational policy objectives, and engage stakeholders to ensure effective organisational policy creation. Strategies for clear communication, employee training, and organisational policy evaluation are emphasized to foster a healthy work environment. The module aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard employee well-being throughout the implementation of organisational policies.
Learning Outcomes	**Learning Outcome 1:** Understanding the benefits of organisational policy implementation. Participants will grasp the positive impact of well-tailored organisational policies, including how they enhance work-life balance, promote employee recovery, and consequently contribute to reduced stress levels and burnout. **Learning Outcome 2**: Understanding the consequences of neglecting organisational policy implementation. Participants will comprehend the potential adverse effects of failing to implement appropriate policies, such as damaged organisational reputation, decreased employee work engagement organisational trust, and increased legal and regulatory risks. **Learning Outcome 3:** Practical implementation of organisational policies safeguarding employee rights. Participants will gain practical insights into organisational policy development and implementation processes. They will learn to engage stakeholders, define organisational policy scopes, communicate effectively, and assess organisational policy effectiveness, enabling them to contribute to a positive work culture that respects employees' rights and well-being. These outcomes aim to guide participants in understanding the importance of organisational policy implementation, the consequences of overlooking it, and how to practically execute policies to ensure a thriving work environment.
Learning Units	*Unit 1*: From promise to practice: analyzing the effects of organisational disconnection policies.

	Unit 2: Organisational policy neglect: unveiling the domino effect on organisations and well-being. *Unit 3*: Guidelines for designing and implementing policies that promote disconnection from work while considering organisational needs.
Learning core material	

Unit 1	Learning Material
Introduction to the module	Text
1 From Promise to Practice: analysing the Effects of Organisational Disconnection Policies.	Text, experience sharing.

Unit 2	Learning Material
Organisational policy neglect: unveiling the domino effect on organisations and well-being.	Text, experience sharing.

Unit 2	Learning Material
Guidelines for designing and implementing policies that promote disconnection from work while considering organisational needs.	Text, practical group activity, video.

Assessment method	For each chapter or Learning Unit please mention the assessment method

Unit 1	Assessment method
Introduction to the module	-
From promise to practice: analysing the effects of organisational disconnection policies.	Multiple choice questions; open question.

Unit 2	Assessment method
Introduction to the module	-
Organisational policy Neglect: unveiling the domino effect on organisations and well-being.	Multiple choice question

Unit 3	Assessment method
Guidelines for designing and implementing policies that promote disconnection from work while considering organisational needs.	Multiple choice question + group activity

Workload (Estimated study time) (min)	We have estimated 180' for this module, including the assessment activity.
Author(s)	UNIVR

Introduction

In today's ever-evolving work landscape, the continuous emergence of new challenges calls for proactive and adaptable approaches. These approaches are essential to cater to the changing needs of both organisations and their workers. To effectively tackle these challenges, organisations need to craft tailored organisational policies that prioritize employee well-being while aligning with the specific characteristics and demands of the company. Within the organisational context, policies encompass formal guidelines and principles set by organisations to regulate various facets of work and conduct within the workplace (Petts et al., 2022). The scientific literature underscores that these policies play a vital role in addressing critical aspects that, if left unregulated, could pose threats to employees' well-being. These aspects include ethical concerns, discrimination, perceived organisational injustice, challenges with work-life balance, and the unregulated nature of remote work (Mohammad et al., 2019). The latter has gained significant attention recently due to the widespread adoption of remote work. Disregarding employees' right to disconnect can have adverse effects, such as their inability to psychologically detach from work, lack of recovery time, and in extreme cases, burnout (Hayes et al., 2021).

Thus, this module aims to provide skills and knowledge on implementing organisational policies that uphold employees' right to disconnect. It will delve into the essential components of such policies, encompassing their scope, objectives, and effective implementation strategies.

LEARNING UNIT 1 - FROM PROMISE TO PRACTICE: ANALYZING THE EFFECTS OF ORGANISATIONAL DISCONNECTION POLICIES

In this learning unit, we delve into the positive impact of well-tailored organisational policies. These policies go beyond rules; they shape the very fabric of a company's culture. We will explore how these policies can enhance work-life balance, promote employee recovery, reduce stress levels, and mitigate burnout. Understanding these benefits is pivotal in appreciating the value of organisational policy implementation and its transformative potential within the workplace.

Introductory reflective prompts: *in your experience, what are the positive consequences of the implementation of organisational policies? Why should an organisation implement organisational policies that promote disconnection?*

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of organisational policies to support and promote work disconnection can offer numerous advantages:

➢ Firstly, it contributes to **work-life balance** by enabling remote workers to strike a harmonious equilibrium between their professional responsibilities and personal lives.
➢ Concurrently, **it facilitates work recovery**, a vital process for resetting both cognitive and physical resources. This recovery opportunity has the potential to reduce stress and mitigate burnout, issues notably prevalent in the context of remote work (Hayes et al., 2020; Hayes et al., 2021).
➢ Moreover, affording remote workers the ability to disconnect and have dedicated non-working periods can amplify their **performance** during active working hours (Petitta & Ghezzi, 2023). Recovered employees tend to exhibit higher focus, motivation, and overall improved performance in their work tasks (Bhattacharya et al., 2020).
➢ Developing organisational policies that prioritize employees' well-being not only benefits their health and productivity but also confers a **significant competitive**

advantage to the company's reputation and brand image. By offering appealing employee benefits, competitive compensation packages, and avenues for career growth. Policies oriented towards well-being, especially those concerning the right to disconnect, have gained substantial relevance in attracting talent to organisations (Yasin & Huseynova, 2020).

LEARNING UNIT 2 - ORGANISATIONAL POLICY NEGLECT: UNVEILING THE DOMINO EFFECT ON ORGANISATIONS AND WELL-BEING

This unit is dedicated to understanding the dire repercussions of neglecting organisational policy implementation within an organisation. When organisations fail to uphold and enforce their policies, the consequences can be far-reaching. It's not just about damaged reputations; it affects employee morale, work engagement, and even exposes the organisation to legal and regulatory risks. This unit will explore these consequences in detail, shedding light on why adherence to policies is not optional but a necessity for sustainable organisational growth.

Introductory reflective prompts: *why is it important for an organisation to keep its word about implementing policies?*

➢ Neglecting the enforcement of stated policies or showing disregard for existing organisational regulations can have severe implications for a company. Beyond tarnishing the company's reputation and undermining **trust** among stakeholders, it can profoundly affect employees' **morale and work engagement**, consequently impacting overall performance (Yang et al., 2022).

➢ Additionally, non-compliance with policies exposes the company to **legal and regulatory risks**, potentially resulting in penalties or legal actions. Furthermore, it can significantly influence the company's culture and image, fostering an atmosphere of inconsistency and a lack of respect for established rules.

➢ In the realm of remote work, the failure to implement organisational policies safeguarding the right to disconnect can potentially give rise to a concerning phenomenon known as **presenteeism**. Remote employees might feel compelled to persist in working even when unwell, fearing negative consequences or job insecurity. This behaviour can lead to decreased productivity, burnout, and an overall decline in well-being (Rhule et al., 2020).

To mitigate the adverse effects of presenteeism and foster a healthy work environment, organisations must establish unambiguous guidelines and expectations regarding sick leave in remote work setups. Employees should be actively encouraged to prioritize their well-being and take the necessary time off for recovery when required. Remote workers should have access to adequate support and resources, including healthcare benefits and mental health services, to effectively address their well-being.

In this final learning unit, we transition from understanding the importance and consequences of policies to the practical aspects of organisational policy implementation. This step-by-step journey, guides the learners through the process of creating policies that uphold employees' rights, particularly focusing on the right to disconnect. From identifying the objective of the organisational policy to effectively communicating and training employees, and finally, monitoring and evaluating its impact — this unit provides the essential knowledge and skills needed to bring policies to life within an organisation. It emphasizes creating a positive work culture that respects and prioritizes employee well-being.

Introductory reflective prompts: *what are in your opinion, or according to your experience, the most relevant steps one needs to follow to implement organisational policies? Let's assume you need to improve one, where do you start from?*

Identification of the organisational policy objective and designing of the organisational policy
The process commences with a thorough **needs assessment**, employing methodologies such as surveys, interviews, and research analysis to gain profound insights into the challenges employees face concerning work-life balance and uninterrupted connectivity. After this evaluation, an in-depth **analysis of existing organisational policies** is conducted to ensure their adequacy in addressing the imperative of the right to disconnect, identifying potential areas for refinement. **Engagement of stakeholders** follows suit, encompassing employees, HR personnel, managers, and pertinent departments to encompass a diverse array of perspectives. This ensures a comprehensive understanding of organisational viewpoints in the organisational policy development process. Consequently, precise articulation of the problem statement is achieved, drawing upon the invaluable insights garnered from both the needs assessment and stakeholder engagement. **Defining the purpose** and delineating the scope of the organisational policy proves pivotal, outlining overarching goals and specific objectives that the organisational policy aims to achieve. Additionally, meticulous **scrutiny of legal and regulatory prerequisites** is conducted to ensure strict adherence to all pertinent laws and regulations. The culminating step involves the **drafting of the organisational policy** and **subsequent submission** for approval to key decision-makers for their review and endorsement, ensuring the organisational policy's seamless alignment with the organisational mission and objectives.

Communication and training
Following the establishment of the organisational policy objective, the critical focus shifts towards effective communication and comprehensive training. The initial step involves formulating a well-defined "**dissemination plan**", encompassing the creation of an extensive communication strategy and the organisation of training sessions. Clarity and comprehensibility are emphasized, leading to the meticulous crafting of clear and **concise organisational policy documentation,** ensuring ease of comprehension for all employees. **Official communication** is paramount and hence, an email or memorandum announcement of the organisational policy is dispatched to apprise all employees and stakeholders. After this, structured **training sessions** are orchestrated, designed to impart in-depth knowledge regarding the organisational policy's specificities. Interactive and engaging strategies are

employed, such as workshops or role-playing exercises, offering employees a platform to simulate organisational policy implementation in realistic scenarios.

To further underscore the organisational policy's significance, efforts are dedicated to **educating managers** and empowering them to serve as advocates. They play a vital role in effectively communicating and reinforcing the organisational policy within their respective teams. Finally, a **system of ongoing communication** is established, facilitating regular updates and reminders to keep employees well-informed and engaged with the organisational policy.

Monitoring and evaluating
Lastly, for effective organisational policy implementation, continuous **monitoring and evaluation** are essential. **Surveys and questionnaires** are designed and administered to gather insights into awareness, understanding, and perceptions of the organisational policy among employees. Furthermore, **interviews and focus groups** are conducted with key stakeholders, providing qualitative insights into their experiences and suggestions. To measure the organisational policy's effectiveness, we define specific **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** and Metrics, enabling quantitative evaluation. Additionally, **case studies and benchmarking** are analysed, drawing lessons from similar organisations or industry best practices to further enhance organisational policy implementation strategies. This step ensures that the organisational policy is not only implemented but also evaluated and refined for ongoing effectiveness.

Introductory reflective prompts: *What are in your opinion or according to your experience, some examples of organisational policies aiming at safeguarding the employees' right to disconnect?*

After-hours email policies
They establish guidelines specifying that employees are not expected to respond to work-related emails outside of their designated working hours. They also encourage employees to schedule emails to be sent during regular work hours if they need to work late to respect colleagues' off-hours.

Communication expectations policies
They clearly outline expectations regarding communication after work hours, emphasizing that employees are not obligated to engage in work-related communication during their personal time. Encouraging the use of communication tools allows scheduling messages to be sent during working hours.

Meeting hours policies
Setting specific time blocks for meetings during the workday ensures that employees have uninterrupted time for focused work. They aim to discourage scheduling meetings during lunch breaks or after regular working hours.

Workload management policies
These policies implement workload management guidelines to prevent excessive work that spills into employees' personal time. They also encourage realistic deadlines and workload assessments to avoid overburdening employees.

Annual leave and time-off policies

They aim to ensure that employees are actively encouraged to take their entitled annual leave and time off to rest and recover without engaging in any online or offline work activity. These policies also discourage any form of retaliation or negative consequences for taking approved time off.

Training and awareness policies

Conducting regular training sessions educates employees and managers about the importance of disconnecting from work after hours and its positive impact on overall well-being. They include the promotion of mindfulness and stress-reduction techniques to encourage a healthier work-life balance.

Managerial role modelling policies

This kind of organisational policy encourages managers and leaders to set an example by respecting employees' right to disconnect and not sending non-urgent communication during non-working hours. They advocate for open communication with managers about workload and expectations.

Flexible work arrangement policies

They offer flexible work options, such as flexitime or compressed workweeks, to provide employees with greater control over their schedules, promoting a better work-life balance.

Technology usage guidelines

Setting guidelines on the usage of work-related technology during non-working hours encourages employees to turn off work notifications and disconnect from work-related apps or platforms. These policies aim to protect employees' right to disconnect, allowing them to enjoy their personal time and maintain a healthier work-life balance.

Activity

Recall real-life experiences

Begin by reflecting on the experiences you previously mentioned, where a company either lacked a organisational policy for employee well-being or failed to fulfill promises to improve policies. Consider how the right to disconnect played a role in these experiences.

Invent a company case

Invent a fictional company scenario based on the amalgamation of your collective experiences. Include details about the company's industry, size, work culture, and challenges related to employee well-being, particularly focusing on the right to disconnect. Describe a specific incident or scenario that exemplifies the need for organisational policy development.

Identify organisational policy objectives

Analyse the invented company case and identify key organisational policy objectives that would address the issues at hand. Define what specific aspects of employee well-being, particularly the right to disconnect, need to be safeguarded.

Organisational policy development
Brainstorm and draft policies that align with the identified objectives. Consider how these policies can effectively address the issues in the invented company case. Discuss the scope, purpose, and legal considerations for each organisational policy.

Implementation strategy
Devise an implementation strategy for the policies. Determine how these policies will be communicated, trained, and enforced within the organisation. Discuss potential challenges and mitigation strategies for successful implementation. And plan an evaluation and monitoring system.

Presentation
Present the invented company case, outline the organisational policy objectives, present the drafted policies, and discuss the implementation strategy. Be prepared to explain how the policies address the challenges and contribute to a healthier work environment.

Reflection and discussion:
Conclude the activity with a reflection and discussion on the exercise. Discuss the learnings, challenges faced during organisational policy development, and potential insights gained about effective organisational policy implementation to safeguard employee well-being, especially the right to disconnect.

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