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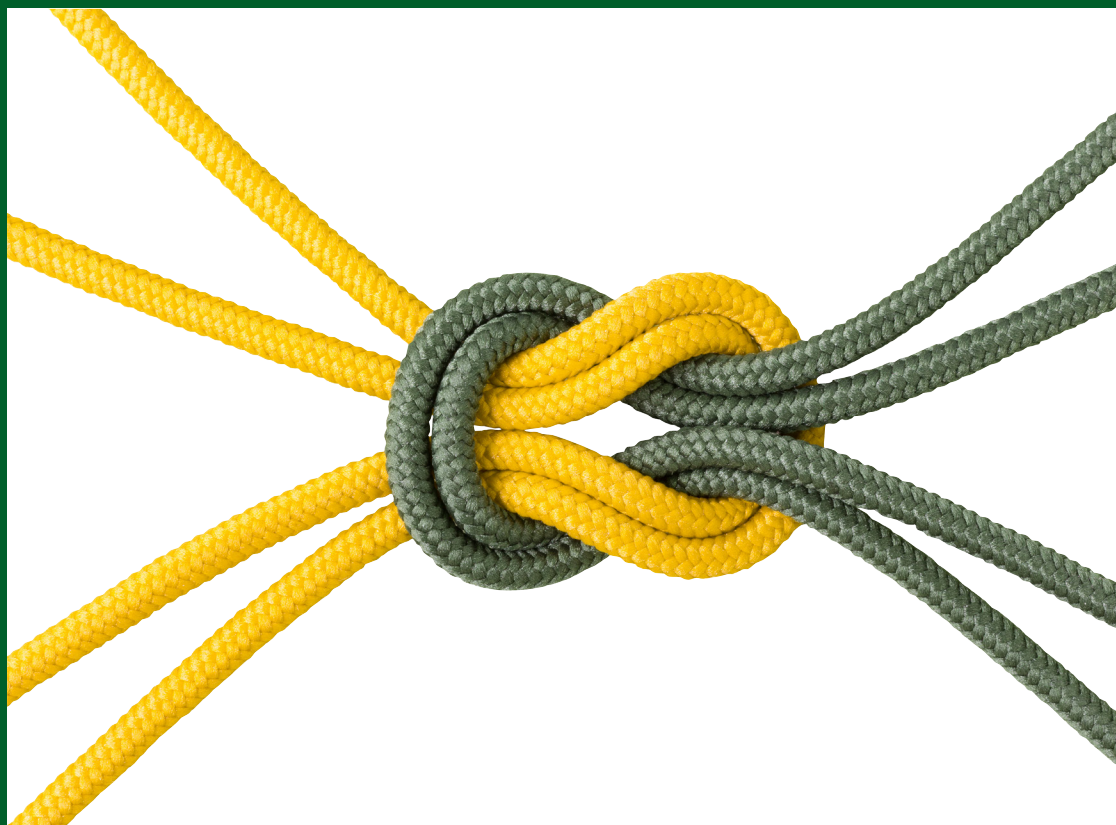
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Swiss HR-Barometer 2016

Focus
Loyalty and cynicism

Executive Summary

published by Gudela Grote et Bruno Staffelbach



Executive Summary

Current edition

This edition of the Swiss Human Relations Barometer (HR Barometer) examines the working conditions, working relationships, work habits and behaviour of employees in Switzerland for the ninth consecutive time. This year's main topic is «loyalty and cynicism», and focuses on the interplay between the loyalty experienced and given by employees and the cynicism that employees develop towards their employers.

Random sampling

This survey is based on a random sampling from the sample register of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The survey was conducted between March and June 2016 and the respondents had the option of choosing between an online version and a paper version of the questionnaire. Overall, 1,506 responses from employees from the German, French and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland were analysed.

Focus: Loyalty at the workplace

Even though the level of loyalty employees in Switzerland experience at their workplace is good, the analyses still show room for improvement. One in four employees viewed at the least promises made by the company as broken promises and one in three considers their relationship to their line manager and work associates as not completely satisfactory.

Focus: Loyalty of employees to their employer

The employees themselves, however, show a great sense of solidarity with their employer. More than half of employees feel emotionally tied to the employer and less than one-fifth of employees were seriously considering turning in their resignation.

Focus: Cynicism towards the employer

Overall, employees in Switzerland do not show a great deal of cynicism towards their employers. Only a few of the employees indicated having cynical thoughts or cynical feelings directed at their company. Two-thirds of the employees surveyed showed cynical behaviour towards their employer at least from time to time, for example in the form of derisive remarks.

Focus: Conditions for loyalty and cynicism

With regard to employers, loyalty and cynicism are largely shaped by the extent of loyalty the employees experience in the company. Employees who perceive their employers as loyal have a higher motivation to stay with the company and show less cynicism. Job security also plays a key role. Employees who fear they will soon lose their job develop a cynical attitude, feelings and conduct and are more likely to consider quitting their job

Focus: Operational measures

Operational measures can be taken to thwart the development of cynicism and promote loyalty among employees. This is where expectation management for employees is crucial. Realistic expectations for the job should be

created as early as during the job recruitment process. Reciprocal expectations of the employee and the employer can be further reviewed at regular HR meetings and coordinated. Moreover, it is a central task of management to reduce uncertainty among employees.

Trend:
Career orientation

The traditional promotion-oriented career focus continues to increase as in previous years. And in 2016, the traditional security-oriented career focus has experienced an upswing. By contrast, the autonomy-oriented career focus is on the decline compared with the previous survey in 2014. Among employees, this growing pursuit of security and the decreasing willingness to take on responsibility for one's own career go hand in hand with the negative development of employee's perceived employability. Employees deem their chances of finding a new job on the labour market as less favourable than in previous years. In line with this, many hope for security and continuity with their current employer.

Trend:
HR practices

Overall, employees in Switzerland rate their working arrangement as positive. In particular, the variety of tasks was rated consistently high during the past ten years of the survey. Only the categories of autonomy and feedback through the work itself saw a slight decline. It can be concluded from the latest survey that companies are investing more and more in staff development: compared with previous years, employees now benefit from slightly more training days.

However, there is room for improvement in the area of career planning: Thus far only one in three benefit from career planning discussions and only one in ten from coaching and mentoring offers. A negative trend has developed in the area of participation opportunities. Since the 2010 survey, the opportunities for employee participation in Switzerland are on the decline.

Trend:
Psychological agreement

Since 2011, the discrepancies between employee expectations and employer offerings have grown and are now stagnate at a relatively high level. In particular, employees expect more from their employers with regard to appropriate compensation and internal development opportunities.

Trend:
Trust in the employer

Employees' trust in their employer has remained relatively constant since the 2011 survey. Around three-fourths of employees in Switzerland trust their employer, 17% partially trust them and 9% of employees tend not to trust their employer or do not trust them at all.

Trend:
Uncertainty

The figure for job security declined for the first time since 2009, however clear sector-specific differences must be noted. In addition, a slight decrease was reported in multi-dimensional job security – worry regarding undesired changes with regard to work content and conditions. However, employees' greatest concern continues to be an increase in workload. They also view their chances on the labour market as less intact than two years ago.

Trend:
Work satisfaction and commitment

This long-term trend that resigned satisfaction with work is increasing at the expense of stabilised satisfaction with work continues to develop. Accordingly, 30% are only satisfied with their work because the requirement level of their work has gone down (resigned satisfaction with work), while 34% are satisfied with their work because their expectations and wishes regarding work have been met. The commitment of employees to their employers, however, remains high and is even trending slightly upward. Overall this indicates a strengthening of employee loyalty to their employer.

Conclusions

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This year's survey shows no new areas of action. But it does underscore the necessity of clearly defining and communicating desirable features of working relationships and implementing the required measures with management and staff development.

The general uncertainty of employees, which is repeatedly expressed in the Swiss Worry Barometer, should not be taken advantage of to leave employees in an unsatisfactory working situation without any alternative. Instead, the goal is to strengthen employees' skills when it comes to dealing with uncertainty and to allow for loyal working relationships to grow from an open and confident attitude in the face of ever-present uncertainty.

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