

AUDIO: A BAN ON AFTER-WORK EMAIL?

Durée: 2'06

Protagonists : Journalist Affan Chowdhry & Lisa Kimmel

Affan Chowdhry: France is in the middle of considering a limit on after-work emails and phone calls. Dream come true or communications nightmare? Well Lisa Kimmel joins us and she is the general manager at Edelman Toronto, a public relations firm where they have adopted a 7 to 7 email policy. Tell me about it!

Lisa Kimmel: OK so here is how it works: We have told all of our employees and we have implemented this in 2010 that they cannot send emails between 7 pm and 7 am. And if something urgent comes up then it's their responsibility to actually call the person that they need to reach. That applies to weekends as well. And the other important thing to note is that it is self-policed, so regardless of seniority level, if someone is not abiding by the policy, then they can call their colleague out.

Affan Chowdhry: And have people stuck to the policy?

Lisa Kimmel: Absolutely. You know, we initially introduced it to address the fact that employees in a survey had told us that they were feeling overwhelmed and stressed. And so when we adopted this policy, the reaction from employees was so incredibly positive and they do abide by it.

Affan Chowdhry: And what has been the effect in terms of the workplace and productivity?

Lisa Kimmel: Well I think you know that there is a significant amount of research that talks about the importance of having a life outside of work that isn't focused on work 24/7. And as a result of that people have the opportunity to do other things that help to enrich their job performance. And there's no question, I can speak personally about the fact that that's certainly the case for me.

Affan Chowdhry: Now what happens when it's management sending after-work emails?

Lisa Kimmel: So one of the things that we have done within my leadership team is that we've all committed to abiding by the policy, though at night, you know - many of us do work at night, and we actually get through all of our emails at that time - so we have an understanding that we can send it out to each other. That said, if one of them is not abiding by it, again regardless of seniority level, a junior employee has the opportunity to call out a leadership team member for not abiding by it.

Affan Chowdhry: Thank you so much, Lisa.

Lisa Kimmel: Thank you!

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