

Quality work

The frequent contracting of economies and the trending decline experienced in the recruitment and hiring of workers for available jobs, has lent to a reduction in the sustaining of employment levels. The retention of labour has been phased under the guise of the trimming of operational costs, as many employers turn their attention to reducing the number of employees on the pay roll. With less hands in the workplace, it is reasonable to conclude that this could have an impact on workplace productivity and the quality of work.

Workers are now crying foul as they complain and accuse their employers about bullying, exploitation and of arbitrary behaviour. There is the growing concern over the lack of consultation and disrespect for the rights of workers. There is also the concern being expressed about the circumventing and the manipulation of the laws of the land by employers. This is said to be to the detriment of workers.

These developments suggest that workers and workers' representative bodies ought to have some genuine concerns of the declining job quality. The actions and behaviour of employers who are engaging in unethical and probable illegal practices, make it difficult to understand how these contribute to promoting quality jobs. Quality jobs are known to exist where there is provision for a living wage, basic benefits, wealth-building opportunities, career-building opportunities, a fair and engaging workplace. Where these five elements have been compromised, it means that workers are left to ponder on the impact such could or will have on their quality of life. As employers undertake the express their rights and obligations as business owners, they have a responsibility to acknowledge that unfair and unreasonable treatment of employees can negatively impact on the growth, development and success of the enterprise.

As employers desire and in some cases demand a consistent level of performance and productivity, they should not be oblivious to the fact that workers have an expectation that they will be provided favourable conditions of work. These will include conditions of employment that provide opportunities for education and training, promotion, attention paid to workplace safety and health, provision for

Quality Work: Dennis de Peiza: Labour Relations & Employee Relations Consultant, Regional Management Services Inc.: 6 August, 2021

trade union representation, negotiation and collective bargaining, respect for human rights, civil rights and a clear demonstration of the employer's interest in the welfare and wellbeing of the employee. These missing elements will certainly diminish the quality of work and can lead to an unproductive and moreover a demotivated and demoralized workforce.

It would appear that employers tend to concentrate on financial returns. Consequentially, they often miss the fact that employee job satisfaction can make all the difference to the positive outcomes of their enterprise. Workers are known to place a high value on wages and job security, but this should not be taken to mean that this is all that matters. In reviewing another definition of quality jobs, there is the view that quality job means that one's work is valued and respected and meaningfully contributes to the goals of the organization. This definition provides a broader perspective as it advances the need for inclusion, whereupon the employee can participate in the decision-making process. This speaks largely to the democratization of the workplace and to the contribution an employee can bring in helping to shape the individual's personal destiny and that of the enterprise.

Attached to a quality job is the value attached to it. Much attention is paid to the pay, hours of work and security of tenure. These have a bearing of the individual quality of life from the point view of the planning of one's life. Also to be taken into consideration would be the nature and demands of the job, how it hinders or contributes to the development of the individual, causes physical, emotional and psychological stress. These are factor that can help to drive the individual to develop the confidence required to aspire to achieve more. This is put into context in the observation made that:

“Most people spend a substantial part of their time at work, and work for a significant part of their life. Hence jobs people hold is one of the most powerful determinants of people's quality of life. However, the question is not simply to have a job, it is also a matter of the quality of those jobs”. (*Sandrine Cazes, Senior Economist, OECD, and Anne Saint-Martin, Economist (May, 21, 2014)*)

Manuela Tomei, Director of the ILO's Work Quality Department, made the point that “Good working conditions contribute to the well-being of workers and the success
Quality Work: Dennis de Peiza: Labour Relations & Employee Relations Consultant, Regional Management Services Inc.: 6 August, 2021

of enterprises. Understanding the issues that affect the well-being and productivity of working women and men is a critical step towards achieving decent work for all. This is particularly true at a time when new technologies and new forms of work organization are reshaping the world of work.”

According to Juan Menéndez-Valdés, Eurofound’s Executive Director. “Job quality can be improved – by reducing excessive demands on workers and limiting their exposure to risks – and also by increasing their access to work resources that help in achieving work goals or mitigating the effects of these demands “Workers and employers and their organizations each have a role to play in improving job quality.”