

The Bradford Factor

Introduction

The Bradford Factor is a method of measuring and managing employee absence. It is used by many organisations to proactively manage absenteeism and discourage unnecessary short term absence in the first place. The Bradford Factor measures the number of absence incidents and the duration of each incident to compute an absence score for each employee. In other words, those individuals with lots of odd days off here and there will score more highly than an individual off for 6 weeks because they've broken their ankle.

In my experience, the higher the score, the more disruption the employee's absence is causing an organisation. The scores act as a trigger to prompt action, escalating the formality of dealing with absence more quickly.

How is the score calculated?

The Bradford Factor Score is calculated using the following formula: $S \times S \times D$ where

- S** is the number of spells of absence of an individual over a given period; and
- D** is the total number of days of absence of the individual over the same period.

So for employees with 10 days' absence in one year, differently distributed, the score can vary enormously:

- 1 absence of 10 days is 10 points (1 x 1 x 10)
- 5 absences of two days each is 250 points (5 x 5 x 10)
- 10 days of one day each is 1000 points (10 x 10 x 10)

Using this formula, you can see at a glance, the

effects of employee absence on the organisation as a whole as well as a comparison with other individuals.

How is it used?

The employer sets certain trigger scores that are communicated to the workforce. They know, for example, that when their absence hits 150 points, they are likely to be called into a formal hearing that may result in a disciplinary sanction. A score of 250 may result in a second hearing and so on. The trigger points prompt a more thorough examination of the reasons for absence, an act in itself that can discourage the 'duvet day' syndrome, before formal action is taken.

Employers usually see that absence is reduced when Bradford scores are first introduced, possibly due to the use of this system which gives a visible warning and deterrent to employees.

It is important to remember that absence that is related to a protected characteristic such as a disability or pregnancy needs to be discounted in the Bradford calculations.

Interested in learning more?

Contact Metis HR to discuss how the Bradford Factor may work to reduce absenteeism in your company.

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Check out our website: www.metishr.co.uk

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