



Creating a Common Sense and Compassionate Leave Strategy

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Session Objectives

- Understand the human experience behind leave requests
- Review foundational leave management concepts
- Explore real-world challenges and how to navigate them
- Equip managers with practical, people-centered tools
- Look ahead at emerging leave trends and expectations



Why Getting Leave Management Right Matters

- Leave requests often arise during employee hardship
- How we respond shapes trust, culture, and retention
- Effective leave handling reduces compliance risks
- People-centered processes strengthens organizations



The Human Side of Leave Management

- Employees feel vulnerable, overwhelmed, or unsure
- Empathy boosts communication, clarity, and cooperation
- Compassion + consistency enhances compliance
- Every interaction influences employee experience



Hallmarks of an Empathetic Leave Conversation

- Listen without judgment
- Validate the employee's experience
- Avoid probing medical questions
- Offer clarity about steps and resources
- Reinforce confidentiality



Leave Management Fundamentals

- Understanding core leave types
- Manager vs. HR responsibilities
- Documentation expectations
- The importance of consistency
- Confidentiality and privacy essentials



Manager Responsibilities

- Be supportive and empathetic
- Know when to loop in HR
- Maintain neutral, factual documentation
- Avoid making assumptions
- Communicate next steps clearly



Common Real-World Challenges

- Incomplete or unclear medical documentation
- Overlapping leave laws and complexities
- Performance issues emerging during leave
- Intermittent or unpredictable absences
- Employee uncertainty about options



Case Scenarios

- Frequent intermittent absences
- Employee provides limited documentation
- Domestic violence-related leave request
- What is the first step?
- How do you communicate with empathy?
- When should HR be involved?
- What risks do you want to avoid?



Equipping Managers for Success

- Provide scripts and conversation templates
- Use checklists and other tools for consistency
- Reinforce partnership with HR
- Build manager confidence through training



Manager Conversation Framework



Compassionate opening



Clarify without probing



Outline next steps



Provide resources



Reassure confidentiality



When in doubt, involve HR!



Building a Future-Ready Leave Strategy

- Mental health + psychological safety
- Domestic violence/safety related leave needs
- Pregnancy, caregiving, and flexible support trends
- Simplifying process for employees
- Data-driven insights to identify trends



What People-Centered Really Means

- Policies shaped around dignity and respect
- Processes that minimize burden on employees
- Training leaders to respond rather than react
- Aligning operations with humanity and compliance



Case Study

Does this work in the real world?

OneDigital Leave Concierge approach



Questions?

