

The importance of open conversations in bridging finance

Blog

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The specialist finance sector has long been perceived as a rather buttoned-up and inflexible environment, where a stiff upper lip and an unwavering ability to power through immense workloads are viewed as essential attributes. However, as [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) aims to underscore, the pressures and anxieties of your career can at times feel overwhelming, even for the most stoic professionals.

It is crucial that we dismantle the stigma surrounding these issues and foster a culture of openness, where discussing one's struggles is not seen as a sign of weakness, but rather an act of courage and self-awareness. By embracing vulnerable dialogues, we can collectively acknowledge the strains that come with financial careers and develop support systems that promote well-being alongside professional excellence.

The market has faced numerous challenges lately, the rise in interest rates, the cost of building materials, the overall economic uncertainty and tight completion dates all of which have had a negative impact on the property market leading to redemption delays and lower completion rates. These pressures can take a toll on the mental health of industry professionals.

The benefits of talking it out

When facing difficulties, whether professional or personal, speaking openly about our concerns can be incredibly beneficial.

Here are a few reasons why:

1. **Reduced burden:** Bottling up emotions and worries can feel overwhelming. Sharing your thoughts and feelings with others can help alleviate this mental burden.
2. **Valuable perspectives:** Those close to us may offer insights or advice that could help us navigate challenging situations more effectively.
3. **Validation:** Expressing our feelings to others can provide a sense of validation, reminding us that our experiences and emotions are valid, understood and often shared.

Cultivating a supportive and open workplace culture

Companies shouldn't just recognise the importance of supporting employees' mental health during Mental Health Awareness Week, but year-round. But what can be done?

Employers should create an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing mental health concerns without fear of judgement or repercussions. Regular check-ins, anonymous surveys, and mental health training help normalise these conversations.

A healthy work-life balance that includes taking breaks can be written into office policies. These should also be led by example. Leaders should model healthy work habits that set the tone from the top.

Where possible, companies can offer access to professionals, whether that's mental health first aiders, access to counselling services, mental health awareness initiatives, or workshops. Through education and awareness, we can actively combat negative perceptions around mental health issues.

Prioritising mental health support creates a psychologically safer workplace, boosts morale and loyalty, and increases productivity overall.

For more information on mental health, take a look at our [Mental Health Awareness Week 2024: Small changes for big impact infographic](#)

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