

Good morning.

I'm a Ryanair cabin crew but i have to remain anonymous for my own protection. I worked for this airline for quite some time now, i'm based in Italy and i believe it's time to talk about our working conditions.

We can't contact unions and this point is stated in our contract but we would like to use the opportunity that you offered us to give you some information about our company.

In these years I've read many articles on magazines and newspapers about Ryanair but often they are inaccurate. There's only one information that came out frequently and it's truthful: Ryanair disrespect employees.

As I mentioned before, we are not allowed to spread information about our company nor to contact the union. "Don't wash your dirty linen in public" is the motto. If you fail to comply with this rule you face dismissal for gross misconduct.

As a consequence you feel solitude and fear.

Ryanair was never open to exchange of views, negotiations and debates. When we had the chance to speak with managers, we never felt understanding from them. The only offer that we always receive is to resign if we don't like something and our dignity and professionalism are affected by. For Ryanair we are a staff number and a crew code; nobody keeps you here if you are unhappy, even though you are a great cabin crew.

The company policy is to earn the most saving the most. If one leaves, another two will be hired paying the training (about 2000 euro and you get back 1200 euro if you stay for at least 1 year). Our misery is basically part of their business.

Colleagues are often the only way to vent, even if the reign of terror established by the Company sometimes "kills" the relationships and the trust which are normally building up in a working place. This because Ryanair push us to report each other. In my opinion this is a very dangerous system, as it can be used against weakest people. It produces discontent, hard feelings and hate, it encourages individualism and it produces stress.

Another issue that we have to face is the strong pressure that the Company puts on us, for example with the on-board sales, considered by Ryanair as a very important part of their business strategy, and basically our main duty.

We have targets to reach every day, which include duty free products, scratch cards, from few weeks food and in the large an average spend.

At the end of the duty we face a debriefing. If we didn't sell enough we have to explain the reasons to our supervisor, which usually disregard the amount of stress which faced the crew in the ten or even twelve hours of duty. When you are at the bottom of the monthly sales chart, you receive a letter where they ask you to improve your performances or they will reconsider your position.

Fear affect mainly the cabin service supervisors, always afraid to be demoted or called for explanations by the managers. They go to work worried and they make junior's working day (cabin service agents) a nightmare. Their only thought is to indulge Company's requests and to avoid bad reports from mystery passenger. Their aim is to sell, sell sell and it doesn't matter if the crew had 5 minutes during the ten hours of duty for a refreshment.

Fatigue and stress give rise to rudeness, arrogance, presumption and, as a consequence, conflicts. The crew should behave like a team and should always be ready to react to any problem which could arise on board, main role of the cabin crews.

This modus operandi produces discord, anger, anxiety. The opposite of what we need to work.

Ryanair, like many other companies, uses mystery passengers to check crew performances on board but what it may look like a normal instrument of surveillance, in this airline becomes an instrument of punishment and psychological torture. The mystery passenger in Ryanair is a simple cabin crew, a colleague named by the company without any kind of different training, whose assignment is to check how much and in which way the crew is selling things on board. They are not interested in safety procedure and they are required to point mainly to the negative aspects of crew performances.

Probably our managers forgot the foundation of business economics: workforce is one of the fundamentals of a successful firm. Unhappy employees lead to low productivity and unhappy customers. Unhappy customers lead to loss of earnings.

For new cabin crew, hired after 2011, the situation is even worst.

In general, you start your career in Ryanair signing a contract with an agency and you are paid for every hour of flight; you don't get any basic salary. Since 2012, social insurance has to be paid in the country where we are based. In Italy we pay contributions to INPS; part is on us and part is on the Company. This amount of money is higher than what we used to pay in Ireland, so Ryanair offered a lower contract (12% less) to new cabin crew, in order to cover the loss.

We all do the same job, but new hired earn much less.

During a meeting, this situation was brought to the attention of a manager. He answered that we are happy the way it is, otherwise many of us would have already resigned. And so no pay increase was given.

Probably, if 40 people would leave tomorrow, he would say that unhappy crew left the Company, so still no pay increase required.

In Ryanair, you are allowed to be sick but the Company won't be happy about it. Flu or strong cold are not enough to call sick. If you get sick 3 times in 6 months you have to face a meeting, even if your illness is certified by a doctor.

To avoid problems, many colleagues are coming to work sick.

When you are sick you have to call crew control and tell them exactly which symptoms and disease you have. The same day you have to fill in a self certificate, writing once again about your sickness in details, and fax it to some offices in Dublin. There's no department which take care of this private things and you never know who's going to read it.

One year and half ago we were asked to vote for a four years agreement, a pay deal. The main points were new roster and pay increase. I remember some articles on the newspapers stating that the Company found an agreement, which satisfied both parts, even if there are no Unions supporting cabin crew. False.

In that circumstance there wasn't any negotiation. They asked for proposals to all the bases but they never considered our requests.

They gave us two choices: same roster (5-2 5-3) and pay increase or new roster (6-2 6-3), more tiring, and no pay increase.

Basically, they gave us one choice.

In order to address the lack of Union, the management established the role of ERC, to represent the cabin crew. When a situation arise, we can talk to them and they report directly to Dublin.

Even in this case there a big issue: Ryanair isn't open to listen and negotiate.

What is more representatives are mainly cabin crew, working with the same shifts as everyone else. They conduct this extra duty in their free time.

A real Union would be a great help in dealing with all the problems that we have in Ryanair. It would bring a better communication with the management and between bases. It would help us when there's a new law, in Italy on in Europe, when the Company leave us alone. It would make us feel more respected and protected.

We urgently need a collective labour agreement which includes minimum salary, fair duties, equal treatment for cabin crew in Europe. Our needs are as important as Company needs.

We are not asking for inopportune benefits or salaries. We only ask for rules which give us the opportunity to work peacefully.

We would need an Italian contract, to have finally a clear idea about our rights and duties for fiscal and legislative aspects. Too many times we are confused about which law applies, if Irish or Italian, and nobody is able to clarify it.

We ask, to union and istitutions:

- the draft, in a reasonably short time, of a European collective labour agreement for our profession
- associations, with the aim to verify the procedure of an airline, which gives same importance to employer and employees
- reasonable duty time, considering the working place, the working hours, the effect of this profession on the body and the importance of the rest between duties
- clarification of "rest time" to avoid to receive phone calls from the Company between two shifts
- clarification about methods used to select new hired and to choose employee for an advancement

Thank you for reading.

Have a nice day

Ryanair cabin crew