



HR Advisor June 2008

The Monthly Newsletter from your HR Support Center

Welcome

Summer is just around the corner! We encourage you to explore the new updates to your online HR Support Center at your next opportunity.

HR Alerts

President Signs Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

On May 21, President Bush signed into law the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) forbidding employers to use genetic information to make employment and health insurance decisions.

Higher Penalties for Immigration Law Violations.

To account for inflation, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) imposed larger monetary penalties against employers who violate immigration laws.

HRCast of the Month

This month's topic:

Effective Performance Management of Your Employees

Regularly monitoring, evaluating and communicating employee performance is a crucial step for improving employee productivity.

The Five Steps of Effective Employee Coaching

New employee orientation and job-specific training serve important purposes. Coaching, however, is a critical key that is set aside unfortunately once too often. A business owner may think that spending the time to coach is too difficult, but it is his or her leadership that helps create a great team of inspired, productive, and loyal employees.

Employee coaching involves the managers and employees meeting regularly to discuss and explore each employee's career goals and development. There are five basic steps in facilitating employees to become high-performers in your team.

- **Discuss the employee's expectations of the job.**

Whenever a new employee is hired or an employee's job functions change over time, always address any questions or confusion the individual may have about the job. To help confirm or clarify the employee's perspective of the job expectations, review together a copy of the job description, department's goals,



HR Tip of the Month

"Encourage" but Do Not "Seek" Job Applicants

When preparing job opportunity ads, phrases like "seeking stay-at-home mothers" have been deemed a specific preference for a particular group and, in this case, a group protected under Title VII. Seeking applicants on a protected basis can violate laws enforced by the EEOC. On the other hand, it is considered appropriate for employers to use the term "encourage" in phrases such as "stay-at-home mothers are encouraged to apply."



Did you know ?

\$28.11

In December 2007, the employer costs for employee compensation for civilian workers averaged \$28.11 per hour worked. Wages and salaries (averaging \$19.62) represented 69.8 percent of these costs, and benefits (averaging \$8.49) represented the remaining 30.2 percent. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics)

and company's goals.

- **Understand the employee's expectations of the manager.**
While different employees have different communication styles, learn about what each employee expects from you as a manager and come to a reasonable working agreement.
- **Learn about the employee's expectations for professional growth.**
Some employees work for just the paycheck, and some have specific professional development interests and ambitions. Recognizing and gathering relevant resources to help support and build a plan for each individual's interests help strengthen employee loyalty.
- **Give feedback about the employee's performance.**
Consistent and constructive feedback becomes effective when focused on raising awareness and on improving performance results.
- **Get feedback about your performance.**
You are a manager as well as a member of a team. How well you respond to feedback from your teammates will make a significant influence on your team's synergy and success.

Each employee should come out of every formal and informal coaching meeting with a strong picture of both the specific performance goals to achieve and how his or her contributions impact the department and the company as a whole.

Question & Answer with the HR Pros: I-9 Not on Time?

Question: If a newly-hired employee cannot provide the required I-9 supporting documentation on the first day of work, what should an employer do?

Answer: Within three (3) business days from the date of hire, an employer may terminate an employee who cannot deliver the required supporting documentation or at least, a receipt for the replacement documentation if they were lost, destroyed, or stolen. If an employee presented a valid receipt for replacement documentation, the employee has up to 90 days from the date of hire to provide the actual supporting documentation. Of course, be sure to consistently and uniformly apply these practices to all employees.

A PTO versus Traditional Time-Off Program

Paid time-off (PTO) programs combine the traditionally separate vacation, sick, and personal time-off banks into one single bank for employees to take "paid time-off." While employees may generally use PTO at their discretion, the requested time-off should still be approved by management.

Under the traditional system, employers often had to deal with employees pretending to call in sick. Under a PTO system, however, employers simply acknowledge the general work-life issues of their employees by simplifying the time-off approval process.



Quote of the Month

"Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall."

-Stephen R. Covey



A Look Ahead

June 14
Flag Day

June 15
Father's Day

June 19
Juneteenth

June 21
Summer Begins



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Difficulties for PTO

- Administrative challenges to convert from a traditional system need to be addressed.
- Employees may view the entire PTO time for solely vacation purposes and come to work when they are actually sick.
- PTO usage relating to FMLA qualifying events (i.e. during pre-approved time-off for vacation, an employee unexpectedly was admitted to a hospital for a number of days due to a serious health condition) may not be realized until way after the fact.

Benefits for PTO

- Employers keep track of only one-type of time-off category instead of multiple categories.
- Employees manage their own sick and vacation time-off usage.
- Employers gain control over unscheduled absences to reduce false claims of sick time-off which was actually used for leisure time-off purposes.
- Employees generally value the flexibility that PTO provides.

Also, make sure relevant employee handbook policies are in place. For example, require employees to provide advance notice for a PTO request. Review and update related policies before the adoption of a PTO program. Also, be sure to get comments and ideas from the employees to help determine how to structure a PTO program that will be of value and use to them and your business.

Tool of the Month: HR Letters

Writing a professional letter can be a daunting task, especially when critical time constraints exist regarding a sensitive HR issue. To make the process easier, you can review, download, and customize a variety of sample HR letter templates prepared by HR professionals.

To learn more about the HR Letters, simply log into your online HR Support Center, and look under the "Essentials" section.