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Managing a Training Budget Includes Demonstrating Its Value

Human Resources departments that effectively manage their training budgets and demonstrate the value of training are more likely to secure their requested funding, says Jean Barbazette, author of three books in "The Skilled Trainer Series" (Pfeiffer).

"In managing a training budget, there are a couple of important things to keep in mind," advises Barbazette, who is also president of The Training Clinic (www.thetrainingclinic.com). "You need to keep track of training expenditures. That's the easy part. The more difficult part is cost-justifying training projects."

Tracking Training Expenditures

When tracking training expenses, she says it is "critical" to collect two types of information:

1. Direct expenses for each course (e.g., costs for instructor, fringe benefits, travel for participants, training materials, classroom use, audiovisual aids, food)
2. Indirect expenses (e.g., general administration, administrative support, postage, shipping, phone, printed materials—annual expenses that should be divided evenly among the total number of courses offered)

Once those expenses have been identified, a training cost framework can be created for each training course, she says. In addition to the direct and indirect expenses, this framework should take into account the number of learners and the length of training to determine the program cost per participant and the cost per participant per hour.

(continued on page 2)

How to Successfully Lead Diverse Teams

Many business leaders and professionals agree that diversity drives innovation, says Frans Johansson, a recognized thought leader and consultant specializing in business innovation and author of *The Medici Effect: What Elephants & Epidemics Can Teach Us About Innovation*. "Bringing different perspectives together is the best way of encouraging groundbreaking ideas. People coming together from different business units, from industries outside the company, people with diversity in terms of culture, nationality, and even gender can be put together in a team."

However, just because your people with differences are grouped together doesn't mean that you will reach your goal of creative problem-solving, developing

unique solutions, or brainstorming new products.

Diverse teams are often more difficult to lead than homogenous ones, comments Johansson. Team members may approach problem-solving differently because of both their personal backgrounds and upbringing and their past work experience.

Johansson points out that while diverse teams may be unique, they have similar obstacles to overcome and common rules that apply to them. For example, Johansson says that the average Swede has a different way of expressing himself than an American. "He may wait to share ideas until asked, while

(continued on page 2)

Cost-Justifying Training

After training expenses have been identified, a cost-benefit analysis can be performed to demonstrate the benefit of training and justify the company's investment in it. Barbazette says there are three types of analyses: cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and productivity improvement.

For example, HR can identify how long it takes employees to perform a certain task before training and how much more quickly they perform it after training, she explains. In addition, HR can look at the amount of revenue generated by a group of learners before training and compare

that with the amount they generate after training.

By comparing the total cost of training to the benefit, HR can determine the company's net savings. Return on investment can then be calculated by dividing the net savings by the cost, Barbazette says. HR can also identify the benefit-to-cost ratio by dividing the benefit by the total cost. "Demonstrating the benefits will help you maintain and expand your budget."

For example, she cites a public utility company that was able to save nearly \$160,000 by offering a certification workshop for its instructors three times a year instead of twice a year. Although the cost per participant increased, the company saved

\$159,984 per year because instructors were certified earlier and, as a result, placed in the classroom earlier. For every additional dollar the company spent on training, it saved \$69.56, says Barbazette.

"Not demonstrating the benefits and the results of training is the biggest mistake many training managers make," Barbazette says. It's not enough to simply report how many people attended training and how worthwhile they thought it was; it's more important to also show how training changed employee behavior and what financial results can be attributed to that, she says. "Relating it to the bottom-line results is really what the rest of the organization wants to hear about."

Teams (continued from page 1)

most Americans volunteer and speak up about their ideas when they have them." A team leader of a diverse team would have to watch for different cultural behaviors and elicit discussion from everyone, he explains. Otherwise, some ideas might not be presented at all in the meeting.

In general, it might take longer to get things going in a diverse team, but the forthcoming ideas will probably be more creative. To start a diverse team on the right track, the leader must instill respect within the team for other people's ideas. This is particularly important when team members are working with people that they haven't worked with before, notes Johansson.

Developing Trust Among Team Members

Developing trust among team members is also critical. At the heart of innovation is the notion of being able to suggest ideas that may not be immediately and obviously useful, so team members must trust that

their idea will be heard and accepted, he explains. Unfortunately, there is not one exercise or one activity that is universally the best for creating team trust.

Johansson suggests that a team outing or even a brainstorming session may help people get to know one another but every work culture can use the methods that it prefers.

He also stresses that keeping the focus on the ideas instead of the people is an important, but often difficult, thing to accomplish. When some people have been working together for 5 years and some others for only a few weeks, it is hard not to focus more on the ideas from the people that you know, he says.

Johansson suggests that using ideation software can help so that people share their ideas in the same virtual space, and the ideas are not attached to specific people. Teams in the same physical location can use the same types of software or services used by teams that must interact virtually through the Internet.

Another important tool for diverse teams is creating a list of terms and their definitions, explains Johansson. This glossary of terminology increases understanding and helps to create a level playing field for all team members.

The more preparation and effort taken in developing a trusting and collaborative environment for diverse teams, the more successful the team experience will prove to be for the leader and for the participants.

For more information about Johansson and his book, visit www.themedicieffect.com.

Join the Conversation!

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'Employee-Responsive' Approach Wins Award for SEPTA

Some corporations and nonprofit entities pay little more than lip service to the notion that their employees are their most valued organizational asset, but the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is not one of them. SEPTA, the fifth largest public transportation system in the United States with 9,000 employees, providing transportation to a five-county area through bus, subway, commuter rail, trolley, and trackless trolley vehicles, counts on its employees to keep its customers on time and safe and, in return, provides excellent career growth opportunities and employee benefits and services.

SEPTA was recently named recipient of a "Special Recognition" Award for the organization's efforts in acknowledging its workforce as its most valuable asset in the 2006 Greater Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Human Resources Department of the Year Award competition. The Rosen Group presented the award.

Susan Van Buren, assistant general manager, says, "The entire SEPTA HR team is excited and thrilled to have been spotlighted for all its hard work in our attempts to gain excellence in our customer service approach to our employees. My team has worked hard to represent SEPTA as a quality quasi-governmental transit employer."

In an effort to enhance performance and improve the quality of its services and internal communications, beginning in April 2004, the HR Division undertook an analysis of the department's processes with the help of an outside consultant. The process included participation from the senior leadership team and department managers and employees from many cross-sections of the organization. The feedback provided the catalyst for changes in the HR division's processes, organizational structure, and some functions that would allow HR to become a more employee-responsive, interactive, and strategically driven organization.

Feedback from stakeholders and the analysis of team member strengths and skills also helped SEPTA's HR function to determine where to focus

future efforts in building high-performance teams, encouraging employee career growth, and meeting succession planning needs.

Career Development, Ongoing Education

SEPTA has a philosophy of promoting from within, and HR provides employees with the tools to help them reach higher career goals. In the area of employee development, SEPTA uses a combination of training, management development, and tuition reimbursement for higher education as the means to engage employees in the practice of lifelong learning.

Last year HR provided more than 4,000 days of training for approximately 2,200 employees in courses to help employees sharpen their computer software, customer service, and other skills, as well as supervision and management training. SEPTA's chief executive officer even engaged in some of the employee and management development sessions.

SEPTA has also put into place a two-phase, computer-based training initiative. The initiative has eliminated lost work time because travel is not required of employees who need to complete such training programs as multimodal rail track safety and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) recertification. SEPTA HR continues to expand computer-based training for the future in areas such as biohazards and other commonly required training programs for large numbers of staff.

To encourage employees to continue their education outside SEPTA, the organization holds an annual Lifelong Learning Fair. The event provides the opportunity for employees to talk with representatives from surrounding colleges, universities, and technical schools and to discuss their education needs that will support their continued career growth. SEPTA also hosts an information portal through its employee website addressing tuition assistance benefits, schedules for free computer classes, and resources regarding higher education for employees and for their children.

Who: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), Philadelphia, PA (www.septa.org)

What: With input from department managers and stakeholders, HR revamped systems, services, and employee development programs.

Results: SEPTA received a "Special Recognition" award in the 2006 Greater Philadelphia/Delaware Valley Human Resources Department of the Year competition.

SEPTA employees can also acquire 12 college credits through internal classes offered within SEPTA's training program. The credits, which received accreditation through the American Council on Education, will be applicable as an elective or core requirement course in approximately 90 percent of the college education programs that are approved within the tuition assistance program. SEPTA saves approximately \$3,006 per participating employee in the tuition assistance program through these internal classes.

As SEPTA strives to promote from within, the HR function fills entry-level employment positions by reaching out through community job fairs, participating on curriculum advisory boards of six technical schools, and mentoring high school students. Partnering with the Philadelphia School District, SEPTA trains high school students by providing a shadowing or internship opportunity to students interested in future maintenance and mechanical positions with the organization.

SEPTA Sets Example To Follow

In a time in which specialized or experienced job market candidates are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit, SEPTA's model of employee development provides a cost-effective example for other employers and HR professionals to follow. To ensure job candidates for entry-level opportunities, SEPTA's model illustrates that a partnership with local high schools, technical schools, and colleges is a good solution to try.



From the Courthouse

Former Employees Sue for Back Pay, Benefits Under WARN Act

When a series of small layoffs takes place in a company, is the employer obligated to provide advance notice to employees? That is a question an appeals court recently had to tackle.

What happened. Financial Fusion, Inc. (FFI), a software company that specializes in retail banking and capital markets software, was in dire financial straits. During the third quarter of 2001, FFI canceled production of a new product and focused on a project scheduled for release on September 24, 2001.

On September 7, 2001, it laid off four employees at its Orem, Utah, facility without advance notice. The employees received a severance package after signing a release form, waiving claims against FFI and its parent company, Sybase, Inc.

Four days after meeting the September 24 deadline and about 2 weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks, FFI terminated 41 employees without advance notice. They received a severance package in exchange for signing a release form.

On October 31, 2001, FFI eliminated six information technology (IT) positions at the Orem site as part of a companywide IT restructuring and consolidation plan. FFI also cut five more positions there to reduce its fourth-quarter expenses.

Since FFI had terminated more than 50 employees at the Orem facility within 90 days, it provided the last 11 terminated employees with 60 days' pay and benefits in an effort to meet its obligations under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN Act).

Twenty-six of the previously terminated employees filed suit against FFI and Sybase, arguing that they, too, were entitled to 60 days' back pay and benefits, since they were terminated as part of a mass layoff without the required 60 days' notice.

A district court awarded back pay and benefits, costs, and reasonable attorney fees to the former employees. The companies appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, which includes Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

What the court said. The appeals court affirmed in part, reversed in part, and remanded the case for further proceedings. Even excluding the layoff of six employees due to IT restructuring, the companies still laid off 50 individuals between September 7 and October 31, 2001, the court said.

By signing the release form, the terminated employees did not waive their rights to sue because language in the form "only implicates claims that arise in the future" [emphasis added], the court said, noting that the mass layoff didn't occur until October 31—when the total number of terminated employees reached 50.

The court said the companies did not prove that the September 11 attacks prompted the September 28 layoff.

Citing conflicting evidence about whether the companies were planning the October 31 layoff, the court reversed the district court's decision regarding whether the terminated

THE LAW

Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act (WARN Act)

Employers must comply with the WARN Act if they have 100 or more full-time employees or have 100 or more employees who regularly work a total of 4,000 nonovertime hours per week. Covered employers must give affected employees 60 days' notice of a "mass layoff" or a "plant closing" that is expected to last 6 months or longer.

A mass layoff is defined as any reduction in force that involves an "employment loss" at a single site of employment that involves, within a 30-day period, either (a) at least 50 employees and 33 percent of the workforce (excluding part-time employees) or (b) 500 or more employees regardless of the percentage involved.

When all employees are not terminated on the same day, the date of the first individual termination within the applicable 30-day or 90-day period triggers the notice requirements. The first and each subsequent group of terminees are entitled to a full 60 days' notice.

workers were "affected" employees and remanded the case for further proceedings (*Allen, et al., v. Sybase, Inc., and Financial Fusion*, No. 04-4045, U.S. Court of Appeals, 10th Cir., 10/25/06).

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- **Understand your obligations.** Familiarize yourself with your legal obligations under the WARN Act.
- **Provide as much notice as possible.** Even if your company qualifies for an exemption under the WARN Act, you must give as much notice as possible, along with a brief statement of why the notification period has been reduced.
- **Document reasons for layoffs.** In this case, the companies argued

that the September 28 layoff was due to "unforeseen business circumstances" associated with the September 11 attacks. However, the only evidence to support that argument was a statement from FFI's HR director about a conversation he had with an unnamed Sybase executive and HR employee about how the attacks would likely impact FFI's customers and, ultimately, the business.

Call for Adoption Benefits Survey Participants

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) is seeking information regarding what companies may be doing to assist their employees who are considering adoption. “We want people to contact us, through an online survey or by calling us, and let us know what their adoption benefits are,” says Carrie Boerio, adoption-friendly workplace project manager. “Even if a company isn’t offering paid leaves or financial reimbursement, we want to know what they’re doing so we can continue to compile what we believe will be the most comprehensive list of employers that offer adoption benefits in the nation.”

DTFA maintains benchmarking information about adoption benefits so that companies can measure their

own policies against those of their peer organizations in the same industry, as well as organizations in other industries.

To participate in the survey, visit www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org/afw/employer_benefit_survey.asp or call Boerio at 800-ASK-DTFA.”

Boerio points out that when companies provide adoption benefits, the financial impact may not be extremely high, but the benefit keeps employers competitive with other companies. “It’s important for HR managers to realize that utilization rates are very low for adoption benefits. People support their peers having adoption benefits, but the utilization rates are way under 1 percent. It’s not expensive, and it’s great for recruiting. It’s one thing to say you’re

family friendly, and another to say, here’s the evidence.”

Rita Soronen, executive director of DTFA, says “Of the *Working Mother* magazine’s 2006 list of top 100 companies, 91 offer financial assistance for adoption, and 73 offer paid leave. And in an annual survey conducted by Hewitt Associates, of the 100 major U.S. employers, those that offered financial adoption benefits rose from 12 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2005. So clearly what we’re seeing is that once companies realize that this is something of benefit to their employees, they’re very quick to put it in their menu of benefits.”

Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy’s, who was an adopted child, created DTFA. He added adoption benefits to the package provided for Wendy’s employees and started the foundation to encourage other employers to do the same, notes Soronen.

Skilled Leadership Can Be Cultivated

Great leaders are developed, not born, and HR executives play an important role in gaining support from and participation in that development hypothesis from their organization’s senior leadership.

Antony Bell, leadership coach and author of *Great Leadership: What It Is and What It Takes in a Complex World* (Harvard Business School Press), says that disastrous delegation occurs when leadership training is relegated to training professionals without clear direction, support, and buy-in from the CEO and other senior management.

“Trainers should not develop programming in a vacuum,” explains Bell. “The CEO must own and champion the process.”

When senior leaders abdicate their responsibilities in taking ownership regarding the importance of leadership development training, it marginalizes the efforts of the HR executives and training professionals, he says. When a chief executive officer takes the lead and partners with HR executives to

implement leadership development training, senior and middle management recognize its importance and take their own participation seriously.

Leadership development is not only important for current managers and senior managers but also for succession planning, says Bell. Filling the pipeline with good leaders is part of HR executives’ and corporate leaders’ roles.

The Three Leadership Dimensions

Leadership consists of three different yet equally important dimensions that must be integrated to form a well-led organization and should be addressed in leadership development training, says Bell. He describes the functions of each dimension of leadership:

1. **Organizational leadership**—selling and promoting the message of the direction
2. **Operational leadership**—planning and shaping processes, organizing and controlling, and measuring and problem-solving

3. **People leadership**—selecting and matching the right people, explaining and clarifying expectations, and motivating and developing

When putting together the components of your leadership development program, work with senior leaders and managers to identify where their strengths lie, as well as their opportunities for development in areas related to the functions depicted above.

In addition to reading his book that integrates the key dimensions of strong leadership into a framework, Bell suggests other helpful books on leadership with which you may already be familiar, including *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t* and *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, by Jim Collins, and *First, Break All the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently* by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman.

For more information about Bell and his book, visit www.leaderdevelopmentinc.com.

Tips & Tactics

Relationships, Human Interaction Drive Productivity, Says Survey

As work becomes increasingly technology driven, and in-person human interaction becomes less necessary, it's interesting that 87 percent of employees report that they are most productive in their work when surrounded by colleagues with whom they have good relationships. This finding came from a fall 2006 survey of 1,919 full-time or part-time professional employees working at least 20 hours per week conducted by SelectMinds, a company that provides corporate social networking solutions.

Seventy percent of the employees also said that social aspects of work are very important for them to feel satisfied with the workplace. Eighty-three percent said that trusted relationships with co-workers and suppliers are critical reasons for joining and staying with an employer. Not surprisingly, employees without positive relationships with colleagues are more likely to leave their employment. One in four employees reported leaving a job in the past because of feelings of isolation, and another 16 percent said they left because of weak relationships with co-workers.

More than one-third of the respondents said that establishing relationships with colleagues and supervisors and adapting to a new company culture were their top challenges when joining a new company. Learning new job responsibilities came in at third place at 29 percent.

Communication also seems to be a problem for many employees; 78 percent of those surveyed reported feeling very or somewhat disconnected from the information flow, office politics, and career opportunities in departments other than their own.

Close to half (42 percent) of the respondents said that when trying to find an answer to a work-related question quickly, they are much more likely to ask an experienced co-worker or friend than check the organization's knowledge management system (only 9 percent chose the system first). Sixty-three percent of the respondents said that the quality of information that they receive from personal contacts is usually superior to that of information they get elsewhere.

"In today's information age, there's a tendency to overlook the critical role that human relationships play in the way in which work gets done," notes Anne Berkowitch, SelectMinds CEO.

"Employees turn to their networks of colleagues for technical information, competitive intelligence, business leads, and even emotional support. As businesses begin to exhaust gains from processes and information technology, their next big productivity frontier is people and the complex networks of information and relationships at their disposal," she says.

So as you plan your HR initiatives for 2007 and beyond, don't forget the importance of human interaction and communication and their influence on employees feeling valued and dedicated to the overall organizational goals. Even when workers are happy with their department's function and interaction, they can still feel separated from the organization as a whole.

That's why employee websites, blogs, traditional and electronic employee newsletters, and regular face-to-face interactions with your organization's leadership may make the difference between employees staying with your company for the long term and leaving after a year or two of employment.

For more information about SelectMinds and the survey results, visit the News section of www.selectminds.com.

SHRM and DOL Partner in Employment Initiative

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) developed an alliance during late 2006 to encourage and better promote the employment of people with disabilities.

"This alliance formalizes the relationship we have had with SHRM, benefiting SHRM as it serves its membership with the resources ODEP brings to the table and offering ODEP the opportunity for broader contact with human resource professionals," said Roy Grizzard, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy.

The new relationship between SHRM and ODEP will target areas in training and education, outreach and communication, and technical assistance, as well as provide more opportunities for feedback from HR professionals.

The partnership will also provide recruitment, hiring, and advancement information through various educational, access, and research activities, according to a statement from SHRM.

Stay posted during 2007 as this alliance begins to provide expanded services to HR professionals. In the meantime, the ODEP website (www.dol.gov/odep)

houses helpful information that you may access as you develop and/or expand your recruitment strategies to reach this largely untapped resource of talent by many organizations.

In the meantime, read some of the many articles that can be found on the ODEP website, such as "Recruiting Disabled Veterans: A Primer," and "Strategic Connections: Recruiting Candidates with Disabilities and Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities."

There are also numerous fact sheets and statistics regarding employment of individuals with disabilities and links to research that you may access.

Home-Grown HRMS Boosts Efficiency, Productivity, Savings for QUALCOMM

Designing an in-house human resource management system isn't for everyone, but QUALCOMM Incorporated was up for the challenge.

The wireless communications company had implemented an enterprise resource planning (ERP)-based HR system in 1998. The following year, however, QUALCOMM (www.qualcomm.com) wanted to shift to a Web-based application and offer manager and employee self-service functions, according to Phil Pins, senior manager of Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS) for QUALCOMM. Recent upgrades of the ERP-based system didn't have those capabilities, so the company decided to design its own system.

Getting Started

QUALCOMM wanted its HRMS to be Web-based so that its 9,600 employees around the world could access it remotely at any time, Pins explained during "Extreme Makeover: HRMS Edition," a recent webinar sponsored by the International Association for Human Resource Information Management (www.ihrim.org).

In addition, the company wanted the application to be highly secure, scalable, and easy to use. "One of our requirements was no training when we rolled out our application," Pins says. "We wanted the screens to look and act the same."

A cross-functional team was created for the development phase, and employee input was sought throughout the process. Employees participated in brainstorming sessions, reviewed page mock-ups, and helped test the application before rollout, according to Pins. Since deployment, they have provided ongoing feedback.

Ready for Rollout

When the system, called MySource™, was ready to go live in 1999, a phased rollout plan was implemented. E-mail notifications were sent to employees from their respective business units rather than from HR, Pins says. "... [Y]ou get more buy-in when the e-mail

is coming from the head of that business unit."

MySource has five modules:

1. Employee Self-Service (information on benefits, open enrollment, compensation, training, work history, and professional achievements)
2. Manager Self-Service (organizational view, employee profiles, merit planning, sick/vacation leave information, requisitions)
3. HR Administration (e.g., privileged access, data maintenance, immigration tracking, training administration, resource planning)
4. Recruiting (e.g., information on requisitions, candidate search and tracking, new hire authorizations, and electronic offer letters)
5. New Hire On-boarding (e.g., personal information, benefits enrollment, beneficiaries, policy acknowledgments, other forms)

Employees are given access only to information that they are authorized to see. "We can pretty well fine-tune what people can and can't access," says Gary Morlock, manager of HRMS.

An "impersonation" feature allows HR to impersonate other users. For example, authorized HR employees can complete a task on behalf of an employee or view the same screen simultaneously to help with problems or answer questions, he explains.

Ninety-nine percent of users who completed an employee survey are satisfied with the application, and the company boasts a 99 percent uptime rate.

In addition, the company has seen increased efficiencies, thanks to MySource. For example, Pins quotes one manager who spends an estimated 80 hours less during merit review cycles. In addition, the company saved nearly \$100,000 by sending job offer letters electronically instead of continuing to send the letters via overnight delivery.

MySource also allows the company to track what company property, such as phone cards and phones, are assigned to

Who: QUALCOMM Incorporated
What: Designed and implemented its own Web-based human resource management system
Results: Saved nearly \$100,000 by sending job offer letters electronically instead of via overnight delivery. Saved \$1.7 million after identifying certain equipment and services that employees were no longer using.

each employee and how employees use the equipment and related services. In an initial audit, the company saved \$700,000 by "identifying equipment that people no longer use and phone calling plans that didn't need to be as robust," says Morlock. The company saved \$1 million after a second audit, he says.

Lessons Learned

Companies that decide to use a third-party application should fully research available products and vendors, says Morlock. He recommends tapping resources available from business groups such as IHRIM.

"Writing your own HR application is definitely not for everybody," Pins says. Companies that determine that an in-house solution is appropriate for their particular organization should consider the following advice:

- **Look for an executive-level champion.** "Executive buy-in is very key," Pins says.
- **Think long term.** "This is not a process that really ends ... It's ongoing," he says.
- **Seek employee feedback and act on it.** When you ask employees for feedback, make sure you are prepared to follow up on and respond to that input.
- **Consider buying third-party tools.** It may be appropriate to purchase third-party tools to add certain features to the system. "There are times when it makes sense to bring something in," says Morlock.
- **Avoid "schedule pressure."** The application should not be rolled out until it is ready, says Pins. "Don't meet a deadline just to say you met a deadline."

HR Tool Box

MP3 Players in the Workplace

Did many of your employees receive iPods and other MP3 players for the holidays? And is this causing problems in your workplace?

Here are some things to consider about workplace use of these players from BLR's product *Smart Policies*:



What—will any music players be allowed in your workplace? Do you need to ban devices that can also record music or copy electronic files? Will you need to ban players that others can hear, but allow players that use earbuds? Can employees use a headset that covers both ears?

Who—Can any employee use a personal music device? Can your sales force? Can your receptionist? Can your supervisors?

Where—Are there any areas in which employees cannot listen to music? Are employees limited to break areas?

When—Can employees listen to music only before work, during breaks and lunch, and after work? Do you need to ban use of personal music players during working hours? Can employees who are seen by customers use them?

Loss and Damage—Have you communicated to employees that the company will not be responsible for loss or damage to iPods and other expensive electronic equipment that is brought to work?

Downloading—Have you considered a policy that company facilities cannot be used to record, upload, or download music or other copyrighted material?

Safety—Have you considered what safety issues might occur if workers cannot hear? Should you limit employees to a single earbud or ban employees in certain jobs from wearing earbuds?

Security—Because of the nature of your company, should you ban iPods and other devices that have a recording feature that can be used to copy files and take them from the workplace?

Morale and Productivity—Will the use of iPods and other devices isolate your workers from one another, make communication difficult, or lessen productivity?

Bottom Line—Communicate to workers in your company's newsletters or intranet sites that abuse of the use of these devices will result in their being banned from the workplace.

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