



increase profit

increase employee morale

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The

# HR Advantage

*“Your Employee Administration Specialists”*

## Getting The Most Out of Employee Training? Make sure training time is well spent

"My frustration with attending workshops is that I'm sure I could say what the presenter says in half the time," complained an employee who recently attended a training conference.

**While statistics indicate that firms that take time to train their employees reap dividends in increased morale and productivity,** there is a lot you can do to make sure that employee training is effective.

Some specialists estimate that half of all training covers familiar territory and a third is irrelevant. How can you assure that training time is time well spent?

1) Tell your employees what they're supposed to learn from the course. Make sure an employee understands why new training is relevant so there will be incentive to pay attention. Ask for an evaluation after training is complete to see if the course accomplished what it was supposed to.

2) Provide time and equipment so employees can test their new knowledge immediately. Little is accomplished if you send an employee to a seminar on using new software when the software isn't even installed on your system yet.

3) Understand that different people respond to different types of learning opportunities. One employee may get what he needs from a video. Another will benefit more from hands-on experience.



4) When possible, let the employee organize his or her own training. This may help eliminate the employee's viewing the course as an imposition instead of an opportunity.

5) In a time when interactive learning is all the rage, remember that the "best interactive learning is doing the job with people who know how to do it."

6) Make sure training isn't too impersonal. A video or software package may get the message across, but can't give someone a needed pat on the back.

**Be sure to take advantage of training opportunities we offer as part of our service to you. We're always grateful for suggestions on relevant training topics.**

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enhance employee benefits

reduce exposure to lawsuits

# Disciplinary Action: The "Wrongful Termination" Lawsuit

"The seemingly simple task of taking employment action is fraught with peril, and rash actions have the potential to turn into lengthy, expensive litigation. Instead of jumping in [to terminate an employee,] stop and think about it. Is your decision prohibited by law? Even if it is not, would an uninvolved party think it looked like it was?"

-Ann Clarke Snell

**A Progressive Discipline Policy is your best protection against making mistakes that will turn into a wrongful termination lawsuit.**

Because it is probably in your best interest to rehabilitate or correct an employee, you must be clear about your expectations. This is the goal of a progressive discipline policy: it provides a catalyst for change. Before terminating any employee, it is wise to have documentation of a "final incident."



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"Was the last thing that happened so grave in nature that the employee knew her job was in jeopardy, and that the incident or infraction committed would lead to immediate discharge?" asks John A DiCicco, CEO of Organizational Analysis Systems, Inc.

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## Progressive Discipline Policy:

- 1) Verbal Warning
- 2) Written Warning
- 3) Second Written Warning
- 4) Termination

**"Supervisors often try too hard to be supportive of an employee, or they are so uncomfortable confronting an employee about a problem, that they fail to provide the employee with clear notice that the employee's performance is not meeting established expectations,"**

**- Attorney Anne E. Denecke**

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Documenting this "straw that broke the camel's back" will be invaluable in the event that you need to defend your company's actions in court.

In the event of gross misconduct such as violence, stealing, or other abuses, termination can be immediate. Contact our office if you are faced with employee termination. We are trained to help.

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payroll

workers' compensation

human resources

# Employee Safety:

## Methods for helping you improve your safety record

**I**t may have been a long time since you felt real spring fever. To see it in action, the best vantage point may be the parking lot of your local high school, which is where Doris Pugh was this week.

"I watched a group of about seven young men, (who were apparently taking an "unscheduled" break from A.P. biology), rip the sleeves and side seams out of the T-shirts they were wearing. Then they all piled into the back of a beat-up pickup and sped off in a shower of gravel. All I could do was hope that all of that reckless abandon didn't turn somebody's Ford F-series into an abandoned wreck," she writes.

The tulips are high. Common sense is at an all-time low. **As any emergency room physician can tell you, the rise in temperature brings with it a correspondent rise in accidents.** Our goal is to be sure we've done everything we can to help keep you and your employees' safe. Accidents affect more than your workers' compensation premiums. They affect productivity, morale, and a host of other elements.

**We have several methods for helping you improve or maintain your company's safety record. Here are just a few of them:**

- ◆ We offer safety training and OSHA compliance programs
- ◆ We can help you establish a progressive discipline system so you can easily deal with infractions putting your company at risk.
- ◆ We can help you audit your job descriptions to assure that they accurately portray the physical requirements for essential job functions.
- ◆ We perform periodic audits of the worksite to help you spot and eliminate potential problems

Your efforts as an employer or manager are vital to the success of your company's safety program. Make sure your employee evaluations include a rating for "employee safety performance." In addition, be certain that discipline for safety violations is documented, fair, and consistent.



"A good safety program has employee involvement, hazard analysis, and injury reporting," according to Bill Sims Jr. Mr. Sims is a published authority on safety programs that work. He recommends a "safety incentive" program to improve safety.

Incentive programs have to be administered carefully, or they have the potential to encourage employees to "hide" injuries once they happen. According to Sims, the first consideration is what behaviors need to be rewarded.

If you reward someone for "not getting hurt," you increase the likelihood that accidents will go unreported, and the safety hazards that caused the problems will remain unchecked.

Instead, Sims suggests rewarding behaviors like making safety suggestions, spotting and reporting close calls, achieving behavioral safety goals, attending safety meetings, etc. We can help you create a program that will meet your company's needs.

***Please call our office to get more information about addressing safety concerns.***



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## What Your Employees Want to Know: Communicating the company strategic direction

**I**n today's business world, changes occur all the time. Sometimes, when our companies change strategic direction, as business leaders we struggle with how to communicate that information to our staff.

**We all know that in the absence of good information, people will create their own ideas. Why not communicate regularly with your employees and stop the rumor mill in its tracks?**

**How do you know when you're communicating most effectively with your employees?** Most people have very simple communication requirements.

They want to know what, if any, problems the company faces, how you intend to address these problems, and what their role should be.

They want to hear these things from people of authority, and usually want to know "why" things are the way they are. Don't wait for problems to arise, or for your employees to ask questions.

### Regularly communicate these key messages to your staff:

- ◆ "This is our mission ... and here is how you fit in."
- ◆ "What you do here is important because..."
- ◆ "Here's how our department / company performed this quarter."
- ◆ "We made a mistake, and here's how we're going to fix it."
- ◆ "What are your thoughts or ideas on this topic?"

We all know that in the absence of good information, people will cre-

ate their own ideas. Why not communicate regularly with your employees and stop the rumor mill



in its tracks? For more ideas on solving communication problems, contact your Human Resources representative.



increase safety

decrease paperwork