

Vision H.R.

Vision H.R. Advantage

“Your Business is Our Focus!”

Supporting Volunteerism

Employers see benefits in the workplace

Like many other companies, Toyota encourages its employees to participate in its VIP (Volunteers In Place) program. After giving 30 to 70 hours of service, participants are eligible to enter a monthly drawing. Toyota gives \$100 to the charity of the winner's choice. At the end of each year, five volunteers with more than 100 hours of service are nominated for VIP Volunteer of the Year. The winner receives \$1,500 for the charity of his choice, and \$500 is donated to each of the charities of the four runners-up.

What does Toyota get for this \$4,700+/year investment? Nila Wells, community relations specialist for Toyota, says that **since the VIP program began employee moral, productivity, and turnover have all improved.** And the company reaps the PR benefit of being recognized as a good corporate citizen.

Attorney Paul Salvatore, a partner in the law firm of Proskauer, Rose, Goetz & Mendelson (New York), believes that preparation is the key to a good company-sponsored volunteerism program.

He suggests the following:

- ◆ **Write guidelines and policies**, and then live by them.
- ◆ **Carefully select charities.** "As long as you're trying to do the right thing, and if any reasonable person can see you're doing it in an evenhanded and fair manner, and then you will be operating in some pretty safe territory," Salvatore says.
- ◆ Limit charitable and volunteer activities to **nonprofit organizations** as recognized by section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- ◆ Although it isn't a hard and fast rule, avoid directing charitable efforts or monies toward **political or religious groups.**

A company volunteerism program can **improve morale and efficiency at your workplace, as well as make a positive statement about your business** to the community. Besides, many believe "it's just the right thing to do."

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A Threat to Jobs and Health

Burnout. What to watch for. What to do.

- ◆ You used to love your work, but now it exhausts you emotionally and physically.
- ◆ You're accomplishing less and less.
- ◆ You feel increasingly cynical about your work, employer, or clients.
- ◆ You're forgetful about appointments, misplace possessions, make more mistakes, and overlook deadlines.
- ◆ You need more time alone.
- ◆ You're irritable in traffic and waiting in lines.



- ◆ You have unexplained headaches, stomachaches, or backaches.
- ◆ You're frequently angry and lash out at others.
- ◆ You regularly think about running away or quitting your job.

If some or all of these symptoms apply to you or an employee, you're probably experiencing or witnessing burnout. ***Burnout is mental or physical exhaustion. It is often denied or ignored by sufferers, and can affect anyone in any workplace.***

It is especially prevalent when layoffs or consolidation force remaining employees to accept added responsibilities under stressful conditions. Often employers only notice burnout when it threatens to cost individuals their jobs or relationships.

Burnout is mental or physical exhaustion. It is often denied or ignored by sufferers, and can affect anyone in any workplace. Learn to recognize, prevent, and treat burnout before it adversely affects your employees and your business.

Try or suggest these ideas to prevent or overcome the effects of burnout:

- ◆ Exercise regularly.
- ◆ Set aside a daily personal rejuvenation time. No thoughts of work, no phone calls, no interruptions.
- ◆ Put a sign on your desk that says "Breathe." Breathe deeply and slowly every time you see it.
- ◆ Get enough sleep.
- ◆ Take regular weekend trips or long drives.
- ◆ Experience nature.
- ◆ Take up or resume favorite pastimes or a hobby.
- ◆ Beautify your workspace.
- ◆ Be assertive. Learn to say "no" when others demand too much.
- ◆ Be creative. Learn to have fun.
- ◆ Help others.

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The ADA and Discriminatory Discharge

Vision HR has the expertise you need

A school bus driver is dismissed from his job because he is diabetic, and school officials fear his insulin dependency may endanger schoolchildren

A nurse is discharged because a back injury prevents her from doing any lifting-one of the requirements of her job.

An employee, known to have a drug addiction, is fired because supervisors fear that he needlessly threatens the safety of others.

To most of us, these dismissals are reasonable. **Unfortunately, under the guidelines of the ADA, each of these employees' terminations amounted to "discriminatory discharge," either because the employer did not make reasonable accommodations, or because the disability was protected under the ADA.**



Because the ADA is so complex, businesses consistently turn to outside consultants to interpret it. Fortunately, your enrollment with us provides you with the expertise you need to protect yourself from a discrimination lawsuit.

Keep the following rules in mind when terminating an employee because of an impairment or disability:

1. Always consult us when terminating an employee who, in your opinion, is no longer able to perform his or her job. "Disabilities," (including not-so-obvious ones like drug addiction) are protected under the ADA.
2. Be certain that we are aware an injured employee is returning to work. We will help protect you by carefully reviewing the doctor's release and helping you make necessary accommodations.

Hiring the Right Person

So, you want to hire the most talented, adaptable employee the market has to offer. How will you find her? Which of his characteristics will tip you off to the fact that he'll be a perfect fit for your company?

Hiring strategies are increasingly more important in our litigious society. **Hire the wrong person and you may be in for months of misery, or worse, a future lawsuit.** Here are some tips that should help you increase the odds that the employee you hire will meet all of your expectations:

- ◆ **Your best people may already be working for you.** Don't neglect the possibility of hiring from within the company. Promotion from within builds loyalty and improves overall employee morale.
- ◆ **A resume' isn't everything.** Writing a resume is a skill. But if you're after a terrific mechanical engineer, you may have to look past a misspelling or two and opt for face-to-face meetings to find out what you really need to know about his skills.
- ◆ **Consider a background check.** You'll want to rely on us to help you with this. We can help you identify a violent or unqualified employee before the damage is done.
- ◆ **Use caution when checking references.** The legalities behind reference checks are getting to be touchy. Let us train your supervisors about reference check roadblocks. We can also suggest some resourceful options for finding out what an employee is really like.
- ◆ **Just how desperate are you, anyway?** You want to sell the position to a candidate, but you may not want to do too good a job. Otherwise you'll fill the vacancy with a reluctant employee.
- ◆ **Take care to make a good first impression.** Remember, the employee's first impression of your company is just as important as your first impression of him/her.

We can suggest dozens of other tips for hiring right. Our Human Resource Department specializes in helping you find the right employees. Call for more information about how we can help.

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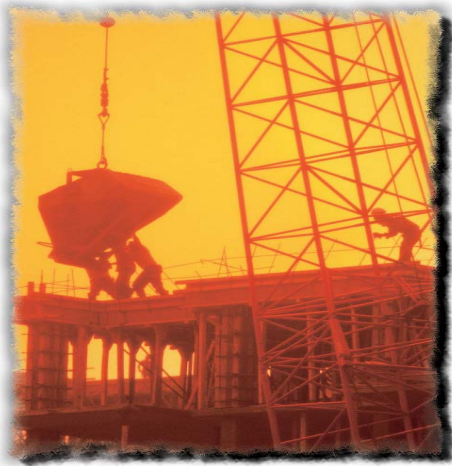
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Sensible Benefits: Attracting, "Growing," and Keeping Employees

Workers are looking for sensible perks. "What people want most from their supervisors is the same thing kids want most from their parents: someone who sets clear and consistent expectations, cares for them, values



their unique qualities, and encourages and supports their growth and development," says Tony Schwartz, columnist for Fast Company magazine.

With competition for jobs at an all-time high, companies resorted to "creative" work-life benefits to attract and retain workers. On-site discounted dog grooming, weekly personal-watercraft rentals, and afternoon naps have all had their heyday; however, workers seem to be staying with

companies who offer a more sensible approach. An Atlanta-based public relations firm, Alexander Ogilvy, after conducting their own research, has decided to focus on training and professional development, compensation, and flexibility to recruit, "grow," and retain employees.

The "Smart Fund" at Alexander Ogilvy sets aside \$2,000 annually for each employee. An employee may use the fund to attend industry-related seminars, conferences, classes, or for subscriptions to work-related publications, or other approved career enhancers. In addition, From December 25 through January 1, Alexander Ogilvy closes its company offices for the holidays without asking employees to forfeit vacation time.

When it comes to perks, many companies differentiate between their knowledge-based professionals and their "blue-collar" workers (mail clerks, secretaries, etc.). But, at Alexander Ogilvy, the "perks menu" is available to all 80 of its full-time employees. This allows workers to improve skills and work up the company ladder, creating a sense of loyalty. It attracts workers at all levels to the company.

Could your business use a benefits and perks overhaul? Let us know. We can help you attract, "grow", and keep good employees.



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