

For Your Info

○ Reminder – Employers Must Post Injury, Illness Summary Beginning February 1, 2005

Some employers must now post OSHA Form 300A, which is a summary report of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred in the previous year. The 300A report must be posted from February 1 – April 30 in an area within the company where other employee notices are commonly posted. For more info, visit "<http://www.osha.gov>" www.osha.gov.

○ Reminder – New COBRA Procedures Now in Effect

Your COBRA notice requirements may have changed. The Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) has issued final COBRA regulations regarding COBRA notification requirements. For more info, visit "<http://www.dol.gov>" www.dol.gov.

What Your Employees REALLY Want

Fortunately, early signs indicate an improved economy for 2005. As the economy improves, the employment market is also becoming more active. High performing employees are typically the first to leave an organization if they are dissatisfied. How do you ensure that your employees are satisfied, happy and committed?

The Gallup Organization, a pioneer in consumer, election and opinion surveys, launched an effort to better understand what makes employees happy, satisfied and committed. Several years ago, Gallup set out to measure employee engagement and those behaviors that were most powerfully linked to improved business outcomes – growth, sales, productivity or customer loyalty. Gallup conducted hundreds of focus groups and thousands of interviews – all organizations, all levels, and all industries and in several different countries. They identified 12 key expectations that when satisfied form a foundation of strong feelings of engagement. When these expectations are met, employees are engaged and productive.

Gallup's 12 Q

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my job right.
3. I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday.
4. In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission or purpose of my firm makes me feel my job is important.
9. My fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a good friend at work.
11. In the last 6 months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. Within the past year, I have had opportunities to grow and learn as an employee.

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○ "Paper-free" I-9 Records

In October of 2004, President Bush approved a law allowing employers to use store and complete I-9s electronically. The law has not gone into effect yet. Visit "<http://www.uscis.gov>" www.uscis.gov to find out more information.

○ Veteran's Benefits

Improvement Act of 2004

In December of 2004, President Bush signed into law the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act, which modifies the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). The new law increases the maximum period of employer-health coverage, from 18 months to 24 months that an employee covered under USERRA may elect to continue. Also employers are required to post this information. The posting requirement will be effective on March 10, 2005. Visit "<http://www.dol.gov/vets>" www.dol.gov/vets for more information.

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US companies, large and small, have paid attention to Gallup's research. Results have shown a link between strong levels agreement with Gallup's 12 questions and worker productivity.

As a business leader, what can you do?

- Ensure that your employees are "connecting" to your company's mission, purpose and to their co-workers.
- Hire and retain supervisors and managers that are more than just technically competent. They need to be fair, reasonable and tuned into the people issues as well. Provide skills-based supervisory and management training to hone these skills.
- Listen to your employees. Ask them what they think about their jobs, their managers and the company. Be ready to respond with plans to work on any weaknesses identified as well as celebrate the strengths of the organization. Consider surveying your employees.
- Walk the talk. Serve as a role model to others. Be a good listener. Encourage dialogue. Ask an employee their opinion.
- Create a norm of celebrating accomplishments. One of our clients rings a giant gong at the end of the month if their monthly sales revenue exceeds their monthly goals. Though a bit corny, employees gather round and understand the importance of exceeding sales goals. There is a certain prestige associated with being the chosen employee to ring the gong.

In short, employees want to feel connected, challenged, informed and in a job that "fits." Companies that understand how to build an environment that answers these needs will be able to retain key employees.

All information provided is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular entity or individual. Although we try to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date received or that will continue to be accurate in the future. No one should act upon such information without appropriate professional advice after a thorough examination of the facts of a particular situation.