

SMART WORKPLACES BY HR TO GO - APRIL 2004

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT - OUTSOURCE IT!

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In this Ezine:

Retaining Younger Workers Isn't Hard If You Know What to Do
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Retaining Younger Workers Isn't Hard If You Know What to Do

Career counselors call younger workers "hummingbirds" because they flutter from job to job. But while it's hard to get Generation X

workers to stay put, it's not impossible. Not if you follow these strategies:

- **Beg for their opinions.** Studies have shown that one way to reduce turnover with younger employees is to convince them that you value their opinions. Surveys of younger workers always indicate that the top quality they look for in a boss is "someone who listens." Don't just ask them for their opinions; beg them.

- **Give them some space.** Younger workers don't like bosses who hover over them. They want to work at their own pace, according to their own style. Help them set their goals, and then give them the freedom to reach those goals any way they see fit.

- **Let them see your face.** Despite the fact that most young workers are comfortable with technology, they also put a premium on face-to-face feedback concerning their performance. The more you meet with them face-to-face, the happier they'll be.

- **Focus on short-term incentives.** Younger workers want incentives now - such as flexible work schedules, performance-based monetary incentives, increased freedom in the workplace, and other programs where they can reap the benefits immediately. Long-term, big picture incentives, such as a 401(k) plan, aren't as effective in recruiting or retaining younger workers.



Squash Employee Feuds Now

You can't stop employees from petty bickering, but you better step in if their skirmish escalates. Here's how to restore peace:

- * **Reveal your underlying concern.** Tell your employees why their feuding disturbs you. *Examples:* "It hurts me that you two don't get along" or "I'm not much of a referee, so I'll need both of you to find a way to work together." Declaring that "I'm not going to tolerate this!" only adds to the tension.

- * **Foster mutual trust.** Many conflicts intensify due to lack of trust. As a manager, you must plant seeds of trust so employees compromise. Have them make simple, short-term promises to each other so they establish a foundation of trust to build from. *Example:* "I want each of you to promise to say something nice about the other person's actions each day."

- * **Stage a confessional.** Play a round of "let's admit our mistakes." Begin by acknowledging something you did wrong, such as letting the conflict stew too long. Then ask each employee to admit a mistake and propose a way to fix that mistake.



The Upside, Downside of Debt

We're hooked on the credit system, that's evident by the national level of consumer debt. While we love to complain about making payments, it's a pretty sure bet that we wouldn't want the system to disappear.

Without it, we wouldn't have to worry about home loans, car payments, and charging appliances. Many of us wouldn't have them. Susan Dentzer, chief economics correspondent for U.S. News & World Report, says these are the "Three Dictums of Debt:"

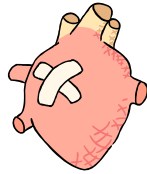
1) *Debt is an asset as well as a liability.* It's your liability, but it's an asset for the lender, or the store owner. There would be a lot less buying and a lot fewer jobs for people making and selling goods if all things had to be paid for up front.

2) *Debt is a means to an end.* Make sure the end you have in mind is justified. If you borrow money for a house, you can look forward to living in it and having it as a big paid-for asset. If you borrow money for a trip to the gambling house, you could end up with nothing to show for it.

3) *Debt can have unintended consequences.* It's easy to build up debt, but the practice can lead to a financially anxious struggle to meet payments.

When money is easy to borrow, it may be borrowed for the wrong reasons. Then the unintended consequence of debt can be brutal. That's the downside.

The upside is there is usually a rational basis for borrowing. It helps us in many ways to make our lives better. Borrowing is not without cost, but what it allows us to do is worth the price we pay. (If we're selective.)



Outsmarting a Silent Killer

As many as 50 million Americans have high blood pressure, but more than a third don't know it. Truth is, hypertension often has no symptoms - yet is potentially deadly. Here's more you should know:

Exactly what is blood pressure? It's the combination of two forces... the force of the heart as it contracts and pushes blood into the arteries and through the circulatory system... and the force of the arteries as they resist the blood flow. *Normal* blood pressure is less than 140/90. Anything equal to or greater than that is considered high.

What do the numbers mean? The higher (systolic) number is the pressure while the heart is beating, the lower (diastolic) number, the pressure between beats.

How does high blood pressure cause damage? It forces the heart to work extra hard. This puts greater strain on both it and the arteries, which can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and eye damage.

How do I know if I have high blood pressure? There's only one way to tell: Have your blood pressure checked - at least once every two years by your doctor or other qualified health care professional.

What else can I do? Help keep your blood pressure under control by staying trim, exercising often, eating less fat and salt, and consuming more pressure-controlling potassium-loaded fruits and calcium- rich, low-fat dairy products. If these lifestyle changes aren't enough, your doctor may prescribe blood pressure medication. Just be sure to take it as directed... and for as long as it's prescribed.

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