

**SMART WORKPLACES BY HR TO GO, INC - OCTOBER 2004**

**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT - OUTSOURCE IT!**

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**Spot Talks Make Training More Effective**

In a busy place like most companies, it's always hard to find the time to do training. No one is crazy about blocking out a big chunk of time to learn something new when there's so much else to do.

We, however, can't just forget about training because it happens to be inconvenient. There's a lot to keep up on in these times; we have no choice but to conduct training. How could we do the necessary training while respecting the fact that employees have a lot of other demands on their time?

Try to start by making the training quicker and focused on one thing at a time. They're called training "spot talks."

Let's say there's a new development in customer service, for instance. Look at all the people who have customer contact and designate them for training in small groups, with each session on one small aspect of customer service. Your promise to employees: Each session will run from 5 to 20 minutes - not a minute more.

Since starting the spot-talk system, you'll see that employees are more willing to attend training and even seem to pick up and retain more of the training than they might in bigger, longer sessions.

### **Guidelines For Checking On Bogus FMLA Leave**

You know the drill: There's that one employee who always seems to need FMLA leave suspiciously on a Monday or Friday. What can you do? You're restricted from contacting the employee's health provider who certified the need for FMLA leave, but a Department of Labor opinion letter says you have other options:

- \* Have a healthcare provider who represents your company ask the employee's health provider to justify the Monday/Friday pattern, and;
- \* Your certification form can request that the employee's healthcare provider verify the employee might need leave on specific days of the week. (For instance, Friday might be reasonable because of fatigue.)

### **Think Before You Move**

You've probably heard it before: Think first to move right. When you move without thinking, you increase your risk of a back injury. So how can you protect your back and still stay active? Use the tips below to help you think through each move before you make it.

**When Reaching:** Don't reach too far out from your body. Instead try this:

- \* Get close to the object you're reaching for.
- \* When reaching up, keep your arms below shoulder level whenever possible. Use a stool or ladder as necessary.
- \* When reaching down, place one hand on your thigh to support your upper body.

**When Bending:** Protect your back by using your legs. Follow these steps:

- \* Bend your knees - and hips if needed - not your back.
- \* Kneel down on one knee for support.
- \* If you need to lean forward, move your whole body, not just your arms.

**When Pushing:** You can push twice as much as you can pull - and pushing is safer. Here's what to do:

- \* Stay close to the load, but don't lean forward.
- \* Use both arms and keep your elbows bent.
- \* Tighten your stomach muscles to protect your back when you push.

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