Southeastern Pennsylvania Society for Human Resource Management

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SPECIAL INTEREST

HOLIDAY MEETING WRAP UP

By Kristine Belser, SPHR, Director, Public Relations & Communications

If you didn't make it to this year's Holiday chapter meeting, Dec 18, boy, do you have a lot to catch up on! But don't worry, we've done our best to capture some of the highlights here for you.

Attendees enjoyed a hot breakfast prior to kicking off the meeting with our traditional "hot topics," which included announcements of various potential job opportunities for our members in transition.

Next, we welcomed two new chapter members to our membership. Then, we awarded chapter member Timothy Fassnacht the Thomas Pilgermayer Professional Development Assistance Program Award (see page 7 for details).

Attendees this year took home their choice of a variety of different picture frames as a special thank you from the Board. And we also held our standard 50/50 and pre-registration drawing.

But the best part of this holiday meeting was the program. We called it Best Practices.

BEST PRACTICES

Our program consisted of a group presentation of Best HR Practices offered by the membership. Beginning with a series of topic discussions (described below), which were led by chapter board members, experts in their specialty, and culminating in a group sharing experience that was unprecedented in this chapter. The program was so beneficial, we had requests to re-print those best practices and follow up at future meetings on some of the topics. Below is a wrap up.

HR Metrics.
Facilitated by Dick Handschumacher.
Best Practice:
Follow a step process to determine what and how to measure.

1. Identify the problem—e.g. turnover
2. Resolve grievances
3. Use metrics—e.g. benefit costs per employee
4. Posting measures
5. Conduct surveys

This practice attracted the highest attendee participation. Discussion focused on measuring HR services and human capital.

Citing the book by the well-known father of metrics, Dr. Jac Fitz-enz's, How to Measure Human Resources (1984 McGraw Hill), Dick shared his experience in utilizing metrics in practice while at his former employer Holy Redeemer Hospital and his current employer Cooper University Hospital. He categorized the metrics in Fitz-enz's book into several categories, including:

- **Recruiting/staffing**: job posting rate, cost per hire, interview costs, recruitment response time, time to start, etc.
- **Benefits**: total benefits cost, benefits costs per employee, benefits to payroll ratio, etc.
- **Employee Relations**: turnover, resolution time, resolution level, etc.
- **Training and Development**: cost per trainee, etc.

From this jumping point, his department developed formal improvement processes that would allow for measuring each area. One such process, the "Employee Relations Encounter" is currently being used. In this process, all employee relations encounters, including calls, written complaints, suggestions, issues, etc., are documented as they come in and logged into a database. The database can later be sorted and tracked by category, such as department, date, nature of issue, initiator, and resolution time. From the data, an analysis is performed on a periodic basis, and improvement initiatives are discussed and implemented.

He says, first you must identify a problem. If there is no problem, there is no value in measuring it. The Employee Relations Encounter allows his HR department to identify problems. Next, capture the value of the problem. Don't track what doesn't have value. Make sure it can be measured and make sure the measurement means something in real numbers. "This will throw cold water on the argument that metrics don't mean anything." Ensure that you have a leadership culture that values what you measure. And don't overuse metrics. He says, "once a problem is resolved to everyone's' satisfaction, only a periodic or spot review may be necessary. Don't overwhelm top leadership with piles of data indicators or the value of measurement may be diminished."

When asked what is the one metric that would enable HR professionals to do their best everyday, Dick says it will change from company to company and from HR dept to HR dept. But ultimately, the cost of HR relative to % of payroll and the cost of HR relative to gross revenue will generally be key performance indicators for HR departments. If comparisons can be made with similar industry & size, it puts this into perspective assuming same roles and accountability. It is also good to keep in perspective that since HR is not viewed as a revenue center, there is very little credit given to areas of cost avoidance – i.e. pro-active efforts in discrimination/harassment issues, unemployment/workers' comp/safety management, benefits plan design, total rewards and recognition and recruitment and retention

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initiatives.

Dick encouraged members to check out the book by Dr. Fitz-enz, as well as the following references/articles to see how to best use this resource.

Sources cited: Debra Cohen- "HR Metrics: A Must" from HR Magazine, Feb 2003, Sharon Lauby- "A Metrics Primer for Recruiters" from EMT magazine Winter of 2005, Shari Caudron www.workforce.com/archive/feature/23/68/12/index.php

Rewards & Recognition.
Facilitated by Greg Hartley
Best Practices:

The team came up with a number of ways to recognize and reward employees. It was difficult to determine a single best practice because different employees are motivated by different things. It could be as simple as a thank you or as elaborate as an all expense paid trip. In addition, it was noted that you may be rewarding one employee or a whole team.

From all the ideas generated there were two underlying points.

First, know your employees. The wrong reward can undermine your efforts. What motivates your employees? Maybe it's money, or recognition in a newsletter. Perhaps they like the opportunity to select their reward from a prize catalog. One recurring theme that kept coming up was food. Food is always a draw, engage employees with parties & celebrations Morning donuts, free lunches, parties, gift cards to restaurants, ice cream sundaes, even candy.

Second, don't let your budget limit your imagination. This can go two ways. Having a small budget means you may have to think outside the box. Do you have a product or service that can be traded? Maybe organize a scavenger hunt, or a road rally. Recognize an employee by letting them leave early with pay. On the flip side, having a large budget doesn't mean that buying everyone the same gold paper weight will motivate them. In fact, it is impersonal and your staff may think of it as a waste of money. Instead have a bingo with various prizes. Give away a "night out" with movie tickets and dinner. Try non-traditional giveaways such as school supplies. At the end of summer give away packs of "back to school" supplies. Organize a white water rafting trip, ski trip, Broadway show trip.

As you can see there are unlimited ways to recognize and reward your employees. The most important thing is to do it.

Worker Adjustment & Retraining Notification Act (WARN) & The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).
Facilitated by Christine Tierney.
Best Practice:

Go beyond the law; there is "what you should do versus what the law requires." Instead of providing the minimum notice requirements, suggestions were made to implement a full communication plan with daily announcements, e-mails, employee meetings and state and local media announcements. Discussions focused on this federal law which governs mass layoffs and plant closings. Regulations and requirements of law were discussed, such as the company's legal obligation to give notice or "warning" to employees who will be impacted.

Performance Management.
Facilitated by Kristine Belser.
Best Practice:

The use of "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results, Time bound) in setting and communicating goals and objectives. Discussions focused on Setting Goals and Communicating Expectations. One chapter member shared her practice of holding supervisor workshops to define a supervisors role and provide tools for corrective action and performance review. Another member shared his practice of utilizing existing tools, such as software from "Job Descriptions Now" and "Performance Now" which save managers time and allow for them customize the templates to work for them. In addition, the table also discussed Evaluation and Measurements. One participant talked about "Road Maps," a map that shows the "specific routes" if you will, or criteria that is used to assess rewards. These maps are then used as discussion points in the appraisal.

401(k) enrollment.
Facilitated by Roz Schaffer
Best Practice:

Introduced "Auto Enrollment" and increased participation from 3% to 90%. Discussions focused on increasing participation in company 401(k), new Safe Harbor Rules, and the regulations issued by the DOL implementing the Pension Protection Act of 2006.

The Board thanks everyone for their participation. We feel the program and the entire holiday meeting was *"m"erry* successful!

For more information on a specific best practice, feel free to contact the topic facilitator or any member of the Board.

If you are interested in having the Chapter run a full program on any of the best practices covered here, please send an e-mail to our programming director, Joanne Zeas, at ppl@sepashrm.org.

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