



HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

VOL 7, ISSUE 1

THE HOPKINS GROUP, LLC IS REGISTERED WITH THE NCTRCA AS A WOMAN OWNED BUSINESS AND WITH THE STATE OF TEXAS AS AN HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESS.

WELCOME, JUANITA NAÑEZ

The Hopkins Group has added another experienced Human Resources professional to our ranks! Juanita Nañez is a Senior Professional in Human Resources and brings more breadth to our team of professionals through her years of experience with diversity initiatives and as a generalist. She has a strong background in hospitality and oil and gas industries. Please welcome Juanita!

Best Buy Co. and a Nap

A study published in the January issue of *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* states that fatigued workers cost US employers \$136.4 billion annually in health-related lost productivity. This is \$101 billion more than non-fatigued workers.

These fatigued workers are significantly more likely to miss work and experience long-term work absence, although the majority of lost productive time for these fatigued workers is attributed to reduced work performance. This includes difficulty concentrating or working more slowly.

In this global age where companies are fighting for every dollar of margin, for the top talent of employees, to keep productivity up, customer satisfaction up, and operating costs down, we need something radical. Truly radical.

In comes Best Buy and their ROWE program. ROWE stands for results-only work environment. This program has been a stealth project over the past few years born to curb burnout, voluntary turnover, and low customer satisfaction scores.

This is not flex-time, available in many companies where employees are often stigmatized for using it. ROWE is a program of we don't care when and where you work, as long as you produce results. By the end of 2007, all of Best Buy's corporate employees will be on the ROWE program and the company will have started testing it at some of their retail locations.

Now they're not saying how it will be implemented at the retail level, but at the corporate level the positive results speak for the

success of the program. Results like voluntary turnover down from 18% to 0% in some departments. Production up 35% in other departments. Hourly employees are still putting in their 40 hours per week, but it may be from home, the office, or the zoo with their kids. And if you need a nap, then ok.

The two members of HR who started this program were seeing workers arriving after 8 a.m. on sub-zero mornings stashing their parkas in their cars to foil detection as late arrivals. Early escapees crept down back stairwells. Cube-side, the living was equally uneasy. One manager required his MBAs to sign out for lunch, including listing their restaurant locations and ETAs. Another insisted his team track its work - every 15 minutes. As at many companies, the last one to turn out the lights won.

Outside the office, the renegade HR employees couldn't help noticing how wireless broadband was turning the world into one giant work kibbutz. They talked about how managers were mired in analog-age inertia, often judging performance on how much they saw you, vs. how much you did. They recognized the dangerous, life-wrecking cocktail in the making: The always-on worker now also had to be always in. The culture was threatening Best Buy's massive expansion plans.

Do you see your company in these descriptions? Do you have turnover, production, or operating cost concerns? Is this a radical solution? Yes. Will it work everywhere? Maybe not, but if your company is one where this might work as a solution to business problems, then it's worth some thought. Don't implement it just because. A program like this needs to be an answer to a problem.



**BUSINESS OWNERS
NEED TO BE
EFFECTIVE
LEADERS. HOW? ON
A REGULAR BASIS,
HAVE LUNCH OR
COFFEE WITH
RANDOMLY CHOSEN
EMPLOYEES AND
REALLY LISTEN TO
THEIR CONCERNS
AND SUGGESTIONS.
AT LEAST TWO DAYS
A WEEK, WALK
THROUGH THE
OFFICE AND CHAT
WITH PEOPLE.**

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**HUMAN RESOURCES
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS**

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EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

This bill (HR 800) pending before Congress completing rewrites the 70-year old rules for establishing a union presence in a business. The old way of a secret ballot will be gone, if this bill passes, and a union can exist with a simple majority of signed authorization cards.

Since this is not done in secrecy, there is the risk of coercion, from both sides, although this practice will still be illegal. The timeline has been sped up also: if there is no Collective Bargaining Agreement in 90 days, then automatic mediation; binding arbitration after 30 days of mediation and the arbitration results are binding for two years. Fines for willful or repeated unfair labor practices have been increased, also.

www.myprivateballot.com is a website for those interested in voicing their opinion on HR 800.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

They're often the unwanted stepchildren of the small business. Stashed on a high shelf. Stored in a dusty binder. Written, filed, and forgotten. Everybody has them. Hardly anyone ever looks at them. If the business even has them.

It's puzzling that job descriptions get so little respect. After all, they're the architectural blueprints of our businesses, telling what each part does and who's responsible for doing it. Whenever we write an employment ad, we reflect a job description. When we conduct a worker's appraisal, it's a job description we measure against. And whenever new technology or other change enters the workplace, we change job descriptions. The only question is whether we revise the paperwork to show it.

The problems are time and complexity. Creating job descriptions is hard work! Managers and supervisors have to be consulted. And it all has to be done over until it's right, with degree of difficulty multiplied by the number of titles in your organization. Some companies have hundreds.

What's more, descriptions now have to meet strict legal standards. They can't discriminate in any way, such as listing tasks for a "warehouseman" or talking about a receptionist position and describing what "she" has to do. And job descriptions need to meet the tough standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, separating essential functions from additional responsibilities so that "reasonable accommodation" may be made to allow completion of the essentials. Don't forget that the job descriptions need to meet the Federal Labor Standards Act too, in defining the job for exempt or non-exempt status.

If it's time to review your descriptions or have them written, make certain that these elements are included:

Complete: A strong description includes all the key categories. These are job identification, a job summary, education and qualifications, required skills, knowledge, and abilities, accountabilities, job specifications, and of course, the all-important groupings of essential functions separated from additional responsibilities. Which leads us to...

Legal: The key determinant here is compliance with ADA. And the language has been carefully written to be exacting. Workers should or need to know precisely what to do and what standards to meet.

Additional elements enter into a successful program: Job descriptions need to be part of a complete program, which includes communication to the organization and periodic maintenance -- because jobs change constantly and new kinds of positions are added all the time.

Beginning of the year crunches are over, so take some time to go over your company's job descriptions and make any necessary updates.