

THE HR CONNECTION

Church, Engle & Associates

Recruitment Specialists & Human Resource Services

Vol. 8 - February, 2009



Jenne Farm
Reading, Vermont

In this Edition:

Conducting an HR Audit, page 1&2

Help Keep Employees Focused and Productive in these Turbulent Times, page 2

Helpful Link:

<http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/>
Department of Labor site for the new Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) final rules which became effective on 1/16/09. Includes overview, news, general guidance, fact sheet, e-tools, posters, forms, interpretive guidance opinion letters, and applicable laws, regulations, rules, and histories.

Quote of the Day:

"People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Abraham Lincoln

Human Resource Audits

What is an HR Audit?

An HR Audit examines the policies, procedures, documentation, systems, and practices of an organization's HR functions. Its purpose is to reveal strengths, weaknesses and issues needing resolution. An audit works best when the focus is on analyzing and improving the HR function, and the organization or department is ready to act on the findings and to evolve its HR function. It provides an opportunity to assess what an organization is doing right, as well as how things might be done differently, more efficiently and/or with reduced costs.

Reasons for an audit:

Just as accounting audits are done to identify problems and ensure sound accounting principles are being followed, an HR audit is implemented to measure the health of an HR function. It can improve productivity, decrease absenteeism, ensure compliance, provide effective succession planning and more. For example, a review of hiring practices might point out flaws that lead to higher than necessary turnover. The audit can identify ways to strengthen the hiring practices to reduce turnover.

A good HR audit should help to:

- Identify the HR programs that are most important to achieving an organizations' objectives
- Find out how well an HR department is delivering on these programs
- Benchmark HR work to ensure continuous improvement
- Promote change and creativity
- Focus the HR staff on important issues
- Move HR closer to the line functions of the organization

Types of Audits

It is important to strategically assess what type of information is being sought in an audit before deciding which kind of audit will best suit a company's needs. There are a number of audits available and each one is designed to accomplish different objectives. Some of the more common forms include:

Functional: This audit focuses on a specific HR functional area (e.g. wage and hour, hiring, payroll, benefits etc.).

Compliance: This type is designed to focus on legally required aspects of HR such as ADA, FMLA, FLSA, EEO etc.

Church, Engle & Associates - We offer a wide variety of professional human resource services including executive, professional, technical and key position recruitment. With our extensive experience there is no reason to go out of state for the highest quality professional recruitment and human resource services.



CHURCH, ENGLE & ASSOCIATES, INC

P.O. Box 361, Shelburne, Vermont 05482
802-434-4416

Web: www.churchengle.com e-mail: info@churchengle.com

THE HR CONNECTION

Vol 8 - February, 2009 Pg. 2



Stowe Ski Area
Stowe, Vermont

Fast Facts: Why use a Retained Search.

A retained search creates a mutually beneficial relationship with a full level of commitment between the client and search firm. It allows for improved communication and overall search efficiency. A search begins with an in-depth meeting with the client to learn as much as possible about the organization and the position. As candidates are found, a comprehensive assessment normally includes face-to-face interviews, interview reports, in-depth reference checking, and background verification. The search firm is accountable for filling the open position regardless of the time investment. Additionally it continuously markets your firm to a cross-section of candidates and sources. Retained searches are normally backed with a six to twelve month candidate replacement guarantee.

Continued from page 1

Best Practice: This type of audit helps a company compare its practices with those of companies that have been identified as having exceptional practices (e.g. employee relations, performance evaluation, harassment policies, training and development, hiring etc.).

Strategic: This type of audit focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of systems and processes to determine whether they are in line with the strategic plan of the company and whether they are helping, hindering or having little impact. Areas audited might include organizational effectiveness as measured by turnover, retention rates, time to fill positions, number and cost of unemployment claims lost. It can also uncover ineffective pay practices, pending litigation risks, ineffective training programs, ineffective hiring processes, etc.

An HR audit can be as broad or as narrow as a company wants. A company may want to review one area at a time or for example, may want to broaden the audit to review all of its written policies and procedures. An organization can contract with an outside third party to conduct an audit or the audit can be completed internally if staff has the expertise, the extra time, and the willingness to objectively acknowledge inadequacies in current procedures.

Properly done an HR audit can prove to be a valuable resource to make sure the Human Resource function is operating efficiently and is meeting the needs of the organization.

Help Keep Employees Focused and Productive in these Turbulent Times

With all the bad economic news it is easy for all of us to focus on the negative and worry about our jobs, security and family. While your employee's job may be secure, home situations may cause them to worry. Perhaps the employee is worried about the loss of their partner's employment and the ability to continue to make house payments or other family matters.

If you have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available, this is a good time to remind employees of the service. If you do not have an EAP program available perhaps health insurance coverage includes counseling services. E-mails and written reminders with pay checks, posted in work areas or distributed at staff meetings are a good way to provide information.

First line managers should also watch and listen for indications of employees under stress, such as a drop in individual production or increased lateness or absenteeism. While a supervisor should not become directly involved in solving the employees non-work problems she/he can point to resources that are available. The phone book list a tremendous amount of community and human services contact information on the local, state and federal level. The State of Vermont web site at <http://vermont.gov> is another good resource for help. Remember keeping an employee productive and focused is almost always less expensive than training a new hire.



CHURCH, ENGLE & ASSOCIATES, INC

P.O. Box 361, Shelburne, Vermont 05482
802-434-4416

Web: www.churchengle.com e-mail: info@churchengle.com