



EffortlessHR November 2008 Employer's Advantage Newsletter



FYI – For Your Information - "Have I Got a Deal For You"

A few years ago the news was all about Enron and how the “books were cooked”. Today we are going through an economic downturn with a major issue in sub-funded home loans. Many home owners will not only lose their homes, but will be faced with financial issues for years to come. In addition, many mortgage companies have folded and employees have lost their positions and it has gone on to affect banks and financial institutions.

What is wrong with this picture? I believe it is a breakdown in not only individual ethics but a disregard of business ethics and business conduct. Business ethics and conduct is all about values and principles and help businesses define who they are as an organization (and also as an individual). I believe every organization should have a business ethic policy, communicate it to their employees and clients, and follow it very carefully.

What is a business ethic policy? It is a statement of what your organization believes in, how they treat one another, and how they do business. It is not just a compliance issue - it is the integrity of the organization and a statement of support and belief in that integrity.

Employees need to have this policy and that the company they are working for has set high standards that are important to them and that the employee is supported by management if they are faced with a difficult ethical decision.

I believe that in the case of Enron and the mortgage debacle we are currently going through, the collapse of organization's business ethics and code of conduct is the primary reason for the failure. This failure cost the business to collapse, their employees to lose their jobs, and in some cases resulted in legal repercussions that are still being felt today. If these businesses had policies in place, they ignored them.

What can employers and employees do? I believe there are several steps that we can take:

1. Reach an agreement as to what each of you mean by business ethics and what conduct will be appropriate in your place of business.
2. Train employees in how to conduct business and respond to requests and let them know the consequences of not following your policy.
3. Define and explain conflict of interests so there is no misunderstanding of how employees are to conduct business either in or outside of the organization.
4. Provide assistance and support in reviewing how to identify and deal with potential conflicts of interest.

5. Protect your own business secrets and product information with non-disclosure documents so that every employee understands that certain information is proprietary and important to your business.

Business ethics and conduct are too important not to be a major statement within an organization. Make sure your organization has one.

Lola Kakes
CEO, EffortlessHR
7670 E. Broadway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85710
520.546.3947
lola@effortlesshr.com
www.effortlesshr.com

FROM JIM SIRBASKU'S DESK

How to Fly Safely Through Turbulence

CEOs these days must feel as if they are piloting a plane upside down and backwards through the perfect storm, where all things that can go wrong, do. Following the storm, comes a brief period of misleading calm before the chaos begins again. Everyone on board gets a wild, somersaulting ride and fears what lies ahead. For some organizations, holding on for dear life is all they can do to survive.

In today's economy, surviving the storm has become an organization's main priority. The uncertainty that makes quick changes necessary means organizations must rely on their *well-trained* employees to carry them through. Strong workers who come to work each day with enthusiasm, focus and creativity make for trusty copilots during times of economic turbulence. They can help navigate above, below or around obstacles while offering solutions that no one else has thought of to help calm everyone aboard.

But, as leaders prevail upon key players to do more with less manpower and fewer resources, we cannot just distribute assignments and walk away hoping they will figure out what to do. Keeping the company steady through tough times requires commitment from the top to stay on course. Now is not the time to abandon goals, ignore the problems, or adopt an "every person for himself" attitude.

Remember, nothing is more crucial than hiring competent people and helping them develop the skills necessary to help pilot the plane. Making sure your employees have the talent, skill and knowledge to make it through the storm is more important than ever. Here are some key things to do— in good times and bad.

- **If you are not operating under a hiring freeze, count your blessings.** Then treat every new hire as if he or she might be your last. Be sure managers take the important steps of recruiting potential candidates that fit the position and your company. Insist on tools that help recruiters ask the right questions during the job interview and help them make decisions based on science instead of guesswork.
- **Train new workers well, and do not neglect the old guard – the stalwarts who choose to stay with you even when the going gets rough.** Even in a good economy, everyone needs training. Specific training and everyday coaching helps retain workers and makes sure they are ready for current and future challenges. In a down economy, some might covet the training budget with an eye toward making the bottom line look healthier. Repeat this mantra: short-term pain, long-term gain.
- **Do not assume anything about your employees.** Know them better than they know themselves. New tools are available to tell you exactly who is working for you – their competencies, their weaknesses and their goals. Do not decide that you can apply the same management style to everyone and get the same results. A multitude of different faces greet you when you walk into the department. They are likely to include four different generations, both

genders, and different races and ethnicities. In the global marketplace, you will find variations even within identifiable groups. It is imperative that you learn what skills your employees have, the skills they are capable of acquiring and what it takes to keep them motivated.

- **Check the pulse of your key leaders.** Are they engaged? A recent study reveals that more than half of senior executives possess “less than ideal emotional connection and alignment” to their organizations. Are any of these your co-pilots? If so, re-coaching, and moving around employees is likely in your future, if you want to be assured of a future.
- **Have a plan and use it.** Do not fear adjusting it as necessary. Traveling through turbulence is much smoother and less alarming if you carefully map out your flight plan before you proceed, tweak the course as needed, and make sure you have a team of willing and able employees to make the necessary in-flight changes.

Now, buckle your seatbelts and prepare for takeoff. We may have a bumpy ride ahead.

Jim Sirbasku, CEO
Profiles International

POP QUIZ

Test Your Knowledge about Workday Attitudes

Employers, how much do you know about your employees? Test your knowledge here. Circle an answer for each question. Answers appear below each set of questions:

1. What is the most important factor keeping your employees in their jobs right now?

- a. Pay and health insurance
- b. Satisfaction with work
- c. Job security
- d. Satisfaction with co-workers

2. What do employees want most from their jobs?

- a. Feeling valued
- b. Less stress
- c. Being part of a team
- d. Shared vision and values

3. What percentage of employees say they plan to stay in their job for the next year?

- a. 50 percent
- b. 20 percent
- c. 80 percent
- d. 60 percent

4. Half of employees are satisfied with the number of hours they work.

- True
- False

5. More than half of employees believe this is a good time to take on extra work on the job.

- True
- False

ANSWERS courtesy of Randstad's World of Work Survey 2008

1. c; 2. a, 3. d 4. True; 5. True (in fact, 68 percent of employees believe this)

Employees, how well do you know your manager? Test your knowledge here. Circle an answer for each question:

1. What percentage of employers plan to stay in their jobs the next 12 months?

- a. 65 percent
- b. 75 percent
- c. 60 percent

d. 45 percent

2. Which one of these things are employers most satisfied with at work?

- a. Compensation
- b. Flexible hours
- c. Amount of work
- d. Opportunity to learn new things

3. Employers believe fair compensation of employees is more important to employees than surveys indicate.

- True
- False

4. Employees and employers are equally satisfied with the number of hours they work.

- True
- False

ANSWERS for 1, 2 and 4, courtesy of Randstad's World of Work Survey 2008; answers for 3, courtesy of salary.com -- 1. a; 2 d. 3. True; 4. True

Ending a Vicious Cycle, Reaching Nirvana with Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™

"By working faithfully eight hours a day you may eventually get to be boss and work twelve hours a day."

-- Robert Frost

The eloquent American poet's words have a ring of truth to them – but they provide **only one view** of the boss's job. There are perspectives aplenty, and one in particular does not rely on the chief spending 12 or more hours every day toiling at work. It is this: The boss's goal instead is to develop employees so that everyone enjoys a **productive, enjoyable and fulfilling** workplace.

Let's pay a visit to an imaginary workplace. We will call it The Nirvana Company. Imagine a boss at Nirvana focusing energy and expertise on the **quality of his or her relationships** with employees. This boss would know, for example, whether an employee's decision-making style matched her own fast-paced method, or whether the worker preferred to ponder situations a while before making decisions. The boss would learn how best to manage that worker to get his very best decisions and the highest productivity. There's more – the boss would do this for **every employee** in the organization.

Does this scenario seem too good to be true? It doesn't have to be. In fact, Profiles offers an assessment **that not only helps the boss work on relationships – it helps employees do the same thing.**

Workplaces do exist in which supervisors and their direct reports know each other's work styles and use that knowledge to their own and the organization's advantage. And studies show that such managers and employees are highly productive and engaged. The reverse is also true: **Managers who are out of step with employees often cause low productivity, low morale and high turnover.** In fact, more people **leave bosses** than they do jobs.

The Profiles assessment that takes on this issue is Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™, and it combines insight into the characteristics that affect the boss-employee relationship with information on how unique individuals can best work together.

The strength of Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ lies in two key areas: What it measures and what it provides as a result of its measurements.

First, the measurements: Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ examines **seven important characteristics** that define the relationship between an employee and the manager: **self-assurance, self-reliance, conformity, optimism, decisiveness, objectivity** and **approach to learning**. Once these are measured and analyzed for both boss and worker, each receives a report. The manager's report provides a detailed description of the differences between the two on each characteristic, as well as a "best-practice" working style for both the manager and the employee. A "Working Together" section gives **ideas for managing this unique employee** and a "Next Steps" section offers detailed instructions on how to proceed.

The Employee Report shows the worker his or her similarities to and differences from the boss, with ideas for making the work relationship smoother.

In short, Profiles WorkForce Compatibility™ helps both manager and employee to:

- **Communicate** better
- **Spot conflicts** before they occur
- **Successfully resolve** problems that pop up

This assessment is neither magic nor a fairy tale – nor does it support the view of Robert Frost expressed above. It does require hard work and a commitment to rely more on facts than assumptions. But its strength is in its **personalization of management strategy**. The one-size-fits-all approach to management is out the window – good riddance.

Bosses who are ready to put their busy workdays to better use should call us, your Profiles International representative at (520) 546-3947 and start enjoying more pleasant, productive workdays.

As we all pause over the next few days to celebrate Thanksgiving Day, I offer my thanks as follows:

- .. I'm thankful that I am living in this wonderful country – that even though we have our faults, we have to build walls and pass laws to keep people out not to keep them in.
- .. I'm thankful for my family – whose love and support mean so very much to me.
- .. I'm thankful for my friends – those whom I know and those whom I have yet to meet.
- .. I'm thankful for my job – although we are just a little ripple in the whole scheme of things – it is ours and I am proud of what we have accomplished.
- .. And, finally, I'm thankful for the good things we have to celebrate as they far out weigh the bad things in life. Let's all work to keep it that way.

Happy Thanksgiving!!

