



WOODBRIIDGE GROUP NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

FALL 2007

Editor's Choice:

~ Polish Your Group's Treasures ~

Day by day, you're probably most aware of your employees in terms of how well they do their individual jobs. That's necessary, of course, but don't overlook their contributions to the group itself – how they help the department function socially and make it a good place to work. Recognizing these assets will help you in assigning tasks, appreciating each contribution, and understanding what the group wants and needs. Consider three types of contributions:

1. **Experts and problem-solvers.** Which employees are good at taking ownership of a work process or task? Assign them to iron out stubborn wrinkles in difficult procedures, such as obtaining the data for the group's weekly report that's always late. Then ask them to share their problem-solving skills with their coworkers.

2. **Social hubs.** Which employees are so popular with their coworkers that they're always in the know? They may concentrate on goings-on in the department or be in constant contact with other departments, customers, or industry sources. Keep them up-to-date on your priorities for the group so their networks are in the loop, too.
3. **Outsiders.** Which employees don't hang with the group or go with the flow – and offer you a different perspective because of it? Draw them into discussions and solicit their opinions to push the group's solidarity toward objectivity. ■

(The Manager's INTELLIGENCE Report–October 2007)

Inside this issue:

Sleeping at your Desk	2
10 Winter Driving Tips	2
Quiz Answers	3
Do you know the Answer?	3
HR Corner— Performance	3
Is it a Stroke?	4

Special points of interest:

- Editor's Choice:
- From the Desk of Bruce Blevins —
- On The Lighter Side
- Just 4 Fun
- Inside the Mind of Tina
- Calendar



From the Desk of Woodbridge Group's Executive Director...

What Exactly Does the Younger Generation Want?

Many corporate leaders, HR executives, and managers are puzzled about how to motivate, inspire, and retain members of the “20-something” generation, “Millennials,” or “Generation Y” - as they may be called—who are employed in their organizations. As voluntary turnover rates in this group have grown, with young professionals changing jobs every year or two, Nicholas Aretakis, a corporate leader and entrepreneur for more than 20 years, decided to talk with these young adults from coast to coast to find out not only what they want, but also what they need from employers. He shares his findings and advice to recent college graduates in his book, *No More Ramen: The 20-Something's Real World Survival Guide*.

Aretakis translates some of his thoughts into practical advice for HR executives and managers. He explains that this generation, in a hurry to be successful, has watched their parents achieve a certain level of career and personal success and expects to achieve similar success quickly. He explains that recent college graduates are more sophisticated, better educated, more technology-savvy, and, frankly, have had more material things than any generation before them.

“Their expectations are so lofty and their standard of living is so high that when they move out [of their parents' houses] with salaries of \$40,000 to \$45,000, they are barely scraping by. When they have jobs, and they see that they're not getting quick returns, they get disillusioned and leave and go somewhere else.”

The problem with this for both employers and the young professional is that

young employees are not increasing their skills and knowledge with this job-hopping. They continue to feel frustrated because they're not being promoted with new employers, either; and they may bounce to another employer, repeating the same situation. Aretakis suggests that sitting down and setting short- and long-term goals and objectives for entry-level staff helps. Training managers to develop customized objectives for specific job tasks and responsibilities will assist managers in effectively communicating expectations and the subsequent rewards for meeting them to the “20-Somethings” when they talk with their subordinates, he explains.

A clear pathway that younger employees can follow to earn more challenging work assignments, income, and eventually, promotions, will help create a sense of team and company dedication.

(Continued on page 4—back page)



On the Lighter side...

FIVE BEST THINGS TO SAY IF YOU GET CAUGHT SLEEPING AT YOUR DESK:

5. "They told me at the Blood Bank this might happen."

4. "This is just a 15 minute power nap they raved about in the time management course you sent me to."

3. "Whew! Guess I left the top off the Whiteout. You probably got here just in time."

2. "Did you ever notice sound coming out of these keyboards when you put your ear down real close?"

And the NUMBER ONE best thing to say if you get caught sleeping at your desk...

1. Raise your head slowly and say, "...in Jesus' name, Amen." ■

10 Tips for Safe Winter Driving

Now that winter is in high gear it's a good time to offer your employees a few safe winter driving tips. Helping your workers stay safe shows them you care and promotes loyalty.

Help your workers stay safe with these tips from the Iowa Department of Transportation:

1. Do not overestimate your ability in bad driving conditions.
2. Slow down. Wear seat belts. Never drink and drive.
3. Put extra distance between you and the car in front of you.
4. Don't slam on the brakes. The wheels could lock, causing your car to slide.
5. If your car starts to slide, turn your wheels in the direction in which it is sliding to straighten it out.
6. Drive on interstates and one-way roads, whenever possible.
7. Turn on your lights to see and be seen.
8. Clear snow and ice off the headlights, tail lights, mirrors, and license plates. Stop the car when necessary to keep the windows clear.
9. Be aware that bridges, ramps, and overpasses may freeze first.
10. Check the windshield wipers to make sure they are not frozen to the windshield. Consider replacing your original wipers with heavy-duty ones.

If you get stuck in the snow, don't panic. Start by shoveling a path in front and behind the wheels. Spreading sand or strips of carpet helps. You can also try rocking the vehicle by moving forward and backward in rapid succession until free.

©1997-2007 Business & Legal Reports, Inc. All Rights Reserved ■

JUST 4 FUN

"MINDBENDERS"

This exercise in mental health uses words, letters, symbols (and their positions) to represent common words, phrases, expressions, people, places, and events.

Example:

SOMEWHERE

RAINBOW

"SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW"

thought

thought

1. _____

HEAD

2. _____

NOON GOOD

3. _____

ONE

T

S

4. _____

y e

m n

e e

n m

e y

5. _____



Inside the Mind of Tina Miller

Administrative Services Manager

NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES:

EMPLOYEE NOTICES REQUIRED UNDER FEDERAL LAW

Employees claiming exemptions from withholding during the prior year on their W-4 must complete a new Form W-4 by February 15, 2008 to keep their exemption status.

Employees who have filed Form W-5, Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate will have their certificate expire on December 31. Employees who want to continue receiving advance payments must complete a new Form W-5 before the first payroll processing in 2008.

Please check your current pay stub to verify that all information is correct: Your name, address, Social Security number, etc. If you need to make changes—notify your business office for correct form. ■

Managing resentful, immature people takes the same skill set as raising kids: You have to be nurturing, mentoring, and coaching to succeed.

by Mark Miller,
Sales Manager

(October 2007 Bits & Pieces)

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER ?

How many times can you subtract 6 from 30?

ANSWER: Only once, because the second time you will be subtracting from 24 instead of 30

HR Corner:

8 Rules for Dealing with Poor Performers

While the failure of managers to confront employees with performance problems can cost a company in terms of sales, revenue, and profitability, many managers continue to avoid dealing with poor performers, says Joanne Sujansky, Ph.D., founder and president of the consulting firm KEYGroup.

Sujansky says that companies that tolerate poor performance can also see an increase in turnover among high performers who are unhappy working in that environment.

"When you confront your poor performers, you will find that one of two things happens," says Sujansky. "They improve or they move--hopefully to a new company and not another department, that is. Either way--improving or moving out of the company--keeps customers satisfied and business brisk. And it keeps your good employees happy, too."

Sujansky's firm (keygroupconsulting.com) conducted a survey in which just 31 percent of respondents said their manager confronts poor performance.

"We found that less than one-third of managers are seen by their employees as doing a good job confronting poor performance," she notes. "It seems that, in most companies, poor performers are allowed to run rampant."

Sujansky offers the following 8 rules for dealing with poor performers.

1. **Be specific.** If an employee has been consistently late, specify the number of times (frequency) or amount of time (intensity). Avoid exaggerated statements. If the form of poor performance has been a problem in the past, remind the employee when you have pointed out the offense previously.
2. **Focus on the performance required for the job.** For example, if you need to correct something like inappropriate dress, make sure that you reiterate the guidelines that have been outlined for the workplace--not the personal taste of the individual.
3. **Consider the needs of the receiver.** Everyone handles feedback differently. Regardless of the poor performer's personality, however, you should always be clear and straightforward in your communication.
4. **Focus on performance over which the receiver has control.** Poor performance isn't always the result of an employee's carelessness. If an employee hasn't reached his goals because he has not conducted the required number of activities, work with him to identify things he can do that will help him to make progress.
5. **Give timely feedback.** Usually, there's no reason to hesitate on giving feedback to poor performers. Make the individual aware of what she did immediately so she'll have total recall of what just happened.
6. **Check for understanding.** Avoid asking close-ended questions during the discussion or when summarizing. Ask the employee to summarize his understanding of the situation and to identify the actions that should be taken moving forward.
7. **Keep a paper trail of your discussions.** After each meeting with the poor performer, take notes that summarize the discussions. In your documentation, include the problem, the action taken to correct or eliminate it, the dates, the result that occurred, and any comments that will help you to recall feedback sessions when you are completing your summary of performance at the end of the year appraisal. However, don't include only examples of the employee's poor performance. Also highlight, discuss, and document examples of acceptable and/or outstanding performance.
8. **Use the ABC format for giving feedback.** Here's how the format breaks down: **A** is for accurate. Be accurate by reflecting an objective description of what occurred. **B** is for behavioral. State the problem in performance terms (what was seen or heard). **C** is for consistent. Be sure to include what was done, the impact, and how it will be eliminated (negative) or repeated (positive) in the future.

"Confronting poor performers may not be easy now," says Sujansky. "But once they have a system in place for doing so, managers usually find that getting them back on track is far preferable to ignoring the problem. As you begin to deal with poor performers instead of avoiding them, you will discover what makes them tick and you will be able to resolve issues more efficiently. Everyone will benefit, and your job will get a whole lot easier." ©1997-2006 Business & Legal Reports, Inc. All Rights Reserved ■

MINDBENDER

ANSWERS:

1. Second thought
2. Headlines
3. Good Afternoon
4. Cornerstone
5. Arch Enemy

WOODBRIIDGE GROUP STAFF:

BRUCE BLEVINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TINA MILLER, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER
PATRICIA WEATHERWAX, HUMAN RESOURCES COORDINATOR

Telephone: (231) 527-1460

Toll Free: 866-371-9637

Fax: (231) 527-1564

E-Mails

Bruce: wmes@tucker-usa.com

Tina: tina@tucker-usa.com

Patty: hrwmes@tucker-usa.com



What's in the Future for:

CCA - Crossroads Charter Academy
WMAAA - W MI Academy of Arts & Academics
BCCS- The Byron Center Charter School

November 2007

BCCS Flex Open Enrollment Mtg.—Nov 8
CCA Flex Open Enrollment Mtg.—Nov 12
WMAAA Flex Open Enrollment Mtg.—Nov 14
BCCS, CCA, WMAAA & Woodbridge Group
Closed—November 22 & 23

December 2007

Last day of school before winter break—Dec 21
Woodbridge Group Closed—Dec 24, 25, & 31

January 2008

Woodbridge Group Closed—January 1
Students & Staff returning to class after winter
break—Jan 7

...What Exactly Does the Younger Generation Want?... continued

Aretakis explains that companies should set up formal mentoring programs in addition to expecting immediate supervisors to engage in mentoring and coaching their direct reports. "Your employees need to know that you have a shared interest in their success. If I'm a manager, it's to my advantage to keep employees happy and challenged and to show them where and how they can advance in the organization by making a material contribution to the company."


Succession planning that is made visible for the organization as a whole would also assist "20-Somethings" in seeing a future with their current employer. This group of employees needs proof that it's more advantageous for their personal and career growth to stay with their current employer than move on to find a new one.

A last bit of advice from Aretakis is to make certain that your work culture is supportive and fun. Aretakis says, "Make people enjoy coming into the office by promoting a sense of team spirit and a sense of camaraderie."

For more information to help you deal with your "20-Somethings," visit: www.nomoreamenonline.com.

From: Best Practices in HR, The HR Professional, November 3, 2007

SOMETHING WE ALL NEED TO KNOW
It Is A Stroke?



Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- *Ask the individual to SMILE.
- *Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.
- *Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness, and speech problems researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's annual meeting in February 2004. Widespread use of this test could result in a more prompt diagnosis and treatment of stroke and possibly prevent brain damage.

True friends are like diamonds
Precious, but rare;
False friends are like autumn leaves
Found everywhere.

