

Office Politics: Taking a More Positive Approach

Excerpted from Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success © 2005 by Karl Albrecht.

Coffee room talk is often dominated by conversations about office politics. Usually the complaint is accompanied with some statement denying personal involvement in office politics - "I'm just not going to play" or "Life's too short for this nonsense." Often these statements are an indicator that the outcome of the politicking is not going the way the individual would like.

The person who scorns organizational politics usually does not understand that he or she continually participates in a political contact, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously. If you work for an organization or participate in any kind of organized activity, you've involved yourself in its politics. Declaring yourself "out of the game" doesn't get you out of the game. You can't "not play" - you can only play competently or incompetently.

The fact is, office politics are a reality in any organization and they are not necessarily a bad thing. Some use politics to accomplish great results within their organizations. Others pursue "politicking" to advance their own agenda and not the organization's. People who engage in self-serving, destructive political behavior that works against the interests of the enterprise, do less well in the long run than those who compete through contribution and achievement.

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Practice Positive Politics:

Since office politics are part of organizational life, you may as well put them to work for you and for the organization in a positive way. Here are some tips:

- ★ align your wants/arguments in support of organizational goals;
- ★ develop an image that is congruent with the organization's culture;
- ★ gain control of decisions over organizational resources;
- ★ create the impression of indispensability;
- ★ be visible with key decision makers and important external stakeholders;
- ★ develop powerful allies; and
- ★ avoid the perception of alignment with members of the organization that have a "tainted" reputation.

Q: We have an employee who is not going to be returning from FMLA. Can we recover our share of the group health benefits premium costs ?

A: Group health benefit premiums can be recovered under limited circumstances, according to the FMLA regulations. Generally, a worker must return to work for 30 calendar days to avoid having to reimburse the employer for its contributions during unpaid leave.

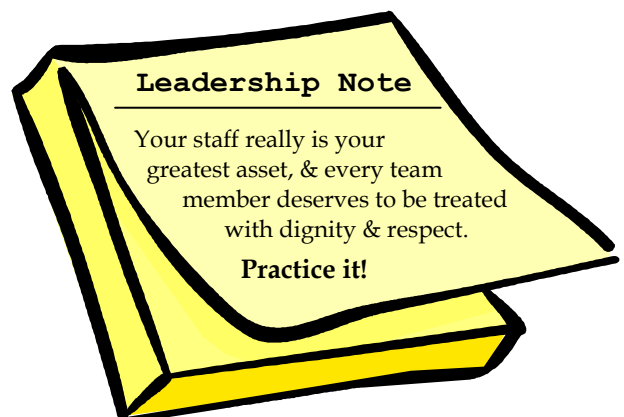
Employers cannot recover premium costs when:

- An employee is on paid leave.
- The employee does not return due to the condition's recurrence or the onset of another serious health condition.
- An individual begins retirement within 30 days of taking FMLA leave.
- There are circumstances beyond the employee's control such as the elimination of an employee's position during FMLA leave.
- An employee cannot return because he or she is needed



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Leadership Note

Your staff really is your greatest asset, & every team member deserves to be treated with dignity & respect.

Practice it!

the *President's Corner...*

Compensation Strategies for a Dynamic Business Environment

Most compensation strategies today in both large and small organizations have the same basic objectives: to attract, retain and motivate the best employees! However, this strategy is much too general. We need to dig a little deeper to describe exactly what this means.

A well crafted compensation strategy helps tell the story of who you are as an organization and what you value as an organization. It is equally important that this strategy not just sit on a shelf somewhere in Human Resources, but is implemented throughout the organization consistently and effectively.

Assuming the total compensation system is compliant with all local, state and federal laws and regulations (i.e. legal), the ultimate question for every HR Professional is: ***How do you know if your organization's total compensation system is effective?***

The answer to this question lies in the goals of the system:

1. *Compatible with the Organization's Mission/Strategy:*
 - Life Cycle (start up, growth, mature, decline)
 - Revenues/Expenses Picture
 - Industry Dynamics
2. *Compatible with Corporate Culture:*
 - Entitlement-Oriented/Paternalistic
 - Contribution-Oriented/Merit-Based
3. *Appropriate for the Workforce:*
 - Entry Level/Unskilled
 - Experienced/Highly Educated Professionals
 - Exempt/Non-Exempt
4. *Externally Competitive:*
 - Industry
 - Occupation
 - Location/Marketplace
 - Match, Lead, Lag
 - Review Salary Data Annually
5. *Internally Equitable:*
 - Fairness
 - New & Seasoned Staff
 - Job Differences
 - Salary Ranges by Position or Grade Level
 - Minimum/Midpoint (Market)/Maximum

Effective compensation philosophies are written and clearly understood, therefore even the best compensation package will fail in this task unless employees understand and value it. The keystone to a successful benefit management program is employee communication!

For more information on Compensation Strategies for a Dynamic Business Environment, please feel free to contact me directly at any time!

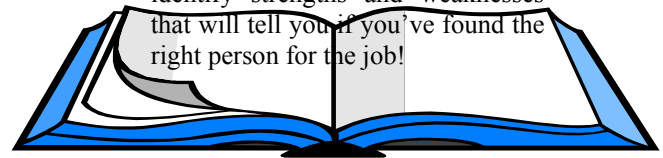
~ Deb

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By Victoria A. Hoevemeyer

This brand new book just published in 2006 contains 701 behavior-based interview questions to find the right person for every job. This book shows you how to use competency-based interviewing methods that will uncover truly relevant and useful information.

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77% Who's Next?
77%

of companies said they do not have enough successors in their current senior-level managers already working in their organizations, according to a survey of 186 human resource managers at U.S. Companies.

Source: Right Management Consultants, Philadelphia