

P A N D E M I C

Excerpted from HR Magazine, May 2006 Vol. 51, No.5

In 1918, the world experienced the deadliest pandemic ever known. Between 50 million and 100 million people died worldwide, and US deaths were estimated at more than 500,000. Could it happen again? The general consensus among experts is that another pandemic will strike – sooner, rather than later. The only real question is the severity of the threat, which remains anyone’s guess.

Pandemics occur roughly three to four times a century, explains Michael Earls, a spokesman for Trust For America’s Health in Washington, DC. And while outbreaks don’t occur at predictable intervals, he says, “we are kind of overdue.”

Crisis Planning Lacking

It is imperative that businesses develop their own crisis plan. Unfortunately, many have not even started. While a 2005 *Disaster Preparedness Survey Report* from the Society for Human Resource Management found that 85% of companies have a formal disaster preparedness plan, a recent survey of US Employers in November 2005 reported that only 14% had adequately planned for a possible pandemic.

The study also found that 30% of those responding believe there isn’t much a company can do to prepare. But Bill Anderson, director of global security at Ryder System Inc., a logistics and transportation company in Miami, disagrees: “The more we can identify ahead of time, the more we can free up our crisis management team to address the unanticipated.” Current crisis plans that do not include specifics for pandemics are a good start, but are not enough. If you haven’t dusted off that plan for a while, now is the time to take it down from the shelf and reassemble your team, which should include representatives from human resources, business continuity, environmental health, security, IT and any business areas vital to your operation. There will be *no* time once a pandemic has started. An influenza outbreak could spread worldwide in as little as 20 to 30 days. Issues to think about:

- Communications**
- Absenteeism**
- Finding Replacements**
- Productivity**

If we do experience a pandemic, no matter how severe, it will pass. The good news is that the more businesses plan for it, the better off they will be. And if there is no pandemic in the foreseeable future? You’re still better off. This kind of business preparedness can pay off immediately. You can create new business opportunities and new relationships with your customers, suppliers and government organizations that you may not have thought of before.

Do you need some help getting your company ready for the future? Call D. Gallant Management Associates and let us help you with your disaster preparedness plan.

STUDY:

Accommodations Effective, Inexpensive

Most accommodations needed by employees with disabilities cost nothing, and the ones that do average only about \$600, according to a study by the Job Accommodation Network, a free consulting service of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.

More than half of 890 employers reported no direct costs related to providing workplace accommodations to employees. Such accommodations included changing work schedules and allowing flexible hours. Others often involved one-time-only expenditures.

-Disability Compliance Bulletin

MORGAN STANLEY SETTLES OVERTIME CASE

New York-based securities firm Morgan Stanley has agreed to pay a \$42.5 million settlement in a class-action overtime lawsuit involving about 500 of its California brokers.

According to the suit, which was filed in U.S. District Court in San Diego, Morgan Stanley failed to pay overtime to current and former commission-based brokers and broker-trainees who often worked more than 40 hours a week. It also claims the brokerage wrongfully deducted money from paychecks to cover administrative expenses.

Morgan Stanley defended its practices and said it believed financial advisers should not be paid on an hourly basis.

Source: Human Resource Executive – June 2006

WE'VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!

Source: *Human Resource Executive*, May 2006

In February, GroupSystems Corporation released the results of a survey it conducted regarding that infamous workplace ritual: "the staff meeting."

More than 84% of the respondents believed staff meetings could use some fine-tuning. The problems most often cited included irrelevant discussion, lack of closure and unclear action-item responsibility. The average length of a typical weekly staff meeting came in at around 50 minutes, and respondents estimated they ought to be able to trim 16 minutes off that figure, if inefficiencies were removed.

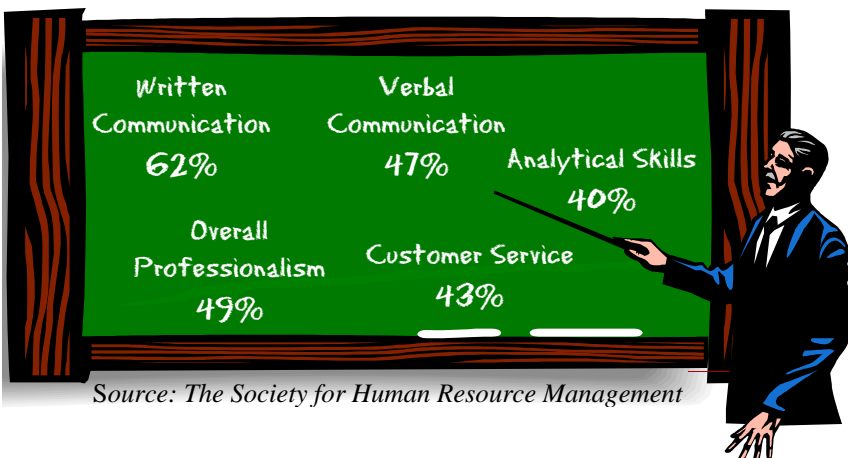
It may not sound like much, but in a department of 10 people, that adds up to two hours and 40 minutes of staff time each week, or approximately 3.5 workweeks per year. Respondents also cited poor record keeping: 50% said they do not take minutes for most meetings and 56% said action items are noted only sometimes or not at all. Worst of all, 68% say the input offered in meetings regarding a particular action item is only taken into account in the implementation phase.

The survey was conducted between November and January, among full-time professionals working in corporate, government, defense, education and not-for-profit settings. More than 130 professionals took the survey.

There are steps you can take towards an effective meeting: circulate an agenda in advance, take minutes during the discussion and circulate promptly after the meeting, record action items and persons responsible, parking lot for future agendas, start on time and end on time. Take these small steps, and you'll see your meetings become more productive.

Coming up Short

More than 80 percent of 489 HR Professionals said they were seeing some lack of competencies in new workers. The areas in which new workers were most commonly lacking, they said, were:



CONGRATULATIONS!

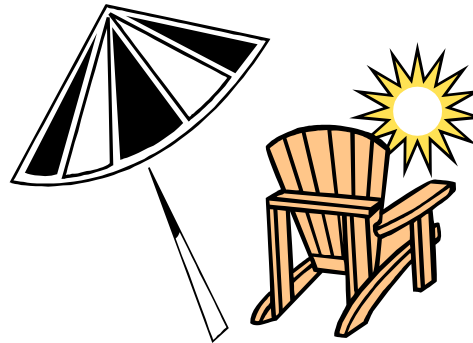
To the winners of our **BROOKSIDE GIFT BASKETS!**



Darlene Cadorette-Levesque
HR Director - White Rock Distilleries - Lewiston, Maine

David Welenc
Director of Finance - Vernon Advent Christian Home - Vernon, Vermont

Darlene visited our exhibitor booth at the Human Resource Expo Held at the Samoset Resort in Rockland and David visited our booth at the NNEAHS 12th Annual Conference at the Sheraton in South Portland



Have a safe and Happy summer!

From your friends at **D. Gallant Management**

JOB OPENINGS...

Our clients have asked us to assist them in their efforts to find qualified applicants for the following positions:

STATE DIRECTOR - Massachusetts
Institute of Professional Practice, Inc
(Private Non-Profit Agency serving the Developmentally Disabled)

CEO/President
Medium sized Management Company located in Central and Southern Maine

Director of Sales & Marketing
Credit Union in the Portland Area

We welcome any referrals and/or names of individuals who may have an interest in either of these positions.

Call our offices today at
(207) 773-4800 for more information.

Watch for the *President's Corner* piece on "Employee Retention" In the September 2006 issue of this Newsletter