

SSA Presents HR to IMPROVE YOUR COMPANY'S HEALTH

Have you had your annual physical yet? We all know that preventative examinations are important to our physical well-being. Likewise, most employers encourage their employees to undergo annual physical exams in order to maintain a healthy workforce. After all, employees are a company's most important asset. What about your business itself? When was the last time your business received a really thorough physical? Is your company due for a Human Resources annual exam?

As an employer, you can perform your own HR exam. For example, some of the HR functions that should receive a thorough annual review are:

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK – Most small and medium-sized businesses rely on “canned” employee handbooks. However, the employee handbook is one of the most effective tools of communication between you and your employees. When a new employee is hired, he or she should be able to find answers to basic company policies and programs in your employee handbook. In addition, when an employee needs clarification on hiring, disciplinary or benefits issues, the employee handbook serves as an important source. While a “canned” employee handbook certainly is better than no handbook at all, a customized employee handbook that is updated each year and specifically tailored to your company's needs is the better way to go.

BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION – Many small businesses rely on payroll companies or PEO's (Professional Employer Organization) to handle the payroll function. This undoubtedly saves them the expense of having an in-house accounting department. But, the same employers will try to handle their own employee benefits administration. Most small-business owners do not have the time or expertise to oversee their company's benefit plans. Yet this is an area that is very important to both management and employees and it is vital that the plans remain in compliance with state and federal regulations.

SAFETY – Now, perhaps more than ever, employers are finding it necessary to implement comprehensive safety programs. Whether or not your company is in the business of manufacturing, your employee's safety is essential. Does your company have a written safety program? Do you offer regularly scheduled training sessions to help ensure that your employees are fully informed of all safety policies and procedures? Does your company have a building safety and evacuation plan? In the wake of escalating employee violence in the workplace, safety issues should be seriously addressed.

DISCRIMINATION AVOIDANCE AND SENSITIVITY TRAINING – You have a duty to your employees to see that they're protected from discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Does your company have a written policy on harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination? Have your supervisors received sufficient training to handle a discrimination or harassment complaint? Failure to do so could result in serious and expensive litigation.

“An annual HR exam or audit is an important tool for businesses of all sizes,” says Jack Mc Gaughnea, President & CEO of Northeast HR for Hire, an HR consulting firm located in Schenectady, NY. His consultants at Northeast HR for Hire review several aspects of the Human Resource function. “First, we initiate an overall examination of the business, such as number of employees, exempt vs. non-exempt, full-time or part-time, salary or hourly wages. Next, we review the business function. Is payroll being handled in-house, by a payroll company or by a PEO?”

“Then, we look at the benefits programs such as health, dental and life insurance, pension and compensation programs. We review vacation, paid and unpaid leave. If the company maintains or wishes to enroll in a 401(k) and/or Section 125 Plan, we will assess the programs and make sure the company is in compliance with state and federal laws.”

Once an audit is completed, Mc Gaughnea and his consultants work with the business owner or management to customize a plan that will fit the company's specific needs. According to Mc Gaughnea, “Our goal is to provide superior Human Resource solutions at the very best value to your company.”

As an HR Rx, the consultants at Northeast HR for Hire recommend that your company undergo a thorough HR examination at least once a year. “Our consultants are available to assist businesses of all sizes, from the sole proprietor to larger companies with their own HR staff, in performing an assessment and developing an ongoing maintenance program for your business,” Mc Gaughnea says. “Prevention is the key to a healthy, happy workplace!” □

SSA and Northeast HR for Hire have formed a new partnership to offer Human Resources services to SSA members at a 15% discount. The audit is free. If you are interested in finding out more about Human Resources outsourcing, call Jack Mc Gaughnea, President and CEO of Northeast HR for Hire, at (518) 355-4556, or visit their website at www.nehrforhire.com. Mention your SSA member number to receive your member discount.

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