You Should Just Know

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ARE YOUR STAFF FINANCIALLY FIT?

The following article has been kindly provided by Wendy Dupuis, Executive Director of Financial Fitness, a not-for-profit organization who have, for over forty years, served the Windsor-Essex and Sarnia-Lambton communities as an independent financial counselling agency specializing in helping its clients ensure that they have their finances in order.

When employers consider the health and wellness of their employees, they typically focus on their physical and mental health. Just as important, but often overlooked, is their financial health.

As an employer you may think that providing your staff with a paycheque is as far as your obligation goes in looking after their financial well being, however, the consequences of having a poor level of financial health can have significant effects of the health and productivity of your workforce.

Studies show that people experiencing money problems have higher levels of stress, anxiety, anger, depression and ill-health as the stress manifests itself in physical ailments. There is also a higher incidence of substance abuse, and absenteeism; as well as marital difficulties that often accompany a stressful money situation.

These stressful situations do not stop at the doors of the workplace. For the employer, this worry can result in a higher number of accidents, because people cannot concentrate on the task at hand; and a higher absenteeism rate because people are either sick or having to attend appointments such as legal, counselling or see a bankruptcy trustee to help manage their debt. When employees are at work they get calls from collection agencies, and employers have added administration

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HOW WELCOMING IS YOUR ORGANIZATION?

An employee, full of the enthusiasm of a new graduate, reported for the first day of work in a new organization. While she had been able to do some research into the organization, the final decision to accept this job was based on a 'gut' decision. While there were doubts, she felt it was the right place for her to be.

Our new employee reported, as directed, to her supervisor. After a very brief welcome, the new employee was taken to her small office. She was handed a large binder, and was told to review its contents, as it contained the company's policies and procedures. Also part of her task that day was to review a Powerpoint presentation, sent to her via e-mail, which served as an introduction to the company. With that, her supervisor left the new employee to fend for herself.

The day was a long one for the new employee, as she plodded

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costs to assess wage garnishments from the employee's creditors. A debt ridden employee will often think that making more money will solve the problem, and will pressure their employer for a raise.

The solution for someone who is struggling with their finances is not necessarily to make more money. More likely they need to become better at managing the money they have. Employers can help them do that. Instituting a financial literacy program in the workplace can give employees an opportunity to learn better money management skills and build a better financial life for themselves without the need for a raise in pay. Employees learn such skills as how to build and maintain good credit, to set and save for goals, to prepare for such life events such as buying a home, having children, and most importantly to invest for the future –especially if the workplace does not offer a pension plan.

Today's employers are recognizing the benefits of providing an in- house training opportunity for their staff. Instituting an in house financial literacy program is a small investment with a big pay back.

For more information on how to implement a program in your workplace, call the Financial Fitness Centre, at 519-258-2030 x 226 or contact them at info@financialfitnesswindsor.ca

Thanks to Wendy for contributing this very interesting and informative article. If you would like to provide something for this newsletter, please send it to john@jmboxconsulting.com.

AODA UPDATE– JANUARY 1, 2012

Here is a friendly reminder about something that all organizations in Ontario need to look into and implement.

The Province of Ontario, through the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service , developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities' Ace, 2005, has mandated that all organizations with at least one employee needs to have in place, by January 1, 2012, policies, procedures and practices regarding the accessibility to their goods and services by those with disabilities. Training is also to be given to staff with regards to these standards.

Most public sector organizations were to have implemented these standards and given the training by January 1, 2010.

If you have not yet become compliant with these requirements, and would like more information about them, please take a look at the articles on this subject contained in the You Should Just Know articles in editions 1-3 (December 2009) and 2-6 (December 2010), available on our website www.jmboxconsulting.com. If JM Box Consulting Services can be of assistance with the training and/or policy formulation, please contact us at info@jmboxconsulting.com.

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through some very dry policy material. When she started to crave coffee, she left her office to find it, only to find no one was around in her area. After a futile few minutes searching, she gave up and went back to her office. On her way back, she found the washroom for the first time. At noon, the new employee waited for someone to visit, but no one did, and she ended up eating her bagged lunch in her office. At the end of the day, the new, now somewhat disillusioned employee left work, promising never to trust her 'gut' instincts again when it came to taking a job.

What is wrong with this picture? As organizations, we often go out of our way to attract the right employees, but do we put enough effort into making them feel welcome once they are there? For many, the first day of work is often the most influential, as it tells us a lot about the organization and how it treats its employees. The preceding example, based on a real situation, may be seen to be an exaggeration, but the feeling of isolation is not uncommon amoungst new employees. What can counter that feeling is an appropriate organization orientation.

Orientations can take many forms. In larger organizations, particularly those hiring large numbers of staff at the same time, formal orientations are held right at or close to the start of employment. This allows a number of new hires to be brought together and receive, at the same time, an overview of the organization, as well as the requisite training, such as WHMIS. This is then followed up by orientations within specific departments. This allows the organization to provide the new hire with a sense of the organization's culture, and also makes them feel part of a group going through the same experiences.

Within specific departments, and in smaller organizations, the orientation takes on a more personal perspective. Tours of the organization, complete with introductions to other staff are often done, with the new employee being accompanied by a peer employee. Job shadowing for a few days is a useful exercise, so that then new employee, particularly if they are coming from another employer, can see how their job is to be done in the new environment. The whole purpose here is to make the new employee feel like part of the team quickly, and to save them from the steep learning curve that often accompanies new staff as they learn how to do the job.

It is a good idea to periodically review how your organization deals with the arrival of new staff. Think of how you were treated on your first day. Did anyone come and take you to lunch, show you around the place, accompany you on a break, introduce you to others, or even show you where the washrooms are? If you put yourself in the new employee's shoes, you can quickly see what is necessary in order for them to feel welcome.

Our new employee from the start of this article? Three weeks into her new job, she quit, found a better job, and began a successful career. The employer, mystified, had to start the recruiting process all over again. And learned nothing from the experience.

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Check out our website at
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An Overview of Our Services

JM Box Consulting Services provides innovative, cost-effective Human Resources support and services that assist clients in dealing with their issues and challenges with confidence. Together, we will resolve issues one at a time, either through consultation, training or working together on necessary projects. These services are designed to be of greatest service to small to medium size organizations, including the municipal, health care, charitable. not-for-profit and small business sectors. Based in Windsor, Ontario, **JM Box Consulting Services** can meet the needs of clients throughout the Province.

JM Box Consulting Services takes the approach of meeting client expectations by identifying the gap between the desired goals and current realities, to discover the best ways of eliminating that gap- not just for the present, but for the future as well.

Services

E-Consulting- providing clients with quick, cost-effective access to Human Resources expertise through the use of e-mail and telephone communications, without the expense of or supplemental to internal Human Resources staff.

Project Management Services- to provide project management and expertise on matters such as job evaluation/pay equity, wage/salary administration systems, policy and procedure review and development, and organization redesign and restructuring.

Training Services- to address client needs that are best addressed through training specific to the needs of the organization, such as Violence in the Workplace, Working in a Respectful Workplace, and Organizational Community Presence.

WHY AM I HERE? - THE ONGOING QUESTION

For many of us, the days are crazy and we often wonder why we do what we do. Lots of demands, little budget to fulfill them. This is particularly the case in not for profit organizations, where staff resources are often limited by budgetary requirements. So here is some advice.

Having worked in the not for profit sector, I have faced the same question– why am I here? This was particularly the case when the desk was covered in files, the staff were at the door, and my boss wanted to talk about budget costs. So here is what I would do. I would go out and look at the faces of those we served. Our clients, our residents, our patients, our customers. Whatever we called them. I looked at them and if I saw a smile, caused by something we did, I knew why I was there. Try it. It might make a difference on those busy days.

John Box, JM Box Consulting Services.