



HR+ TIMES

Adding value to organisations...

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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION BECOME A TALENT SPOTTER!

We met a lot of managing directors during the course of the year and something that most had in common was a concern at the lack of talent at their disposal and that such shortages were holding back growth and profitability.

Talent is often drawn to valued organisations (very profitable; regularly growing; making a real contribution to society etc). The most knowledgeable, skillful, creative, dynamic and resourceful people want to work with successful organisations so that they may influence success and share in it. While that may sound like the klaxon call for successful organisations on a global scale its real importance lies in the micro field – the SME. SMEs have a greater propensity to grow and larger organisations have a greater propensity to become smaller. On that basis the SMEs will lead the recovery from these challenging times we live and work in and to do so they will rely on finding and keeping talent. So how do you find talent?

The recruitment process, the obvious method, is sometimes 'hit-or-miss' so looking to the New Year, here are some remedies to eliminate the hit-or-miss approach. Job descriptions and person specifications are essential but restrict the specification to a small number of clearly focused attributes. Look for people who demonstrate an ability to reason through the day-to-day challenges without deviating into less important activities. Test mental agility to determine how well people respond to speedy decision making much needed as the speed of business turbulence grows almost incessantly. Don't be taken in too much by the great orators. Many managers in business achieve an A-grade for 'saying what needs to be done' but end up with an E-grade for the 'result'! Remember the great political phrase "the most important thing a person has to tell you is what he is not telling you". So be an aggressive listener and look for something beyond the words being said to find the best person for the job. Final thought! Don't clone yourself. The business world is constantly changing and that means that knowledge, skills and abilities are changing too. Recognise your shortages and search them out in the talent you plan to hire.

*A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR CLIENTS
FROM THE TEAM AT HR+*



WANT TO GROW IN 2012?

Do you and your business have ambitions to grow next year?

Whether you're starting up or have been in business for a while, however many people you have working for you - you need to ensure that they are fully engaged with your plans.

You need to ensure that you have the right leadership and management skills to achieve this.

Understand the skills you need

Through a one to one business and skills diagnostic provided by our trained adviser, HR+ can pin point which of our many tailor made training solutions would be most beneficial for you and your business.

This would be followed by a personal development plan meeting conducted by a Skills South East Leadership and Management adviser, who will check eligibility so that you can gain access to up to **£1000 grant funding** towards your individual training solution.

Please contact Victoria Newton-Cutler or Karen Welfare on 01233 722431 for more details and an appointment.



OFFICE HABITS THAT DRIVE US CRAZY

These range from the technological to the downright odorous. The top bugbears of office life range from slow computer systems to colleagues who bring in smelly food for lunch according to research by Samsung UK. Colleagues who shout down the phone or never offer to make tea and coffee, printer jams and unnecessary emails also feature prominently as irritating aspects of a day at work.

Regular cigarette breaks, lateness, spending the first half hour of the day reviewing the previous episode of Coronation Street, skiving and being unconstructive just didn't get a mention in the top list. No wonder this country is regularly dropping down the international league of productive countries!

HURRY!

Time is running out

You only have until the end of February 2012 to lodge your application for grant funding as development activities have to start before 31st March 2012.

Eligibility

This offer is available to private sector businesses and social enterprises that;
Have fewer than 250 full time equivalent employees and that have at least one employee in addition to the senior leader and have potential for high or fast growth.

PEOPLE PROFILE ANGIE ATKINS

HR CONSULTANT, ASSOCIATE CIPD



Angela has over 15 years' experience at management level working within SME's, in a diverse range of industries including manufacturing, hospitality & retail. Over the last 10 years she has worked in a fast paced sales industry in which six of these years have been spent in a generalist HR role. Angela has specialised in areas of employee relations; including performance management, absence management, disciplinary and grievance and employee resourcing and successfully managed issues arising from a company restructure. A key achievement for Angela was the implementation and retention of the Investors in People standard. Angela was also responsible for managing a policy project which successfully reduced staff absence.

Angela has achieved her Certificate in Personnel Management and Development, has the Associate CIPD and is currently studying towards her Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management CIPD qualification.

Angela has joined HR+ to lead our development strategy in Greater London.

GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE HOMEWORKING

More and more employers are securing homeworkers and for many reasons, two of which are the reduced costs (less office space, equipment etc) and securing talented staff who don't want the commute to and from the same place each day (running family and work life together, portfolio working, part-time). If you are one of those workers and want to be as productive as possible try the following.

- Establish a routine and stick to it
- Agree measurable outputs with your boss
- Share your diary with the office
- Meet the team socially
- Make sure your technology is suitable for purpose and safe
- Dress to enhance work ethic
- Don't skive but take sensible breaks
- Don't let the team down



HUMAN REMAINS OR HEAVENLY ROUTE – TRY HR+ FOR THE LATTER!



There are still some senior managers who see human resources more as human remains. Those who fall into this category may be described as short-sighted or apathetic – in as much as they accept poor human resource practitioners. Now I don't doubt that there are some HR practitioners who struggle to make an effective contribution to the organisation but many do. In fact, where there is limited or poor HR contribution the organisation is unlikely ever to be fully productive and make sustainable and adequate profits.

So what should you expect from your HR staff or HR Adviser? Well plenty and some of the key contributions are spelt out below.

Vision and strategic plans: these cannot be developed or realised successfully without fully understanding what is needed from the people employed in the organisation. Such plans should benchmark against competitors, promote best practice and encourage change management programmes aimed at continuous improvement.

Recruitment: HR should prepare good job descriptions and person specifications to aid the recruitment process and

contribute objectively through the selection stages. Poor hiring is costly in time and lost productivity. There is also much that proactive HR can do to improve staff stability.

Pay: HR practitioners should ensure a company has an effective reward system which both attracts new talent into the business and ensures that extra effort and results are rewarded.

Engagement and motivation: Staff doing their job is OK. Good HR practitioners will work with management and staff to ensure that they do the job brilliantly and at sustained levels of high performance through effective training and personal development.

Managing change: proactive HR practitioners should be great change agents. Organisations which are not making change are in effect going backwards as the better ones pass them by.

Managing out: there isn't an organisation which does not have staff that are not performing at the right level. Good HR practitioners will help convert low performers to acceptable levels of performance and where that conversion is unable to be achieved, will ensure terminations are fair and timely.

The Editor recalls some time ago that he asked the CEO of an SME, which employed about 200 staff, what he thought the difference was between a good and poor HR practitioner and he responded immediately by saying - £1,000,000 of profit a year. That is the case for having good HR support and advice.

If you need good HR support and advice please call Victoria Santer on 01233 712424 to see how we can help you out.

THE BRIBERY ACT 2010

This Act came into force on 1st July 2011 following international pressure on the UK to combat corruption. The Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2010 placed the UK in twentieth position in the table of the top twenty-five least corrupt countries. The Act introduces four new offences:

1. Bribing another person
2. Being bribed
3. Bribing a foreign public official
4. Failure to prevent bribery

Bribery can include gifts, corporate hospitality, client entertainment and can also include sponsorship so this Act has considerable implications for business in general. The Act can impose unlimited fines where convictions are secured and the corporate offence of failing to prevent

bribery is expected to be the most significant element of the Act. Individuals who commit offences can be imprisoned for up to 10 years and / or receive an unlimited fine.

An organisation will be deemed to have committed the offence of failing to prevent bribery if a person associated with it bribes another person for the organisation's benefit. The only defence is that the organisation has put in place 'adequate procedures' (undefined in the Act) to prevent the bribery from occurring.

Organisations therefore should bring the Act to the attention of management and especially those involved in corporate hospitality; review its current practices; produce a policy and publicise it well; and it may be prudent to change terms of business to incorporate compliance with the Act.



AGONY ABSENCE

Absent staff are one of the biggest challenges facing many organisations today. Research by HR intelligence source XperthHR found that absence from work in 2010 equated to 2.8% of working time or 6.5 days per employee per year at a cost of £553 per head. Another survey by Aviva Health (UK) showed that long-term absence is an issue for 69% of employers. That report went on to say that business owners feel torn between their emotions and business duties when dealing with long-term sickness. Today employers are faced by more complex illnesses such as musculoskeletal problems; cancer; mental health issues; heart problems and drink and drug related issues. Are managers able to deal with these issues? Our view is with difficulty. At HR+ we have expertise to assist and our partner organisation can provide occupational health advice and support.

If absence is a problem to you, give us a call on 01233 722431 and we will be pleased to help.

SMILE CORNER

As we enter the dark days of winter an article in a Methodist church newsletter made me smile and hopefully you too. You know when you are living in 2011 when:

- You accidentally enter your password on the microwave
- You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years
- You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of three.
- You email the person who works at the desk next to you
- Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they are not on Facebook
- You email your children upstairs to tell them dinner is ready
- You pull up in your own driveway and use your mobile phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the shopping
- Leaving the house without your mobile phone is now a cause for panic and you turn round to go and get it
- You get up in the morning and go on-line before getting your coffee