



The SPOTLIGHT

A monthly HR, Benefits & Health newsletter designed exclusively for Nevada Benefits Clients

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Your HR Benefit

By Tanja Anderson

Special points of interest:

- Nevada Benefits New HR Service Line
- Praise for your bottom line!
- HR Audits
- Open Personnel Records

As a new or seasoned business owner, all have experienced the catch phrase, “**Expect the Unexpected!**” We may frame our first dollar, catch the moment of cutting the ribbon, or just revel in the fact we made it through the line getting our business license. As much as your business grows from conception to show – we live daily the multitude of details and headaches that can crop up that make our business successful and learn over time to expect the unexpected. At Nevada Benefits, we are aware that costly personnel litigation can be the “unexpected” that can potentially put you out of business.

any outstanding HR issues or with a HR audit. Even if you have a HR employee on staff, you can look to us for information.

Phil Randazzo, founder of Nevada Benefits Corporation wants to make your life as a business owner just a little easier and maybe even a lot smarter. As an entrepreneur and business owner himself, Phil realized that many small businesses just don’t have the resources to hire a HR point person. “Many times employees not trained in Human Resources may have to take up the daunting task of managing the day-to-day of a business’s most valuable asset – its human capital. I want to provide a tool that really helps business owners get through the myriad of rules and regulations of human resource management – It’s a challenge that business leaders don’t have to go at alone.”

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Nevada Benefits has assisted you with your medical, dental, vision, and life insurance and now we can help you with human resource information and best practices. Let us show you what you might expect in dealing with some of the pitfalls in HR management.

In HR, the best insurance to shield you from liability could just be the information that keeps you prepared!

At Nevada Benefits, we unveil new free resources to our clients: *The Spotlight* that features HR *Information* and HR Help Desk. In addition, you can make an appointment for a site visit to help you get started in the right direction, and obtain assistance with

The Nevada Benefits HR Spotlight Newsletter will feature topics on HR trends, alerts, health, culture and personnel laws that may affect your business and assist you in becoming prepared. The HR Spotlight newsletter will strive to give you the information you need and want - We welcome any input and questions that you may have related to HR and benefits!

Open Personnel Records: The Law!

Under Nevada's Open Personnel Records Law (NRS613.075), employees must be given a reasonable opportunity to inspect or copy their personnel files and employment records. Specifically, the law provides that with some exceptions (employees who have

been employed fewer than 60 days or former employees who make a request to inspect records 60 days after employment has been terminated) employees may inspect and copy their employment records.

Are HR Audits Really Necessary?

Chances are you want to CYA—cover your assets! Noncompliance problems can be, and frequently are, the basis for significant financial risk. Personnel laws are ever changing and never stop. So sure—probably a **great** idea to get started on a HR audit. If you are the HR professional and trained in Human Resources, you may be getting the updates on new laws, regulations and litigation that define an ambiguous law that help you in the now— but what about Sally who you hired last year and Bob who you hired last month. Were their personnel files up to par? It's hard to go back and remember to fix something you missed.

In the accounting department, there are checks and balances happening daily. If you get your financial statements audited, at least you know that your accountant is doing his or her job. HR is quite different. If you hired good employees and pay them on time, chances are you won't hear from them until they don't feel recognized, get harassed, aren't treated with dignity or respect, are retaliated against, or feel like Joe employee is getting some favoritism. Up until then (while your files out of order, you haven't checked your required federal and state law posting, and you've got medical information in an employee file) you've felt relatively safe. It isn't until an employee makes ripples that you begin to feel the waves!

The truth is companies **must** operate within the confines of a heavily-regulated employee environment. This includes dealing with a myriad of complex laws and regulations, including ERISA, COBRA, EEOC, OSHA, ADA, FMLA, FLSA, Title VII, exempt and nonexempt compensation, unemployment, age discrimination, sexual harassment, immigration reform and control, right to privacy and worker's compensation, just to name a few.

You can start small to get the job done— but really, get in there and get dirty! Chances are you took over the HR duties because there wasn't anyone else, there are no resources, or

you've inherited the department from someone else. If you ask me, I'd like a little comfort in knowing just how deep I stand.

HR responsibilities and functions that should be reviewed are employee documentation, workplace violence, stress management, substance abuse, corporate policy, interviewing and hiring, organizational development, job descriptions, problem resolution, performance evaluation, discipline, termination, interim/contingency staffing, training programs, team building, payroll management and the burgeoning number of employee benefit administration issues.

Most lawsuits can be traced to four distinct stages of the employment relationship as pointed out below.

1. Hiring (e.g., job descriptions, application forms, employment contracts, references).
2. Employee evaluation (e.g., performance appraisals and promotions).
3. Employee discipline (e.g., rule infractions, evidence, poor performance).
4. Termination (e.g., comparison with other similar situations, proper warnings, adherence to the complaint procedures, etc.). (Adapted from Daniel, Teresa J.D.)

Take a look at your HR department on a regular basis to see if your programs and procedures are working.

Make improvements if something's not working for your organization. When you start to feel the waves you just might find yourself in a better boat than before!

Get Started! Review the HR Self Audit Checklists that will be featured in our newsletters.

For assistance on HR audits or site visits, call Tanja Anderson, Director of HR at Nevada Benefits, at 702.258.1995. This HR service is free to Nevada Benefits clients.

“It isn't until an employee makes ripples that you begin to feel the waves!”

Ten Sentences that will help you retain your best employees

Telling people “You're doing a great job” isn't going to make them want to stay at your company. It isn't specific enough. Praise can help you retain your top employees—but only if it is detailed and relevant. Develop an arsenal of “openers” that you can use to keep your praise specific. Here are 10 to get you started:

- “You really made a difference by...”
- “I'm impressed with...”
- “You got my attention with...”
- “You're right on the mark with...”

- “One of the things I enjoy most about you is...”
- “You can be proud of yourself for...”
- “We couldn't have done it with your...”
- “What an effective way to...”
- “You've made my day because of...”

Share these with your line managers—it will contribute to the bottom line! — Adapted from Recruitment & Retention, Mark McCormack's Success Secrets

PART 1: HR Self-Audit Checklist



Take a moment and breathe... As daunting as it seems, if you take a self-audit of your HR Department one piece at a time, it really does become manageable. (Of course, a little help from someone else helps!)

Throughout the next year, our newsletter will include the areas that should be reviewed in your HR Self Audit Checklist such as recruitment, new employee orientation, compensation, benefits, safety & wellness, training & development, performance and termination.

Make notes or check off items that your organization has considered establishing and those that don't exist.

Employee Communications and Documents

Employee files: How are employee files organized? Who is respon-

sible for employee files? Who has access? Are confidential files, such as those containing health information or I-9 forms, kept separate?

Employee handbook or employment policies: Is there an employee handbook/manual? Is it current and legally compliant? Is it appropriate and relative for the size and scope of your

“Take one piece at a time—
it really does become
manageable.”

business operations? Is an employment-at-will statement included? Is a no-harassment policy included? Is a no-discrimination policy included? Do employees sign a receipt/statement saying they understand they are covered under the contents? Are supervisors trained in administering the policies?

Employee communications: Is there an employee newsletter/e-mail? Are there bulletin boards and a policy on who can use them? Is there a complaint/grievance process in place? Is there an employee suggestion process? Are employee surveys ever conducted? How often? Are results communicated back to employees? Are exit interviews done? Is the information acted upon?

Legally required posters/notices: Has a review of the federal laws the company needs to follow been done? (If not, check <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/>. This site also lists poster requirements.) Are the appropriate posters available for employees to see?

Documents: Are confidentiality statements or conflict of interest forms being used? Are they needed based on your business structure?

Adapted from *Why Smaller and Medium Sized Companies Do Need a HR Function*, Patricia A. Mathews and Phyllis G. Hartman

Matters of Health

Are your employees looking down? Are your managers looking stressed? Are everyone's sails flapping listlessly in the cold breeze?

Health matters when it comes to the bottom line. Share with your employees simple ways to feel good at work and in turn keep them healthy.

BREATHE DEEPLY: Every few hours, spend 5 minutes inhaling and exhaling deeply. It will help you feel calmer and more mentally focused, with renewed energy.

VISUALIZE: Close your eyes for a few minutes and mentally escape by imagining a peaceful scene or an exotic getaway. “Seeing” yourself calm can be rejuvenating.

REFUEL: Have healthy hi-fiber snacks at arm's reach. Prevent energy dips, helping you feel good throughout the day.

WAKE-UP: Splash cold water on your face for a quick wake up or have some mints - both refresh you.

New EEOC Office in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS – A New EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) Office opened August 9, 2006 at 333 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Suite 8112, in the Lloyd George Federal Building. The new office – in the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area -- is part of the agency's broader effort to reposition its field structure to enhance its enforcement presence, improve customer service and public access, and increase efficiency.

The Las Vegas office, part of the EEOC's Los Angeles District, is responsible for receiving charge filings of discrimination, conducting investigations, and providing outreach, education and technical assistance to local employers and the public.

“As the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area, the people of Las Vegas will be well served by the expanded presence of the EEOC,” Chair Dominguez said at the office opening. “We look forward to working closely with the local employer, labor, legal and civil rights communities to proactively prevent employment discrimination on one hand, and provide vigorous law enforcement on the other.”

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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Where you can count on
customer care!

We're on the web at
www.nevadabenefits.com

Member of the LVCC and So NV BBB

Other News and Calendar of Events

HIRING & FIRING—The Right Way!

November 8, 2006 12:00 pm
Lunch seminar hosted by Nevada Benefits.
Attorney Sharon Nelson presenting.
Please RSVP at 702.258.1995

HOME BUYER SEMINAR

Interested in buying property at 10, 20, even 30 percent
below market value?
You are invited to attend a FREE WORKSHOP, hosted
by Joe DeSimone Jr., broker/owner
of FIRST FEDERAL REALTY DESIMONE.

Whether you are a seasoned investor, a first time home-
buyer, or just relocating, our FREE program will
leave you with a clear understanding of the WHAT,
WHERE and HOW of purchasing a home at great value.

Resources & Info ON-SITE will include:

Complete buyer certification
NO MONEY DOWN financing
FREE Credit Reports Provided
Large Inventory of SHORT SALE & FORECLOSURE
properties
Available homes at every price range

Thursday, November 9th at 7:00 PM
Inside the Yosemite Room at Sun City McDonald Ranch
2020 W. Horizon Ridge Pkwy
Henderson, NV 89057
(702) 990-8660
Presented by
FIRST FEDERAL REALTY DESIMONE

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are intended for general information and should not be construed
as legal advice or opinion.*