



HR Examiner

Examining practical HR issues business owners and managers encounter every day

The Key Is: What You Don't Know You Don't Know

April 2006

Bring Arlene To Your Company

Are you ready to bring your managers and supervisors to their next level of performance?

Have Arlene conduct **ConsulTraining** for your managers and supervisors. Each month we'll address the important issues your leaders are facing in a practical, fun and skill-enhancing manner.

Backing-Up

I was interviewed this month for an article by Lori Peck, a business owner who provides writing and advertising services, about an interesting topic: Contingency Planning. The article focused on corporate preparedness for unforeseen disasters and emergencies: such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, terrorism and other emergencies. My responsibility was to bring the HR side of preparedness to the article.



I've not been asked by my consulting clients to assist them in HR disaster planning, but we rely on so much

Arlene's interactive style facilitates the opportunity for each manager to increase their effectiveness on the job and with their staff.

Live Consulting: The sessions focus on developing solutions for today's workplace issues...

Interactive Training: ...while introducing topical ideas, insights and learning.

Here's a Sample of Arlene's ConsulTraining Topics

- ▶ Managing the Employee Life Cycle

- ▶ Leadership Skills

- ▶ Employment Law / Sexual Harassment

- ▶ Communication Skills

information in our day-to-day personnel operations, I thought it would be interesting to share some of what she and I discussed.

First, I'd like to address the solo business owners who subscribe to this ezine. What do you do to protect yourself from "loss?" Do you back up your computers regularly? Do you save those backups off-site, not just on-site? How many of you carry liability and other business insurance? Do you have health and disability insurance? If something were to happen to you, could someone else step in and pay your bills, send out your invoices and continue your business in your absence?

My Virtual Assistant, Jean Hanson, has created the [Home Office Procedures Manual](#) to assist us with all the details of our operations. It may be the perfect tool to protect you

Next, for all of you who have employees, there are so many issues related to HR preparedness. After the tragedy of 9/11, my HR mind always wondered how those businesses that were partially and/or seriously destroyed revived themselves. While we saw and read the impact of the tragedy on individuals and families, how did all those companies pick up their missing pieces?

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HR Contingency Planning

- ▶ Giving On-Going Performance Feedback
- ▶ Conducting Performance Reviews
- ▶ Interviewing Skills
- ▶ Motivation / Employee Relations
- ▶ Discipline, Documentation and Termination
- ▶ Team Building
- ▶ Professionalism and Ethics
- ▶ Managing Change
- ▶ General Management

What first comes to mind for me are personnel files. If all your files are "paper" files, they are likely not replaceable. In a disaster, you risk losing the history of each employee, including hire documents, job history, performance appraisals, disciplinary actions, I-9s, etc. Most of these are not easily replaced. So consider scanning these documents into your computer for easier back-up.

Larger organizations will have a computerized HRIS (human resource information system) to track employee data. If so, where are these backed up? Are you utilizing a stand-alone HRIS, where you would do your own off-site storage, or are you utilizing an external service, and do you know their back-up methodology? How much personnel information is still retained manually vs. computerized?

The same preparation applies to payroll records. If you are doing your own payroll, what backup methods do you have in place for individual information, payroll taxes and other related information? And if you're using a payroll provider, how well are they protecting your data?

As Lori and I spoke, I think the most pertinent areas appeared the deeper we got into the conversation. If you have employees and one of them "disappeared,"

SKILLS

- ▶ Orienting and Training Employees
- ▶ Building Supervisory Relationships
- ▶ Presentation Skills

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could someone else perform their job responsibilities? This applies even if an employee quits suddenly, becomes ill, or is terminated. Many of my clients have expressed their lack of preparedness for an exiting employee. And the lost time trying to reinvent the job tasks, reconnect with clients and vendors and pick up the pieces can be devastating.

The reality is, most of our job knowledge is in our heads and is not accessible to others in our absence.

So what are you doing to protect your organization? Are your employees truly cross-trained or do they just have an inkling of what their coworkers do? Have you outsourced any functions where you can no longer duplicate the process or methods? Are your employees working so independently that they are creating their own work procedures and are eroding the standardization you've worked so hard to establish?

It's time to take a look at how you're structured and what you can do protect yourself in case of a loss. Whether you experience a computer crash, a mass exodus of employees or a physical disaster, we must protect the business of doing our business.

So, how you can protect yourself? It could be creating detailed operations manuals for every position and process in your organization; it could be increasing the cross training and rewarding people for their broader

knowledge base; it could be gaining more control of vendors. Brainstorm with your leadership team and coworkers to see where your contingency gaps fall and how you can protect yourself.

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About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with small businesses as their Human Resource Xpert to create their HR systems and solve their HR problems.

If you have gaps in your HR operation, have an employee problem to solve, or want to enhance your managers' skills, call Arlene today. Learn how HRx can save you time and help you avoid costly HR mistakes. HRx, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN 55344, 952-996-0975, www.HRxcellence.com.

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