



HR Examiner

*Examining practical HR issues business owners
and managers encounter every day*

Wrapping Up A Great Year

December 2007

HR Mastery Groups and Other Services

Last year I partnered with the Stanton Group to offer monthly roundtable meetings with people with HR responsibilities. These 2-hour monthly meetings focus on your HR needs. It's a great opportunity to get support and ideas from other HR professionals and enhance your knowledge

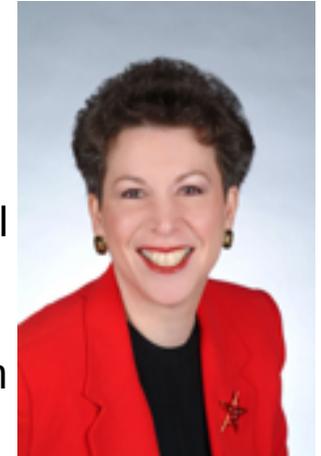
New Year's Resolutions

It's hard to believe that another year has passed and none of us has aged! Well, at least we can admit that we're a lot wiser than we were last year.

So based on the wisdom you acquired in 2007, what activities will you be continuing in 2008? What will you be doing differently?

Here are a few HR New Year Employee Relations Resolutions I'm suggesting based on the hundreds of calls I received from my colleagues and clients this year. If you think one of these items sounds like you, don't fret, none of these issues belong to you alone.

- When an employee who isn't performing well resigns, accept the resignation. Don't try to convince them to stay.



of HR law and practices.

Our 2008 groups will be starting in January and February. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about this program (facilitated by me), call me. The sooner we hear from you, the sooner our groups can begin.

**Here's a few
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resolutions for 2008:**

▶ If you haven't updated your employee handbook in a while...

▶ If your managers need on-going, supervisory skills training...

▶ If you need to train managers and

- When you terminate an employee for cause, don't let them go back to their desk with unsupervised access to their computer.
- If you provide employees with valuable company property, have them sign a form authorizing you to deduct the cost of property loss or damage from their on-going and/or final paycheck.
- If you hire someone as an independent contractor and they're performing the same work under the same conditions as your employees, they are an employee and must be paid as an employee.
- If you've terminated an employee for a policy violation and the terminated employee files for unemployment, contest their claim.
- If you're only spending 30 minutes with prospective employees and think you have enough information to know whether they will make an effective hire, schedule more time with the candidate and/or have other managers interview the person for a second opinion. Some people can fool you in this short period – and it takes less time to interview longer than try to get rid of a substandard employee.
- If your employee hasn't called or reported to work for two or more days, don't chase them down; let them go. If you find out later that there was a serious medical reason for the absence, you can reinstate them. But if they're too disrespectful to notify you of the absence, don't call them and get them off the hook.
- If you have a problem employee, moving them randomly to another position hoping that they'll perform better there is not the solution. You're just moving the problem and avoiding dealing directly with the issue.

employees on sexual harassment...

▶ If you need assistance with a difficult employee...

▶ If you'd like someone to audit your HR practices for practical operations and/or legal compliance...

▶ If your performance system isn't working...

▶ If you need a resource to call on regularly to perform employee relations support for your organization...

▶ If you just want to hear my voice and have a laugh...

...just call Arlene!

Have a wonderful New Year!

the problem and avoiding dealing directly with the issue.

- If you're leaving your employees alone with their personnel file, think twice. The entire file may not be there when you return.
- If you have a great employee (or more), let them know directly and regularly that you appreciate them. No news isn't always assumed to be good news.
- If you haven't been giving your successful employees regular annual pay increases, don't assume they understand your financial condition. Find a way to show them your appreciation with pay as well as with other recognition activities.
- Federal legal reminder: Make sure you've updated your I-9 form to the new 2007 version no later than December 26th to stay in compliance with the law.
- MN State legal reminder: If you eliminated the policy in your handbook stating that you reserve the right not to pay out vacation out at termination of employment to employees who are terminated for cause, add it back in.
- If you're paying overtime based on hours worked in excess of an 80-hour pay period, you're not in compliance with the FLSA. Overtime is based on a 40-hour work week.
- If your manager comes up to you and wants to terminate an employee because s/he is tired of the employee and has no documentation regarding the employee's performance issues, decline the request and require appropriate documentation and warnings.
- If you're paying all your employees on a salary basis and no one's eligible for

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overtime so that your payroll handling is convenient, it's likely you're not in compliance with the FLSA. Review the definitions at www.dol.gov to understand which positions are truly exempt from overtime.

- If you're administering your own COBRA, your risk of an error can be very expensive. Outsourcing is the recommended option.
- If you don't have Employer Liability Insurance protecting you financially from employee lawsuits, purchase some immediately – don't wait until it's too late.
- If your offer letter wishes the new employee a long, successful career with your organization, delete the "long" and leave in the successful.
- Don't assume that your temporary agency is conducting appropriate I-9 documentation and background checks on your behalf. Some are – some aren't.

Well, that's what I can think of at this moment. If there's a topic you'd like me to address in the future, this newsletter is for you. Call me or send me an email with your ideas. If you have interest in an HR topic, surely others will as well.

Here's to an HR-friendly 2008!

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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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