



August 2009

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Issue Eight

Did You Know?



Four Point HR has a new **Drug Testing and Background Check Program.**

The benefits of this program include:

- Reduced Pricing
- Internet-Based Access
- Billing Through Payroll
- Drug Free Workplace Compliance
- Client Customization

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BLOG CORNER: Managing Account Receivables

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The receivables function plays a vital role in preserving cash for a business. With margins lower than usual, many customers and clients look for more favorable terms through negotiation or simply choose to pay later than when times are good. We generally regard the receivables process beginning once an invoice is sent to the customer and continues as staff notifies customers of payment terms and follows up to ensure timely payment. Managing receivables and growing top line revenue often stand in conflict with each other. Many of us feel the pressure to grow revenue. We may be looking to grow revenue outside of our target markets by working with customers who do not meet traditional credit worthiness criteria. It is of the utmost importance to manage the receivables risk on the front end of customer acceptance. When putting together a quote or contract with a new prospective client that is outside of your previous target range, include someone from your accounting or receivables department so that they may run credit checks and prepare their processes to handle a new level of client. **How do you manage the receivables risk from new customers?**



Building Morale 101

In these tough economic times, many companies have made the difficult decision to downsize. While this makes sense from a financial perspective, the burden of those job duties often falls to the remaining staff. Those left wear many hats in order to cover all functions of the business.

It is up to management to keep up morale and this can be accomplished inexpensively. Why not try one, or more, of the following suggestions:

- Show Appreciation – Everyone needs a pat on the back. Show your appreciation for your staff's efforts by telling them when they are doing a good job. This goes a long way in building the employees' self esteem as well as creating a positive, upbeat workplace.
- Bring Doughnuts (or fruit salad) – Bring your employees together in the morning for breakfast. For very little cost, this can start their day off on a good note. This does not need to be a weekly offering – surprise them now and then.
- Create Friendly Competition – Who doesn't benefit from a little friendly competition for highest producer or best customer satisfaction rate? Give a gift certificate or take the winner to lunch.
- Reward Above and Beyond Efforts – Purchasing a pair of movie tickets or a coffee gift card is relatively inexpensive in relation to what is gained by the business when employees are stretched thin. Challenging your employees to go above and beyond will not only benefit your business, it will also benefit your customers and will be reflected in every aspect of the business.

Even though employment is a privilege, keeping your business going is critical. Employees are a vital part of every company. Whether you utilize the suggestions above or come up with your own ideas, you will find this to be an easy and enjoyable way to boost the company morale.



Are Your Child's IMMUNIZATIONS Up to Date

Immunization has been called the most important public health intervention in history, second only to safe drinking water. It has saved millions of lives over the years and has prevented hundreds of millions of cases of disease. None of us want to see our children get sick and getting them immunized can protect them from a number of very serious diseases.

But did you know that getting your children immunized can...

- Protect their friends, schoolmates, and others from those same diseases?
 - *Some children can't be vaccinated for medical reasons and some children do not respond to certain vaccines. For these children, the immunity of people around them is their only protection.*
- Help protect your grandchildren, their grandchildren, and future generations from diseases?
 - *As we've seen in several countries, if enough parents fail to get their children immunized, diseases that had been under control can come back to cause epidemics.*

When disease germs enter the body, they start to reproduce. The immune system recognizes these germs as foreign invaders and responds by making proteins called antibodies. These antibodies' first job is to help prevent illness, but by eliminating the attacking germs, antibodies also assist in wellness. The antibodies' second job is to protect from future infections. This is called immunity. It is why most people get diseases like measles or chickenpox only once, even though they might be exposed many times during their lifetime. This is a good system for preventing disease, with the only drawback being that one has to be sick before one can be immune.

Vaccines offer a solution to this problem. They help one develop immunity without getting sick first. Vaccines are made from the same germs (or parts of them) that cause disease, but the germs in vaccines are either destroyed or weakened so they won't make one sick. The immune system reacts to the vaccine in the same way it would if it were being invaded by the disease — by making antibodies. Immunizations help a child's immune system do its work and protect against future infections.



Workplace First Aid Kit

First aid supplies are required to be readily available under paragraph § 1910.151(b) of the OSHA standards. An example of the minimal contents of a generic first aid kit is described in American National Standard (ANSI) Z308.1-1998 "Minimum Requirements for Workplace First-aid Kits." The contents of the kit listed in the ANSI standard should be adequate for small worksites. When larger operations or multiple operations are being conducted at the same location, employers should determine the need for additional first aid kits at the worksite, additional types of first aid equipment and supplies and additional quantities and types of supplies and equipment in the first aid kits.

In a similar fashion, employers who have unique or changing first-aid requirements in their workplace may need to enhance their first-aid kits. The employer can use the OSHA 200 and OSHA 300 logs or other reports to identify these unique situations. Consultation from the local fire/rescue department, appropriate medical professional, or local emergency room may be helpful to employers in these circumstances. By assessing the specific needs of their workplace, employers can ensure that reasonably anticipated supplies are available. Employers should assess the specific needs of their worksite periodically and augment the first aid kit appropriately.

If it is reasonably anticipated that employees will be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials while using first aid supplies, employers are required to provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) in compliance with the provisions of the Occupational Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens standard, § 1910.1030(d)(3) (56 FR 64175). This standard lists appropriate PPE for this type of exposure, such as gloves, gowns, face shields, masks, and eye protection.

According to the ANSI Z308.1-2003 document, a basic workplace first aid kit should include:

- At least one absorbent compress, 32 sq. inches with no side smaller than 4 inches
- At least 16 adhesive bandages, 1 inch x 3 inches
- One roll of adhesive tape, 5 yards total
- At least ten packets of antiseptic, 0.5g (0.14 fl oz.) applications
- At least six applications of burn treatments, 0.5 g (0.14 fl. oz.)
- Two or more pairs of medical exam gloves (latex or non-latex)
- At least four sterile pads, 3 inch x 3 inches
- One triangular bandage, 40 inch x 40 inch x 56 inches

Additional (but optional) items include:

- Four 2x2 inch bandage compresses
- Two 3x3 inch bandage compresses
- One 4x4 inch bandage compresses
- One eye patch
- One ounce of eye wash
- One chemical cold pack, 4x5 inch
- Two roller bandages, two inches wide
- One roller bandage, three inches wide
- CPR barrier device

These items are intended to be the minimum for a workplace first aid kit. Depending on the potential for injury, a more complete kit may be necessary. Please contact the Risk Management Department for assistance.



Cutting EMPLOYMENT Costs

PAYROLL CORNER

- Minimum wage has been increased to \$7.25 per hour. This is the final phase of the three-year implementation that was put into law on May 25, 2007.
- Are you tracking your PTO/vacation time? Now is the perfect time of the year to take a look at the tracking procedures you have in place. If you don't utilize the payroll system to track, be sure to submit any PTO/vacation time taken when sending in payroll hours. This will allow us to generate reports to show the hours used during the course of the year.
- The United States Immigration and Customs Service (USCIS) has announced that employers should continue to use the existing I-9 Form that was to expire on June 30, 2009. The new form had been mentioned on previous newsletters. When released, the new I-9 Form will basically be the same as the prior form but with a new expiration date.

Employers are finding that the costs of employment are rising. This is a result of many states increasing their unemployment rates and employment taxes, partnered with the increasing costs of benefits.

In the tax arena, employers must pay Social Security taxes of 6.2% up to the first \$106,800, Medicare taxes of 1.45% (no wage limit), and federal unemployment taxes (FUTA) of 0.8% up to the first \$7,000. This is compounded by the increasing costs of state unemployment (SUTA).

These are just the taxes the employer must pay. Consider also the employees' wages and employer-provided benefits such as health insurance, dental insurance and 401(k).

Professional Employer Organizations (PEO) offer a solution. By using the services of a PEO, employers can determine their exact costs per employee. This is highly beneficial when making budget decisions or bidding for jobs.

Individual states have also developed programs to help relieve these costs. The Georgia Department of Labor created the Georgia Works Program. This program allows workers who qualify for unemployment benefits to receive on-site training and a special training allowance while still receiving their regular unemployment benefits.

Employers who use the Georgia Works Program provide a maximum of 24 hours of training per week for up to 8 weeks. At the end of the 8 weeks, the trainees receive a certification of the new job skills they learned and can be considered for employment. Please contact the Georgia Department of Labor Career Center for more information. Other states have implemented similar programs and you can access information via their department of labor.

Another way to reduce employee costs is to hire a veteran. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) offers tax savings to employers that hire workers belonging to a targeted group, including unemployed veterans. Employers can secure a federal credit of up to \$4,800 for hiring:

- A veteran who is a member of a family that has received Food Stamps for at least 3 consecutive months in the 12 months prior to the date of hire; OR
- A veteran with a service-connected disability hired within 1 year of having been discharged, or released from active duty and who has been unemployed for any 6 of the last 12 months; OR
- A veteran hired in 2009 or 2010 within 5 years of having been discharged, or released from active duty that received unemployment compensation for at least 4 weeks within a year of being hired.

Other veterans, not meeting one of these three criteria, may still generate up to \$2,400 in federal credits for their employers.



E-VERIFY: Are You Who You Say You Are

In 1997 the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) developed a pilot program called the Employment Eligibility Verification Program (I-9). This program, operating in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA), was made available to employers and, in 2004, evolved into a web-based program. Its purpose was to ensure that employers were acting responsibly in their hiring practices, and to identify companies that knowingly violated the employment provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act by hiring unauthorized workers.

The Employment Eligibility Verification Program worked to notify an employer of any discrepancies with an employee's name and Social Security Number, as provided on the W-2 earnings report, not matching the SSA records. Errors like these have often been made due to typographical errors or unreported name changes requiring verification and correction. The SSA informs that over 4% of the 250 million wage reports received are for employees that do not have a match in their system and that notifying companies of the discrepancy could take upward of a year.

In 2007, The Dept of Homeland Security (DHS) proposed the No-Match Rule that outlined the steps employers would take if they received a "no-match" letter. The letter states there was no match found for the employee and advises that verification is required to correct the information.

Effective September 8, 2009, the web-based E-Verify system will go into effect allowing participating employers to verify electronically the employment eligibility of their newly hired employees. The verification is completed in minutes.

Are you a Federal Contractor or Subcontractor?

If so, this only applies to you if you are awarded a contract AFTER September 8, 2009. The contract would include the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) E-Verify clause (73 FR 67704). Federal contractors may **not** use E-Verify to verify current employees until the rule become effective and they are awarded a contract that includes the FAR E-Verify Clause.

All Federal contracts awarded, or solicitations issued, after the September 8, 2009 effective date, will include the clause. Any subcontracts over \$3,000 for services or construction will also be required to use E-Verify. Only contracts for less than \$100,000, and those that are for commercially available off-the-shelf items will be exempt from this rule. Any company awarded a contract will be required to enroll in E-Verify within 30 days of the award date. They must begin using the E-Verify system to confirm that all of their new hires and their employees directly working on federal contracts are authorized to legally work in the United States.

What to do if your company received Federal Funds or Federal Stimulus money?

Currently the mandate that would have forced companies that received federal funds (i.e., Stimulus, other federal funds or tax breaks), to use E-Verify has been dropped. You have the choice on whether to sign up and utilize it.

Want to learn more about E-Verify?

For more information, to take the free webinar, or to sign-up, visit www.uscis.gov/everify. "...E-Verify is free and voluntary and is the best means available for determining employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security Numbers", according to the USCIS' website.