

HUMAN RESOURCES SELF-AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Human Resources Department is structured, organized and equipped to provide overall strategy, direction and effective management of the organization's human resources function to accomplish organizational objectives.

1. Is there one department or function within the organization that is responsible and accountable for planning, establishing, overseeing and coordinating all human resource policies, systems and services for all 11 major categories? _____

2. Does the senior-level human resources manager report to the same level position as all other major staff and line departments within the organization? _____

3. Does the senior human resources manager participate in addressing the organization's strategic, tactical and policy issues? _____

4. Does the senior human resources manager integrate all HR activities with the organization's strategic business plan. _____

5. Does the Human Resources department demonstrate a clear understanding of organizational and customer needs? _____

6. Are HR services and functions aligned and prioritized to organizational and customer needs? _____

7. Has a department mission statement been developed explaining its purpose within the organization? _____

Has this mission statement been communicated to all management personnel? _____

Has this mission statement been communicated to other customers throughout the organization? _____

If so, to whom? _____

How? _____

9. Does the Human Resources department take a lead in striving for a more empowered and participative work force (productivity improvement, cost reduction, quality improvement and improved quality of work life programs)? _____

10. Has a Human Resources department organization chart been published and distributed? _____

If so, to whom? _____

Does the organization chart clearly define functional responsibilities and whom customers can contact for service? _____

11. Are job descriptions established for all HR personnel stating major job objectives, responsibilities and accountabilities? _____

12. Do all HR personnel understand their respective roles and relationships to others in the department? _____

13. Are department personnel cross-trained to perform duties outside their major areas of responsibility? _____

14. Do they work on team and department task force projects? _____

15. Are department personnel professionally and technically competent? _____

16. Do they serve as internal consultants to management as well as counselors to employees? _____

17. Does the department staff work well as a team? _____

18. Are they readily accessible to all customers? _____

19. Are department personnel provided adequate training and professional development to meet organizational challenges and demands? _____

20. Is involvement in professional and technical groups encouraged? _____

Does the department subscribe to major technical and professional journals? _____

21. Is there a credible performance appraisal in place clearly stating mutually established goals and objectives for department personnel? _____

22. Are human resources staff compensated according to market standards? _____

Are they compensated based on comparable positions within the organization? _____

23. Does department staff effectively balance organizational with employee needs and act as an intermediate for both? _____

24. Is the Human Resources department results-oriented (i.e., measuring cost-effectiveness and the bottom-line results of human resources programs)? _____

If so, is it attentive to the bottom line and does it demonstrate a business orientation?

25. What is the span of control of the top position within the department (i.e., how many and which positions report to it)?

Are supervisors or managers reporting to other mid-level managers? _____

How many employees are in the Human Resources department? _____

What is the ratio of HR department staff to to all employees served? _____

How does this compare to the staffing levels of other comparable organizations offering similar services? _____

26. Are HR needs and programs accounted for in the organization's budgeting process?

27. Does the organization make plans for ensuring that HR's future needs are met? _____

28. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how would the Human Resources team rate the overall effectiveness and structure of your Human Resources department? _____

29. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think other department heads would rate the overall effectiveness and structure of the HR department? _____

30. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think the employees would rate the overall effectiveness and structure of the HR department? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

1. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

For each of the 11 categories, the Self-Audit questions are designed to rate how well the HR department achieves the purpose of the category definition stated at the top of the questionnaire: Is the HR department structured, organized and equipped to provide

overall strategy, direction and effective management of the organization's human resources function to accomplish the organization's objectives?

Questions one through nine explore how department leaders achieve organization objectives, are part of management's strategic planning effort and assist in making decisions that affect bottom-line results. These questions both help ensure that HR's efforts are in accord with customer needs and suggest ways HR teams can take the lead in helping customers get the most out of the organization's human resources.

Questions 10 through 26 address communicating department functions and services to all customers, staff objectives and internal relationships, staff's dual role as internal consultants to management and counselors to employees, staff competence and flexibility, cross-training, balancing employee needs with business needs and a bottom-line results orientation.

The components of questions 25 also relate to staff size, structure and span of control. Industry-specific standards for staff size are available from a variety of professional publications, such as the Saratoga Institute's "HR Effectiveness Report" and national and regional statistics compiled by the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA). Any surveys that relate specifically to your type of organization will make that benchmark more credible.

Questions 26 and 27 address resources and planning to ensure the delivery of required services.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

2. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of identifying and providing ways to fulfill the organization's developmental and human resource needs.

1. Is there one position accountable for reviewing the organization's human resources requirements? _____

2. How is this review carried out?

Formally/informally? (please describe)

3. How often is this analysis updated (e.g., yearly, every two years, three years or more)? _____

4. Do your projected needs include the following considerations?

Availability of outside workforce demographics (age, sex, minority classification, education, skills level, occupations, etc.). _____

Anticipated changes in your organization's technology, processes, products/services and markets. _____

Personnel needs these changes will require (e.g., new skills, education, knowledge and abilities). _____

5. Which sources outside the organization provide these demographics?

6. What sources within the organization provided this information?

7. To whom are these projections communicated?

How often? _____

How far into the future? _____

8. Is there one position accountable for reviewing and assessing the HR department's skills, education, interests and needs? _____

9. How is this assessment carried out (formally or informally)? (Please describe.)

10. How often is this assessment updated (e.g., yearly, every two years, three or more years)? _____

11. To whom are this assessment and any projections communicated?

How often? _____

How far into the future? _____

12. Are this assessment and projections used for training and development? _____

13. Are this assessment and projections (workforce requirements) used for career planning (matching organizational and individual skills, abilities and needs)? _____

14. Is there a formal career planning process in place? _____

15. Is there a career counseling system to identify individual skills, interests and needs, and which offers in-placement and/or developmental assistance? _____

16. Are high-potential employees identified for key positions? _____

If yes, is there a succession plan to target high potential employees? _____

17. Are human resource projections (i.e., numbers, job classifications, skills, knowledge, ability and educational levels) identified in the recruitment plan? _____

How far into the future? _____

18. If the human resources plan calls for restructuring or downsizing, are there strategies set to deal with displaced employees? _____

Is outplacement assistance offered? _____

Are there strategies to support remaining employees? _____

19. Are the human resources projections a part of the organization's budgeting process? _____

20. Does the organization have plans for ensuring it's development and human resource needs are met? _____

22. On a scale of one to seven (seven being high and four being adequate), how do you think the HR staff rates the human resources planning/organizational development process? _____

23. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think other departments would rate the human resources planning and organizational development process now in place? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

2. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Affirmative answers to all the questions in this section means the organization's development and human resource needs are being met. The emphasis is on connecting organizational development and workforce need projections with internal and external workforce skills. [Exhibit 12, the Customer Satisfaction Survey beginning on page 43, illustrates this process.]

Questions one through seven deal with influences on the planning process (changing workforce, markets and customers, products, services, technology/skills base and identification of external supply).

Questions eight through 17 deal with internal assessment and availability of these same considerations: organizational development activities in management development, training, career and succession planning to satisfy workforce demands within the organization. If the internal labor supply is greater than the need, then the tougher issues of resource reallocation have to be addressed (questions 18 and 19).

Human resources planning is particularly important for emerging, rapid-growth and high tech businesses. Mature businesses in need of new products, services, markets,

acquisitions or divestitures must also plan to identify, attract or reallocate the talent necessary for revitalization and continued competition. A good example of the need for adequate human resources and organizational planning is given in the article "Inevitable Forces for Change in America—1988 to 2000" by Gregg Edwards and David Pearce Snyder (see References and Recommended Readings, page 149):

Here's a little piece of information about that technological revolution, a headline from an article reporting on a study by Worldwatch Institute back in 1980: Micro Electronics Seen Producing Sweeping Industrial Change. That's certainly old news about the future, but there's a reason to go back to this story to remind us they told us what was going to happen. Most of us just didn't pay attention.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The process providing timely recruitment, selection and placement of high-quality employees to satisfy the organization's staffing requirements.

1. Is there a policy in place stating the organization's philosophy on recruitment and selection? _____

Does the policy contain procedures to guide managers through the recruitment and selection process and describe how to get help? _____

2. Is there one position within the organization accountable for overseeing and coordinating recruitment and placement? _____

RECRUITMENT

3. Is there a formal process in place for identifying job vacancies? ____

4. Briefly describe the process from needs identification through final approval authorization. _____

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5. Is recruitment done proactively from a planning mode (i.e., projected workforce plan) as well as reactively to immediate replacement and new job openings? _____

Is recruitment linked to human resources planning (projected workforce requirements)? _____

6. Is a job analysis conducted for each position? _____

Does the job analysis accompany the hiring authorization? _____

Does the job analysis accurately identify the key objectives and responsibilities of the position? _____

Does the job analysis accurately identify the essential 'can do' skills needed (i.e., skills, abilities, knowledge, education and experience)? _____

Does the job analysis accurately identify the essential 'will do' skills needed (e.g., leadership, interpersonal, entrepreneurial, communication and good attitude)? _____

7. Is consideration given to internal candidates for all or some job openings before outside recruitment begins? _____

If some positions are determined not to be filled from within, how is this determination made? _____

8. Is there a formal job posting procedure in place? _____

If so, does the job posting contain the job objectives, needs and requirements cited in the job analysis (#6 above)? _____

9. Are recruitment strategies (methods to obtain qualified candidates) set before active recruitment begins? _____

Who participates in the strategy development?

Does this strategy include affirmative action and diversity needs? _____

10. What kind of recruiting sources does your organization use and for what positions:

Newspaper sources? _____

Professional journals/periodicals? _____

College recruiting? _____

Special events recruitment (e.g., job fairs and expos)? _____

Community referral agencies (e.g., state employment and training offices)? _____

"Quasi-search" methods (e.g., hourly rate paid to recruiting professionals for targeted candidate sourcing or use of professional candidate researchers)? _____

Employee referral? _____

Internal computerized applicant database? _____

Professional networking (e.g., associations)? _____

Direct mail recruitment? _____

Personal networks (e.g., local competitors, customers, suppliers, outplacement firms or industry research)? _____

If so, please give examples:

11. Does your organization measure the effectiveness as well as the costs of these recruiting sources? _____

12. To whom are these performance measures and recruiting costs communicated? _____

SELECTION

13. Does the HR department perform all initial screening of candidates? _____

14. Are candidate telephone interviews, teleconferencing or video screening conducted before personal interviews? _____

15. How many candidates are typically interviewed before filling a position and at what levels?

16. Who participates in the interview and at what intervals?

How many people are typically involved in the interviewing process?

Are panel interviews used? _____

Who makes the final hiring decision?

17. Are hiring managers trained in objective selection (e.g., interviewing techniques, position-related questions and legal implications)? _____

18. Are reference checks conducted on all candidates? _____

Who performs the reference checks? _____

19. Are tests or personality profiles used in the selection process? _____

Are they professionally validated? _____

20. Are drug tests administered to all new employees as a condition for hire? _____

21. Does the organization compare the number of job openings and workforce projections with the HR department's recruitment and selection capacity? _____

Are peak and low hiring cycles identified? _____

22. Has the organization examined or evaluated any of the following alternatives to satisfying workforce requirements:

Project or contract outsourcing? _____

Temporary placement? _____

Internal temporary placement pool? _____

Part-time employment and job sharing? _____

23. Are all employment costs accounted for in the organization's budget? _____

24. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think the HR team would rate the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process? _____

25. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think other departments would rate the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The purpose of the Recruitment and Selection questions is to improve critical staffing needs in a timely manner and with quality candidates.

Questions three through 12 examine how the company attracts job candidates. Question ten deals with finding candidates. The more targeted sources appear at the end of the list. Cost-benefit analyses of all hiring sources (questions 11 and 12) will tell you where to place your recruiting energies and financial resources.

Questions on the selection process (13 to 20) may be more important to government agencies and contractors because of highly regulated selection criteria, affirmative action and diversity implications. Fiscal constraints and regional preferences may also restrict government staffing professionals to the most inexpensive sources, regardless of their results.

What makes a successful manager is the ability to influence positive behavior and to hire the best talent. HR professional counseling, guidance and training on effective interviewing and selection are essential to help managers make the right hiring decisions. It is also essential that the selection criteria be equally and consistently applied to all applicants.

Companies' efforts to reduce both their workforce and their fixed labor costs have resulted in less costly ways to satisfy workforce requirements. These include outsourcing and temporary workers, which transfer costs on a variable basis. This is why Manpower, Inc. has become the largest employer in the U.S. today. If your organization uses these methods, be aware of possible long-term quality problems resulting from reduced commitment and lack of company pride.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

4. COMPENSATION

A system of evaluating jobs and compensating employees to ensure that the organization attracts, retains and motivates employees to accomplish organizational objectives.

1. Does the organization have a policy clearly stating its position on employee compensation? _____

Is this policy linked to the organization's management philosophy on compensating employees, and does it reinforce the values of the organization? _____

Is the organization's compensation philosophy clearly communicated to all employees? _____

Is it clearly supported and monitored by management? _____

2. Does the compensation policy contain procedures to guide managers on how to implement the compensation system? _____

3. Is there one position within the organization accountable for overseeing and coordinating all compensation-related activities (job evaluation, job classifications, job descriptions, salary administration, performance appraisal and compliance with all governmental pay regulations, including FLSA, ADA, compensable time and EEO regulations)? _____

4. Is there a process for keeping the organization aware of compensation paid for comparable job functions in the region? _____

Compensation paid to comparable exempt job functions nationwide? _____

Compensation paid to comparable exempt job functions industrywide? _____

How frequently are these market studies performed? _____

5. Is your pay plan in agreement with the compensation philosophy of the organization? _____

Are pay ranges wide enough so as not to force vertical pay growth? _____

Are pay ranges wide enough and procedures available to reward additional knowledge, skills, abilities and responsibilities and encourage lateral career growth? _____

Do the intervals between ranges clearly define the differences in positions assigned to those pay ranges? _____

Are pay differences great enough to ensure that a subordinate is not paid more than his or her supervisor, including overtime payments? _____

6. Are all jobs classified using a consistent job analysis? _____

7. Are all job classifications reviewed for gender and minority equity? _____

Are all comparable jobs reviewed for possible evidence of uneven treatment for females or minorities? _____

8. Does your organization have an employee performance appraisal system? _____

Does the performance appraisal establish clear objectives, expectations and performance measurement criteria linked to that specific job? _____

Does the performance appraisal provide objective, interactive and meaningful feedback on performance? _____

Do performance objectives clearly support departmental and organizational objectives? _____

Are these objectives and measurement criteria discussed with the individual being appraised? _____

Do the employees have clear and direct control over the outcome of their appraisals? _____

Do performance appraisals reflect an employee's positive behavior, as well as results? _____

Do performance appraisals include a written plan to improve employees' knowledge and skills? _____

Are pay plans linked to rewards for measured performance? _____

Is the performance rating/pay adjustment reviewed by someone in a position higher than that of the rater before discussion with the employee and implementation? _____

9. Does your organization have a pay-for-performance (merit-based) system? _____

Does it work as intended, or is it a tool for compensation adjustment?

Does an outstanding performance merit an outstanding reward? _____

10. Are compensation increases budgeted throughout the organization and are guidelines for distribution clearly communicated? _____

Are ranges and limits clearly defined (e.g., pay increments linked to performance measures)? _____

Is distribution of compensation among departments reviewed by management for consistency and equity before awarding increases? _____

11. Are other performance compensation awards (results sharing) appropriate and in place? _____

Profit-sharing awards based on organization-wide profitability. _____

Special recognition awards, e.g., bonuses for meeting a combination of results criteria, including department contribution performance, major productivity increases, sales and profit increases, and cost savings. _____

Group or team productivity based on team performance and distributed by team members. _____

Gain-sharing awards based on local performance. _____

A special pay-for-knowledge system, e.g., payment for increased development of employee knowledge, skills, abilities and/or responsibility (allowing a broader job design without changing assignments). _____

12. Does your organization have the capacity for a compensation strategy to attract, retain and motivate employees _____?

13. Are compensation administration costs included in the budget ____?

14. On a scale of one to seven (seven being highest and four being adequate), how do you think the Human Resources department would rate the effectiveness of the compensation system? _____

15. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think your internal clients (other departments and employees) would rate the effectiveness of the compensation system? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

4. COMPENSATION

It is important for the organization to distribute a clear policy statement on its compensation philosophy to its employees. Guidelines are important to ensure consistency and equity in the reward systems. Compensation is probably the most objective aspect of HR management. You should be aware of this when scoring questions one through seven.

Compensation methods can help motivate the fulfillment of organizational objectives. For this reason, compensation experts receive higher pay than other HR professionals. Major consulting firms specialize in this area because compensation affects the organization's bottom line.

If compensation alone drove performance, companies with big payrolls would always be the most profitable, but that isn't the case. In fact, eliminating higher paid positions is the trend. Compensation programs should motivate and reward people for accomplishing organizational objectives.

Companies need to find new ways to reward individual, team and other group performance. Reward systems should take into consideration self-directed work teams, cross-functional problem-solving teams, matrix management, taking on added work responsibilities and more risk taking. If the organization wants a closer correlation between compensation and quality work, then the recognition of team performance is critical. Questions eight through 11 deal with these incentive issues.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

5. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Programs by which employees receive noncash compensation to ensure that the organization attracts, retains and motivates employees to accomplish organizational objectives.

- 1. Does the organization have a clear policy regarding employee benefits? _____

- 2. Is there one position within the organization accountable for fairly and consistently implementing employee benefit programs and ensuring compliance with governmental regulations, such as ERISA, COBRA, EEO and the Family and Medical Leave Act? _____

- 3. Is the organization current on competitive employee benefit practices, such as childcare, flex-time, job sharing, vacation/sick time, time-off provisions and health plan alternatives? _____

HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT

- 4. Is there a process in place to contain medical costs while offering quality health care to employees? _____

- 5. Do you periodically gauge employee satisfaction with the benefit plan in terms of customer service, timeliness, claim management and accuracy? _____

- 6. If employee dissatisfaction is high or costs are out of control or noncompetitive, do you put your benefit plans out to bid? _____

- How often does this occur? _____

- 7. Does your medical cost containment review cover the following?:
 - A. Have you analyzed both of the following alternative health care programs for their cost containment processes, including services offered, accessibility, quality of care and cost? _____

HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATIONS (HMOS):

What are enrollment numbers for the past three years. (Rapid enrollment rates may result in poorer service.) _____

Is the HMO accredited by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)?

Were any conditions attached to the accreditation? _____

What is the public perception of the HMO (has it received bad press)?

Have organizations similar to yours fared well under this HMO? (Ask for a list of clients and call some of them.) _____

What are the exclusions or limitations on procedures, such as transplants, rehabilitative procedures and mental and nervous disorders?

PREFERRED PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS (PPOS):

In addition to all the questions for HMOs above, what is the ratio of network vs. non-network charges? _____

Do employees accept the network doctors? _____

B. Has HR reviewed the following administrative controls?:

In-house company data on premiums paid and claims processed? _____

Retention provisions of carriers, such as rebates or favorable rate consideration for retention of company funds? _____

More favorable stop-loss arrangements with a carrier? _____

Encouraging employees to report errors in medical bills? _____

Health-care spending accounts and changing rules? _____

Nonduplication of benefits instead of traditional coordination of benefits? _____

Initiating a probationary period before health coverage begins? _____

C. Has HR reviewed basic cost management programs, including the following?:

Increasing deductibles, coinsurance responsibility or copayment amounts? _____

Requiring second opinions for surgery? _____

Instituting pre-admission testing and certification? _____

Concurrent hospital stay reviews? _____

Closely managing chronic or costly illnesses? _____

Patient auditing of hospital bills? _____

Requiring employee plan usage data from health care carriers/administrators? _____

D. Has HR reviewed employee health promotion and education programs (see also Self-Audit Questionnaire #11)? _____

E. Has HR communicated with health care providers to review customized plan options and cost containment measures? _____

8. Are the costs of employee benefits regularly calculated and compared to national, industry and local data? _____

9. Are vacation and sick leave accruals analyzed for purpose as well as cost consideration? _____

10. Are there programs to control absentee costs? _____

11. Are there programs to curb sick leave abuse? _____

12. Are unemployment compensation costs analyzed for cost savings? _____

13. Are pension plans reviewed and employees counseled on win-win pension options that will save the organization money? _____

14. Does your organization offer retirement counseling to employees? _____

15. Are there benefits to extending the retirement age? _____
16. Should changes in long-term disability payments be considered? _____
17. Does your organization regularly communicate the benefits it provides as well as emphasize the company's contribution to employee benefits? _____
18. Does your organization have the capacity to provide necessary employee benefits and address cost-containment issues that affect profitability? _____
19. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think the Human Resources department would rate the effectiveness of employee benefits programs? _____
20. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think internal clients (department heads and employees) would rate the effectiveness of the employee benefits programs? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

5. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Employee benefits are necessary to attract and retain quality employees. Few organizations, however, are able to find new ways to contain costs and use benefits as an incentive to improve employee productivity.

Health care cost containment is covered in questions four to seven. Aggressive negotiations with carriers, a closer look at administrative controls and cost-benefit analyses must be routinely carried out if an organization wants to convert high costs into increased profits. An annual review of benefit plan vendors should be conducted, especially for health care services which consume a large portion of expenses. The remarketing of a benefit program, however, should take place no more frequently than every three to five years, unless there are serious concerns about rates, service or accessibility. More frequent remarketing of a benefit plan damages the credibility of the employer, in terms of seeming disinterested in a long-term relationship. In an insured arrangement, the vendor will be left 'holding the bag' on runout claims.

Pay particular attention to cost-management programs under question seven. Spending time on these details will result in better claims management. Question 7C should answer the following questions:

1. How were charges distributed between employees, the employer and other payers?
2. What types of services were used: hospital (inpatient, outpatient, emergency room), physician's services (inpatient, outpatient), lab, x-ray, durable medical equipment,

supplies, surgical center, etc. Any category labeled 'other' on a report should account for no more than 5% of the total or require a detailed explanation.

3. What types of illnesses did employees experience? There should be at least 15 major diagnosis categories used on the report.

4. What are employees' demographics?

You are entitled to this information. By monitoring how the healthcare plan is used, it is possible to decrease claim costs. Some negotiation with the carrier/administrator may be necessary to obtain reports in a meaningful format.

Because health care accounts for the largest portion of most benefit packages you should strive to raise your performance standards as an employer by applying your business strategies to health care management. According to David W. Kempken, Executive Director of Benefits for Chrysler Corporation, you should re-examine your standards for plan design, administration, communication and provider relationships with the goal of "best practices." Nonhealth-related employee benefits, such as vacation time, sick leave, pension formulas, retirement incentives, holidays and unemployment compensation tend to remain untouched. There is literature which addresses these issues. They could save your organization quite a bit of money. See Michael Markowich's article "25 Ways to Save a Bundle" and Michael Mercer's book *Turning Your Human Resources Department into a Profit Center*. Both are listed in References and Recommended Readings, page 149.

Benefits can increase productivity by meeting lifestyle and family demands in a diverse and changing work force. Daycare centers, flex-time, work-at-home options, alternate leave provisions, cash options and other benefit bartering arrangements may improve worker productivity. The principle that a happy worker is a more productive worker still holds. Likewise, funding benefits that do not meet the needs of the workforce are both counterproductive and unprofitable.

A U.S. Chamber of Commerce survey (March 31, 1995) cites useful benefit cost benchmarks: total benefit costs as a percentage of payroll average 41.3% nationwide. Medical benefits account for 11.1% of the total.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

6. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This section audits programs that govern employee treatment, communications, support systems and services that encourage greater employee satisfaction, motivation and productivity.

1. Is there one position within the organization accountable for overseeing and coordinating all employee relations and communications activities? _____

COMMUNICATIONS

2. Are there policies that state the organization's employee relations philosophy governing all conditions affecting employees? _____

3. Do these policies state expected behaviors of employees? _____

4. Are these policies condensed into an employee handbook? _____

5. How and to whom is the employee handbook distributed? _____

6. Is the employee handbook information reviewed by legal counsel to satisfy all laws affecting employment, personnel relations, working conditions, employment at will, implied employment contracts and disclaimer issues?

7. How frequently is it updated? _____

8. Is there a formal orientation for new employees? _____

Are follow-up employee orientations scheduled? _____

9. Are employees given the opportunity to exchange information with superiors as well as assimilate information being transmitted from the top down? _____

10. Are there forums that allow for regular interaction and information exchanges between employees and management? _____

If _____ so, _____ briefly _____ describe:

11. Are there forums in which racial and ethnic minority concerns are conveyed to management with the intent of affecting positive changes? _____

12. Does your organization engage in employee opinion surveys? _____

If yes, how frequently? _____

Do you communicate survey results to employees? _____

Is there a demonstrated commitment to introducing changes based on survey data? _____

EMPLOYEE TREATMENT

13. Are employees afforded a process where both sides of a complaint are heard and a decision is rendered fairly? _____

14. Are disciplinary procedures and rules of conduct explained in an employee handbook or other form of notice? (Remember, the purpose of discipline is to have people behave in an acceptable way.) _____

15. Are progressive forms of discipline expressly cited? _____

Are they consistently applied? _____

16. Are fairly competitive employee benefit programs in place? _____

17. Is there a program that provides for management and employee participation in the discipline process? _____

18. Are there opportunities for employee professional growth? _____

19. Does the organization demonstrate, emphasize and reward leadership to ensure success and satisfaction in the organization? _____

20. Using a one-to-seven scale how do immediate manager practices rate in terms of daily supervision and management of employees? _____

21. Has the organization demonstrated reasonable employment security? _____

22. Is direct compensation/pay reasonable, equitable and competitive? _____

23. Are employee and team accomplishments, special efforts and contributions recognized in addition to direct pay? _____

24. Does the organization encourage teamwork and employee involvement? _____

STATISTICS

25. What is the organization's monthly absentee rate? _____

Do you consider this high or low? _____

In what departments/areas are absences particularly high and why?

26. What is the annual turnover rate (average position replacements per year)? _____

Do you consider this high or low? _____

27. Are exit interviews conducted? _____

By whom? _____

Who is given feedback from the exit interview and how is it used?

28. Are demographics of turnover data analyzed? _____

How is this analysis used? _____

What has management done in the past two years to reduce turnover?

29. Has the organization attempted to project future needs in terms of an increase in working mothers, child care, single parents, elder workers, a more diverse work force, etc.? _____

30. Has the organization made plans to meet its future employee relations needs? _____

31. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources department would rate the effectiveness of the organization's employee relations and communications programs? _____

32. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think your internal clients (other departments and employees) would rate the effectiveness of the employee relations and communications programs? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

6. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This section covers employee satisfaction. This critical aspect of human resources management is broad in scope, complicated and difficult to measure. Since almost half of our waking hours are spent at work, an interesting and pleasant work environment is essential to retain quality employees.

The questions in this section are designed to help you understand and deal with intangible employee relation issues. These include communication, how employees are treated, support systems and those conditions of employment conducive to employee satisfaction, motivation and productivity. Three major issues are covered here: (1) communication, (2) employee treatment and (3) statistics as a gauge of employee satisfaction.

Policy statements, newsletters, bulletins, messages and information handbooks help the employer communicate with the employee. The employer's willingness to commit to its philosophy in writing sets the stage for a candid dialogue. A standard of openness displays a sense of trust. While employees may not read every word, these communications help the employee identify with the company and its success.

Most important in this section are the responses to questions nine and ten. It is important for your organization to have scheduled interaction with employee groups and representatives for discussion of issues of mutual concern.

How the company treats employees is certainly important to them. It is also crucial to the organization's well-being. Bad or inconsistent treatment is the number one cause of voluntary turnover. Money can't compensate if basic human needs, such as dignity, respect, justice and social interaction, are lacking. An increase in work hours, coupled with a decrease in the quality of work life, loyalty and security issues, is responsible for a resurgence in union membership. The unionization of white-collar employees and frontline workers is increasing, particularly in services, such as government, hospitals, insurance and financial firms. How the employees are treated should be of utmost concern to you.

Policy guidelines help managers make decisions concerning specific workplace issues. From the employer's point of view, personnel policies and procedures which guide managers to do their jobs better are extremely valuable and help the organization achieve its objectives. The example on the facing page shows how a major corporation arrived at its employee satisfaction "best practice" policies.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

7. PERSONNEL POLICIES/WORKPLACE RULES

Statements of guiding principles intended to translate organizational objectives and means into operational terms and help managers make decisions.

1. Are there written procedures governing all conditions of employment and policies clearly stating the organization's human resources philosophy? _____
2. Are there procedures for monitoring the organization's compliance with personnel laws and regulations? _____
3. Are these policies and procedures published and adequately communicated? _____

How? (please describe)

4. Is there one position within the organization accountable for overseeing the development, coordination and distribution of these policies and procedures? _____
5. Do these policies reflect the organization's desire to be an "employer of choice"? _____
6. Do these policies and procedures contribute toward the organization's mission and objectives? _____
7. Do they balance empowerment of staff with sufficient controls to ensure achievement of the organization's mission and objectives? _____
8. Are managers guided by policy as they make decisions from hire through separation of employment? _____
9. Are managers given the opportunity to provide input to policy drafts before they are formalized? _____
10. If there are other rules outside the organization's stated policies, such as Civil Service rules, are they communicated to and understood by the managers? _____

If yes, does management periodically review such outside rules to see if they reflect the organization's current needs? _____

11. Is policy consistent in purpose, background and procedures for implementation?

12. Are effective dates of policies cited, and do they specify any previous policy statements they supersede? _____

13. Are all policies approved at the highest appropriate level of the organization before being adopted? _____

14. Are personnel policies condensed into an employee handbook? _____

If yes, are expected behaviors of employees specifically addressed? _____

15. Is the current personnel policy manual periodically reviewed by legal counsel to reflect new laws affecting employment, personnel relations, working conditions, employment at will, implied contract and disclaimer issues? _____

16. Are new policies that may have legal implications also reviewed by legal counsel?

17. Does the organization regularly assess existing policies for necessary replacement or amendment? _____

18. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources department team would rate the effectiveness of the organization's policies and procedures? _____

19. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think your internal customers (other departments) would rate the effectiveness of the organization's policies and procedures?

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

7. PERSONNEL POLICIES/WORKPLACE RULES

Personnel policies and workplace rules are intended to make organizational objectives reality. They should guide managers to do their jobs better and help them make decisions concerning workplace issues. Policies and procedures should cite their bases and resources to help managers make informed decisions. Personnel policies should also be flexible enough for managers to exercise discretion.

In a flattening organizational structure, policies and procedures can support delegating decisions. They should serve as a basis for managerial direction, accountability, consistent and effective behavior and compliance monitoring.

The policy manual should serve as a guide for the department to maintain accountability for managing and delivering human resource services effectively. A balance between staff and managerial controls will ensure the most likely achievement of the organization's mission and objectives. Principles of teamwork and recognition of employees' input should be emphasized as the most important components of an effective human resource philosophy.

Here is a sample human resource philosophy:

The XYZ Company recognizes that employees are its most valuable resource. The successful evolution of the organization depends on the support and performance of all employees in achieving its stated mission. Accordingly, the XYZ Company will strive to become an employer of choice by providing those programs and services which support employees in the performance of their jobs, enhance the spirit of teamwork and quality of life, and provide for employee well-being from hire through separation from XYZ Company.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

8. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Policies and practices to ensure compliance with equal employment opportunity laws and other governmental regulations as they relate to recruitment, selection, placement, compensation and treatment of employees while enhancing the validity and effectiveness of related personnel systems.

1. Does your organization have a stated policy covering equal employment opportunity as well as it's compliance with all applicable discrimination laws? _____

2. Does your organization explicitly state its position against discrimination because of:

Race? _____

Color? _____

Sex? _____

Religion? _____

Sexual orientation? _____

Physical/mental handicap or disability? _____

Age? _____

National origin? _____

Ancestry? _____

Marital status? _____

3. How is this policy communicated inside and outside the organization? _____

4. Is there one position within the organization accountable for overseeing and coordinating EEO policies and procedures? _____

5. Is there a review process to keep the organization up-to-date regarding regulatory issues and compliance? _____

6. Are job openings analyzed for job-related skills, education, knowledge and ability requirements? _____

Are selection criteria based on these job-related requirements? _____

Can all hiring decisions be defended against these criteria? _____

7. Are all tests used in the hiring process valid? _____

8. Are all hiring managers trained in nondiscriminatory hiring practices? _____

9. Has the employment application been reviewed to ensure that it meets all equal employment opportunity requirements? _____

10. Is there an internal process for employees to register complaints concerning discrimination and harassment? _____

11. Does your organization have an explicit policy against sexual harassment? _____

Has a procedure to resolve sexual harassment claims been implemented? _____

12. Do you offer training to management on sexual harassment awareness and legal requirements? _____

13. Does your organization conform to all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? _____

Does your organization have a policy statement that prohibits discrimination against qualified handicapped or disabled individuals? _____

Do your organization's job descriptions distinguish between those qualifications, physical requirements, duties and responsibilities which are essential and those which are nonessential? _____

Are policy manuals, handbooks, recruitment notices, job postings and advertisements consistent regarding qualified individuals with a physical or mental impairment of a major life activity? _____

Can disabled individuals apply for job openings and gain access to the premises? _____

Is there a review process for employee restrictions and reasonable accommodation requests? _____

14. If you are a Federal or State government agency, does your organization conform to the requirements of the Veterans' Preference Act ? _____

15. Does your organization have a government supplies/service contract or subcontract for \$50,000 or more in any 12-month period? _____

If yes, does it have an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) in place for each of the organization's establishments? _____

16. Are all AAPs developed according to the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs (OFCCP) guidelines, including:

Affirmative Action Plan Narrative? _____

Workforce Analysis? _____

Job Group Analysis? _____

Availability Analysis? _____

Utilization Analysis? _____

Goals and Timetables? _____

17. Does your organization conduct a self-EEO/AAP audit on a periodic basis? _____

18. Does your organization have a hiring procedure regarding the examination of documents to verify applicant identity and authorization to work in the United States as spelled out in the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)? _____

19. Does your organization have a Federal contract or subcontract of \$25,000 or more?

20. If yes, does your organization fulfill the following requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988?:

Publish a policy statement prohibiting the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of a controlled substance in the workplace and specifying what actions will be taken against employees who violate the policy? _____

Provide a copy of the policy to employees working under the contract? _____

Provide guidance/training on policy requirements? _____

Have a drug/alcohol-free awareness program? _____

Notify employees they must, as a condition of employment, notify the employer if they are convicted of a criminal drug offense occurring in the workplace within five days after the conviction? _____

21. Does your organization comply with the requirements of the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991? _____
22. Does your organization provide programs for drug/alcohol rehabilitation? _____
23. Does your organization conform to the Family Leave Act? _____
24. Does your organization comply with requirements set forth in the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)? _____
25. Does your organization conform to the provisions of Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA)? _____
26. Has the organization assessed or met current and emerging legal issues relating to equal employment and other governmental regulations? _____
27. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources department would rate the organization's performance in the area of equal opportunity and regulatory compliance cited above? _____
28. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think employees would rate the organization's compliance performance? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

8. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Governmental regulations affect every aspect of personnel management. Regulatory compliance is one of the the foremost concerns in human resources management. Knowledge of employment law provides job security to the HR professionals who specialize in this area. Human resources management literature, seminars and government publications cover these legal issues. Many HR professionals - no matter what their specialty - have of necessity become paralegals.

Questions in this section have been designed to highlight pressing regulatory issues. Emphasis has been placed on complex issues, such as the American with Disabilities Act and the Drug-Free Workplace Act.

The HR department should review internal procedures that both address due process in handling complaints of discrimination and harassment and encourage training and awareness to ensure a harassment-free, nondiscriminatory workplace. A qualified senior-level individual should oversee these efforts and keep top management informed of progress. Organizations that demonstrate genuine concern for EEO, affirmative action and diversity issues also resolve most claims in-house.

Legal fees and 'no fault' settlement awards have reached outlandish proportions. The rapid increase in claims, particularly in the sex and disability categories, has created a backlog in the EEO Commission and forced claimants to initiate civil suits. Aging baby boomers who are being rapidly trimmed from large corporations are expected to launch a new wave of legal suits. They are more likely to have the financial resources to encourage the legal community to aggressively pursue age discrimination claims. Increased attention to compliance issues necessarily must include self-audits patterned after the Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs (OFCCP) as published in the Federal Registrar and Bureau of National Affairs.

All organizations should find ways to prevent discrimination and harassment claims. This section of the self-audit is critical to understanding and using regulations to enhance both prevention and in-house resolution of claims. Proper job specifications and requirements, valid testing and screening techniques, equal opportunities for all employees, consistency in employee treatment and valuing diversity demonstrate good business management.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

9. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Programs, processes and strategies that will enable organizations to develop and improve their internal human resources in order to optimize their contributions to organizational objectives.

1. Is there a policy that states the organization's philosophy on employee training and development? _____

2. Is there a position within the organization accountable for overseeing and coordinating training and development activities? _____

3. Is there a process for assessing the organization's immediate training needs and individual development needs? _____

If yes, how is this assessment carried out?

How often is the assessment updated? _____

Who participates in the assessment? _____

4. Is there a process to assess the organization's future training needs? _____

If yes, how is this assessment carried out?

Who participates? _____

How far into the future are the needs projected? _____

5. Are job skills, knowledge and ability considered in assessing training needs? _____

6. Are new technologies, processes, products, services, market changes and community needs considered in assessing training needs? _____

7. Are organizational issues, such as mission, objectives, cultural changes and customer orientation, considered in training needs? _____

8. Are the organization's social responsibilities and respect for diversity reflected in training needs? _____

9. Are legal requirements considered in training needs? _____

10. Is remedial training in literacy and basic computation skills offered? _____

11. Are employee development plans addressed in performance appraisals or other formal settings? _____

12. To whom are the organization's immediate and future training and development needs communicated? _____

How often? _____

13. How are all training programs and opportunities communicated to employees? _____

14. Are subscriptions to professional training and development journals maintained and circulated among department members? _____

Is there a reference library of training and development material for employee use? _____

Is there coordination of professional development material? _____

15. Do all training and development programs have clear objectives (For example, in a workshop on WordPerfect, a clear objective would be At the end of this training, participants will be able to use the Merge/Sort feature.)? _____

16. How are training resources identified internally and externally?

Who is involved in the determination? _____

How are all training resources coordinated? _____

17. Are the results of training programs monitored and evaluated? _____

18. Is cost considered in the selection of training resources? _____

19. Is there a method to track training costs in terms of lost work time? _____

20. Does your organization measure a return on investment in training? _____

How do you know training is used back in the job? _____

21. Does the organization provide adequate capacity to meet chosen training and development needs? _____

Are employees availing themselves of training opportunities? _____

22. Are training and development needs reflected in the organization's budget? _____

23. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources department team would rate the organization's training and development activities and performance? _____

24. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think your customers (other departments) would rate the training and development activities and performance? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

9. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of training and development is to optimize HR contributions to organization objectives. The questions in this section focus on training needs and objectives, address

organizational issues (new products, technology, work methods and changing skill requirements) and gauge what impact training has on the organization's profitability.

A needs assessment should be conducted before embarking on any training program. Many businesses offer wonderful training programs. Attendees usually leave invigorated and excited. Then there may be a few complaints from managers about overtime costs and slowdowns in operating efficiency because of "unproductive" training time. Analysis of training costs may reveal that departments are using more expensive outside resources because their needs are not addressed by in-house programs. Training may be seen as too expensive both in time and money. Budgets may be cut.

To gain credibility with the customer and assume the status of business contributor, the training and development function of the HR department must (a) clearly address customer needs, (b) formulate training programs in collaboration with users, (c) set training objectives, (d) perform a cost-benefit analysis of all programs and (e) measure results. Once credibility is established, department managers will see that their training budgets are necessary and well used.

The choice of training resources should be cost-effective. In some cases a training curriculum can be developed by in-house experts. For other topics it will be more cost-effective to go outside the organization than to train someone in-house. There are many freelance trainers with detailed subject manuals using well-developed modules and techniques. Contract trainers have proven to be very cost-effective.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

10. LABOR RELATIONS

The process that ensures and oversees fair and effective collective bargaining with those unions representing employees and fosters positive labor relations designed to achieve organization objectives.

1. Does the organization clearly state its philosophy on labor relations and implement guiding procedures for managers who deal with contract and labor relation issues? _____

2. Is there a position within the organization that oversees and coordinates labor relation activities? _____

3. Do labor relations strategies support the organization's business plan? _____

4. Is top management informed and supportive of labor management strategies and goals? _____

5. Is there an atmosphere of management respect for union representation? _____

6. Are negotiation strategies and objectives formulated in advance of contract negotiations? _____

7. Does management understand the laws that govern collective bargaining? _____

8. Is your labor management team educated and trained in private- or government-sector bargaining techniques? _____

9. Does your labor relations staff network with professionals from other organizations? _____

10. Are union officials involved in workshops, educational forums or other interactive sessions with management to address topics of mutual concern, such as business competition, health care costs, compensation and organization change issues? _____

11. Is there a formal labor/management group to discuss issues of mutual concern outside of the bargaining process? _____

If yes, does this group have a charter and regularly scheduled meetings? _____

Is the group trained in effective meeting skills (e.g., agenda, ground rules, timekeeping, facilitation and action plans)? _____

12. Is adequate assistance provided to managers in contract administration and handling grievances? _____

13. Are managers trained in handling discipline matters, recordkeeping, counseling skills, precedent-setting issues, etc.? _____

14. Are efforts made to analyze root causes of grievances and take corrective/preventive measures to reduce them? _____

15. When grievances are submitted, are they resolved in a timely fashion? _____

16. Are there credible efforts made to gain labor's input and participation in finding better ways for the organization to survive? _____

17. Has the organization made plans to meet its future labor relations needs? _____

18. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources department would rate the effectiveness of labor relation's performance? _____

19. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think other departments would rate labor relations performance? _____

20. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think union officials would rate labor relations performance? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

10. LABOR RELATIONS

The section on labor relations is important for organizations with unions. The brevity of this section is not intended to minimize its importance. There are fewer questions simply because fair and effective collective bargaining practices are usually already in place. In fact, labor relations may be one of the most important categories for the many organizations which deal with unions, such as local government and public sector agencies and heavily unionized manufacturing companies. Most Fortune 500 manufacturing companies are unionized, and there may be good reasons why other working environments need unions.

Management should link overall labor relations and collective bargaining strategies to the organization's business planning process well before company representatives go the bargaining table. Equally important are issues of workforce flexibility and work redesign.

Company managers should foster cooperative relations with their unions and draw on the skills and knowledge of union leaders to achieve the organization's objectives. Both employer and union depend on the organization's success and ability to compete in the global economy.

The theme of these questions is the need to gain labor cooperation for continuous improvement and to foster union leadership awareness and involvement in critical cost issues. Answers should reveal mutual interests rather than adversarial positions that have not paid off for either party over the years.

Self-Audit Questionnaire

11. SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Programs that provide a work environment that contributes to and demonstrates concern for employee safety, health and well-being, and that produce the economic benefits derived from a safer work environment and healthier workforce.

1. Does the organization have a policy stating its philosophy on employee safety, health and wellness? _____

Is this policy clearly supported and monitored by management? _____

Are there policies and procedures that demonstrate compliance with federal, state and local regulations? _____

Does the policy provide guidance to managers on implementation of related programs? _____

2. Does one position within the organization oversee and coordinate safety, health and wellness activities? _____

Is there a process that ensures organizational compliance with current governmental regulations? _____

3. Are all aspects of OSHA regulations adhered to, such as:

The general duty clause? _____

General industry and vertical standards? _____

Recordkeeping requirements? _____

The right-to-know clause? _____

4. Does your organization have a wellness program in place? _____

Does it include:

A qualified wellness coordinator? _____

Voluntary free biennial physicals? _____

A health risk assessment? _____

A health risk assessment follow-up? _____

Counseling and feedback on health and lifestyle improvements? _____

Discussions/training on health-related topics? _____

Access to exercise and fitness facilities? _____

An evaluation of program effectiveness (measurable by reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, reduced healthcare costs, fewer claims, and progress against major risk factors measured in health exams)? _____

Does the evaluation include a cost/benefit analysis? _____

5. Does your organization have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? _____

Does it include:

An analysis of problems employees exhibit that, if assisted, would improve the organization's bottom line (this could be determined by an examination of company records of accidents, benefits usage, absences, performance, as well as by interviews with employees, supervisors and medical personnel)? _____

An evaluation of the program's effectiveness to reduce absenteeism and accident and health insurance claims and improve performance? _____

A cost/benefit analysis? _____

6. Does your organization have formal accident prevention programs? _____

If so, do they include:

An analysis of work-related injuries by category, department and location? _____

Formal workplace inspections? _____

A process to address biomechanics and ergonomics in the workplace? _____

Inspections that address accident causes, unsafe conditions and unsafe behaviors? _____

Employee training in accident prevention and good safety practices? _____

Reinforcement and recognition of safe behaviors? _____

7. Does your organization measure the cost/benefit ratio of safety programs? _____

8. Does your organization engage in workplace evacuation drills? _____

If so, how often? _____

9. On a scale of one to seven (seven being the highest and four being adequate), how do you think your Human Resources team would rate the effectiveness of the organization's safety, health and wellness programs? _____

10. On the same one-to-seven scale, how do you think your internal clients and employees would rate your safety, health and wellness programs? _____

Self-Audit Questionnaire Evaluation:

11. SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This section provides a thorough review of employee safety, health and wellness programs and methods to produce and measure the economic benefits of a safer work environment and healthier workforce.

Questions 4 and 5 deal with the importance of employee medical surveillance, wellness programs and Employee Assistance Programs. These programs improve attendance, productivity and employee wellness while decreasing health care costs. Provider promotion information emphasizes the obvious benefits of these programs. However, by tracking your own measurements and performing cost-benefit analyses, you can manage the return investment in safety, health and wellness more deliberately.

Question 6 deals with accident prevention and should receive 50% of the overall scoring weight, particularly considering those parts of the question dealing with safe behaviors.

The Human Side, a safety consulting firm cited under Associations and Journals (page 151), has codeveloped with Behavioral Solutions a concept called "Safety in Numbers" (©1992), a behaviorally based approach to workplace safety. Their amazing success stories are based on the application of three principles: (1) breaking away from the traditional approach of reacting to statistics, e.g., waiting for an accident to happen, and instead measuring safe behavior on a daily basis; (2) positive reinforcement by rewarding safe behaviors; and (3) creating a new safety "culture" focused on safe behaviors and their causes. If safety is a major concern to your organization you might explore this rewarding concept.

Compliance with OSHA regulations is a prerequisite to all other actions. Preventing unsafe behaviors and unhealthy habits and even exceeding OSHA standards will reduce the organization's exposure to liability and risk. Over 80 percent of reported injuries are a result of unsafe acts and behaviors that can and should be addressed.