CONNections

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CTBLN partners with state agencies

The Connecticut Business Leadership Network (CTBLN) is a partnership sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities. UTC has taken on the role of the lead company, and other members including state agencies (DOL, DAS, BESB) as well as large corporations (UTC, Pfizer Global Research, Aetna, SNET) and various other employers, large and small. DAS has been largely instrumental in organizing and heading up the CTBLN initiative. DAS employees Suzanne Liquerman and Kathleen Sullivan are on the board of directors and are dedicated to the goal of equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The CTBLN is an employer-driven association that:

- Assists employers in adopting proactive strategies to employ and retain individuals with disabilities

see HRLC on page 2

How Is a Diversity Initiative Different from My Organization's Affirmative Action Plan?

an article from The Society of Human Resource Management

Diversity management is frequently confused with affirmative action and valuing diversity. Opponents of both concepts use the terms interchangeably, often throwing in the word "preferences" as yet another synonym. It is important to understand the history of each and to use the terms accurately. Affirmative action, valuing diversity and managing diversity are separate points on the continuum of interventions designed to stimulate the inclusion of people from different backgrounds in an organization.

Affirmative Action: Affirmative Action is grounded in moral and social responsibility to amend wrongs done in the past to those Americans who were not of the majority population. These legal obligations are based on numerical measures and were designed to increase the representation of minorities and women in areas of employment where they were previously underrepresented. This effort was a direct result of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Because of a long history of discriminatory practices.

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Official Memoranda Information

#00-028

date issued 12/19/00

Item No. 362-E

■

#00-027
date issued 12/19/00
NP-3 (Clerical) Salary Schedules

■

#00-026
date issued 11/30/00
Administrative & Residual (P-5)
Seniority List Update

■

#00-025
date issued 11/27/00
Deferred PARS payout and
related information

■

#00-024
date issued 10/24/00
Contract Award - PARS certificates

■

#00-023
P-5 (Administrative & Residual)
salary schedule

■

#00-022
date issued: 9/25/00
Status of General Letter
Review Project

■

#00-021
date issued: 8/22/00
General Letter No. 31 – Working Test
Period Extensions

For more information on these memoranda, visit the DAS website at:
http://www.das.state.ct.us/HR/om/bhrndir.htm

Talent Management System open enrollment

More and more in human resources, we hear the terms strategic planning, human resource planning, and workforce development. DAS, through its HR Learning Center, is introducing a program that provides a tool to assist in those areas- the Talent Management System (TMS). TMS is made up of the following four workshops:

CareerPower – Employees in the right positions are happier and are more aligned to the mission and business needs of their agency. This one-day workshop offers individuals the opportunity to explore skills, interests, and values along with discussing the place in which they work and setting multiple career strategies for their future. *March 27, May 22, and July 24. $165*

CareerPower for Coaches – Today's managers are expected to be coaches, too. For this half-day program, managers, supervisors, and team leaders will have the opportunity to learn key behaviors and five distinct skills: Listen, Level, Look Ahead, Leverage, and Link. Participants will develop these skills in the workshop as well as make the connection between agency business strategies and the essentials of management development. *February 8, April 19, June 14, and August 15. $85*

Development Plan Lunch & Learn - If you have attended a CareerPower workshop, come to this lunchtime workshop where you will have the opportunity to concentrate on goal setting and mapping out an action plan. We will briefly review CareerPower; offer some tools to help you set goals and then complete the action plan for at least one of your goals. You will leave with a useful tool for your career development.

For location information or to register, contact Cheryl Sawina at (860) 713-5246

Love 'Em or Lose 'Em – Keeping talented employees is a pressing problem in Connecticut. Over 42% of state employees are age 45 or above, indicating that over the next 5 years, approximately 40% would be eligible to retire. Managers need to identify key employees and develop action plans to prepare for these changes. This half-day workshop will show how a manager's actions can affect an employee's decision to stay. *January 30, April 5, June 5, and August 23. $125*

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- Identifies and promotes "Best Practices" in the employment of people with disabilities
- Provides employers with relevant information and technical support
- Works in concert with other key disability organizations as well as statewide business organizations to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities

"It's a seamless transition from what I do here at DAS to the goals the CTBLN has set for itself," said DAS' Kathleen Sullivan who is also the Secretary for the Board of Directors. "I also think it's a great relationship between private and public organizations. We're allowed to share ideas and discuss mutual barriers to hiring people with disabilities. Sometimes this discussion leads to a lot of cooperation and camaraderie. It's a great step in the right direction."

for more information go to:
http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/ctbln/default.html

Recrutiment Corner

Earlier this year Gary Alpert, CEO of WetFeet.com, presented information and strategies on college recruitment.

Alpert emphasized the Internet is a key influence in the student job search. The results of a college survey by WetFeet.com reported over 94% of students use company websites as their most important job search resource. Job boards listing open positions were significantly less relevant (40%). Students use company websites most often in the early stages of their job search, researching the options (81%), deciding where to apply (76%)and preparing for interviews (65%). They also reported visiting as many as several hundred websites during their job search, often multiple times during their search process.

So how can this data help your recruiting? Building awareness of your agency via your website is key. Here are some basic rules for website design:

- Create an obvious link to the careers sectionfrom your home page
- Provide current information about items of concern to candidates
- Have credible and candid information about your agency and its culture
- List current job openings and what makes them appealing

Extend your market visibility by posting your job openings on the DAS website. Through extensive monthly advertising in the major and minority newspapers throughout Connecticut, the DAS website has become familiar to the public as the central location for jobs in state government. You can post your job announcement with a link directly to your website, where applicants can then get more information about your positions and your agency. For information, or to post a job, call Michelle Burns (713-5208) or Patsy McLaughlin (713-5253).

IPMA trains managers while helping Connecticut Children's Medical Center

On January 26, the International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) hosted a full-day session on training for managers in state government. The opening subject was a course designed to teach overloaded managers how to delegate assignments to their staff.

Another HR hot topic covered was the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) hosted by the Department of Administrative Services' Sandra Sharr and Diane Roberts. The course covered popular topics such as: how to calculate pregnancy leave, how to determine whether an illness is a "serious health condition," and what to do when an employee on medical certificate requirement requests FMLA intermittent leave. The workshop also looked at the importance of internal systems and how to stay within FMLA's procedural requirements.

"Employees almost always assume managers have the answers to everything, but that's a bit of a misconception. Managers may have some of the answers, but not all of them," said IPMA member Patti Kokonowski. "What we're trying to do here is give enough information so that managers have a base understanding, and if they don't know the answer, can direct their employees to the right resource."

Other topics included retirement information for employees and ethical issues that arise in the workplace.

"What we're trying to do here is give enough information so that managers have a base understanding, and if they don't know the answer, can direct their employees to the right resource." - *Patti Kokonowski*

But IPMA didn't quit after the conference. Proceeds from an IPMA fundraiser for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center went to the hospital's general fund and will be used to improve the care of the hospital's patients.

If you would like to join IPMA, please contact Patti Kokonowski at (860) 713-5179.

CONNections

CONNections is published on a bimonthly basis by the Department of Administrative Services Communications Office. The goal of the newsletter is to share information and advances being made in the human resources field and communicate these findings to all state human resources professionals.

The editor accepts suggestions and submissions for publication, however, articles may be edited for length and content.

Governor John G. Rowland
Commissioner Barbara A. Waters
Editor John A. McKay

E-mail articles and suggestions to:
john.mckay@po.state.ct.us

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Again, the focus was and has been on increasing the representation of minorities and females in the workforce. It was surmised that creating such an initiative would rectify the social injustices experienced by the nation's minority population. To ensure implementation of affirmative action and to enforce the Civil Rights Act, the Federal government created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC is responsible for identifying and eliminating discrimination in America's workplaces.

Valuing Diversity: The next evolution of diversity is best referred to as valuing diversity. The main objectives of valuing diversity include awareness, education, and positive recognition of the differences among people in the workforce. Valuing diversity extends beyond affirmative action in that it is not solely based on changing the representation of various types of people in the workplace. Valuing diversity builds upon the critical foundation laid by workplace equity initiatives. The focus of this intervention is on recognizing the uniqueness in everyone, valuing the contribution that each can make, and creating an inclusive work environment where awareness of, and respect for, those of different cultures is promoted. It is the quality of the work experience, rather than simply the participation rate of minority employees or women at a particular employer, that is paramount.

Diversity Management: Managing diversity is different from both Affirmative Action and valuing diversity because it focuses on the business case for diversity. Under this scenario, capitalizing on diversity is seen as a strategic approach to business that contributes to organizational goals such as profits and productivity. It also does not involve any legal requirements and is not implemented just to avoid lawsuits. Managing diversity moves beyond valuing diversity in that it is a way in which to do business and should be aligned with other organizational strategic plans. Affirmative action is based on an assimilationist model that focuses on getting people into an organization rather than changing organizational culture (valuing diversity). Subsequently, managing diversity, while based on cultural change, is a pragmatic business strategy that focuses on maximizing the productivity, creativity, and commitment of the workforce while meeting the needs of diverse consumer groups.

While these three interventions build upon one another, when affirmative action is tied together with valuing and/or managing diversity, diversity often becomes tainted by negative perceptions of affirmative action and is therefore frequently misunderstood. Backlash, resistance, and polarization often ensue when these concepts are combined.

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