

# The McKenzie Mailer

June, 2005

Volume 5, Number 6

## UPCOMING EVENT

July 14, 2004

Mr. McKenzie will be the  
Guest Speaker at the  
Society for Human  
Resources  
Management  
Luncheon at the Marriott  
at Southpoint.

### The Topic:

“A High Performance  
Workplace, You Can  
Feel it In the Air”

Click here for  
registration information -  
[http://www.shrmjax.org/  
meetings/shrm-jax-  
meeting.aspx?id=26.](http://www.shrmjax.org/meetings/shrm-jax-meeting.aspx?id=26)

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Check out the new  
recruiting page on the  
website.

We are currently  
recruiting for the  
following positions:

Systems Applications  
Engineer – Ocala, FL  
and San Jose, CA

Human Resources  
Information Systems  
Coordinator

Click [here](#) to view our  
current recruitment  
assignments.

## Discrimination Charges - Should You be Concerned?

The good news is the number of charges of discrimination filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2004 (79,432) dropped below 80,000 mark for the first time since the year 2000. In 2003, there were 81,293. 1994 was the worst year when over 91,000 charges of discrimination and harassment were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. To put this in a different perspective, last year about 64 employees a day ran to the EEOC to file a complaint of unjust treatment. This is not much better than 1994 when 67 people a day filed complaints.

The bad news is that the number of equal employment lawsuits again eclipsed the 400 mark as 415 lawsuits were filed last year. More disturbing is that the average monetary award was more than \$400,000. Two years ago, the average settlement was about \$145,000. This does not include the legal fees which may add on another \$200,000.

Should you be concerned? An article published by the Business Journal of the Golden Triad Area in North Carolina last week cited two different studies (one by the Chubb Insurance Group and another by HR Executive Magazine) in which business owners and managers are becoming more and more concerned about being sued for discrimination. In fact, both studies indicated that more than half of the executives surveyed fully expect to be sued for discrimination and they feared these types of lawsuits more than any other.

What can these companies do to protect themselves? Think of these four words: **fairness, consistency, respect, dignity**. Most complaints are filed because the employee felt that one or more of these concepts were missing in the employment relationship. Many of the complaints are filed to get back at the employer. The concepts are simple to grasp and simple to implement.

**Fairness.** The most important concept of fairness is determined by how the company promotes and disciplines employees. Are employees given the same opportunities to apply for promotions? Do you give employees who are not meeting standards an opportunity to improve? Think of it in your own terms. If you are not performing your job well, how would you feel if you were fired without being told your job performance was not up to par?

**Consistency.** This goes hand in hand with fairness. The same rewards and recognition should be given for similar accomplishments. Likewise, similar punishment should be given for similar offenses. To do otherwise shows favoritism and inconsistency.

**Respect.** Employees should always be treated with the utmost respect regardless of the circumstances. This should be firmly ingrained in the culture of your organization. Any employee, including and especially the Chief Executive Officer of the organization, who violates these values should be dealt with firmly.

**Dignity.** Another reason that employees want to take revenge on their employer is because the boss somehow managed to strip the employee of his or her self respect. To regain some of the lost pride, the employee may decide to take some action to bring the employer down a peg. So why not file a discrimination complaint? It doesn't cost the employee one red cent. The cost to the employer can be astronomical.

Maybe some business owners *should* be scared, especially if they aren't treating their employees with fairness, consistency, respect and dignity.