

# The McKenzie Mailer

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **BECOME PHR/SPHR CERTIFIED**

**HRCI Certification  
Preparation classes  
will start in September  
and will be held at the  
McKenzieHR offices  
located near the  
intersection of Belfort  
Road and Butler  
Boulevard.**

**Ask Bob for more  
information.**

**The  
BizOp Showcase  
and Economic  
Development Summit date  
was changed at the last  
minute and will be held at  
the Hyatt Regency in  
Jacksonville, Florida on  
Tuesday, August 15, 2006**

**Bob McKenzie will be one  
of the speakers at this  
event.**

### **The Topic**

**“A High Performance  
Workplace – You Can  
Feel It in The Air”**

## **Traits of a High Performance Workplace**

A few years ago, it was rare to see any press on the companies regarded as the best places to work. Now there are national, state and local contests with organizations of all sizes and in a variety of industries clamoring for the acclaimed prize to be named to the list of best places to work. These awards now cross all lines and separate awards are given for companies with the friendliest workplaces for women, minorities, people over the age of 50, large organizations and small companies.

The most common thread of all of the companies that win these awards is their ability to be profitable over the long haul. The profits don't necessarily come as a result of a superior business model. They come more as a result of developing and sustaining a culture that values its employees. Looking at the winners of these awards it is apparent that there are many similarities in the way they work with their employees. If you look at these workplaces, you will probably find many, if not all, of the following characteristics.

### **Trust**

The first and most critical trait is trust. Employees must be able to trust their boss and top management to do what is right for the organization. Proper communication is key to gaining trust. Conversely, a lack of communication breaks down the level of trust. Without trust, the foundation of the workplace is full of cracks and holes.

### **No Micro-Managing**

Since employees are well trained and trusted to do their jobs, there is no need for micro managing. All of the people with the organization know what is expected of them and they do their work without being told what to do, when to do it and how to do it. Micromanagers are quickly weeded out of the company. The culture of the total organization is stronger than any individual.

### **The Truth be Told**

The culture of the organization is one of honesty and integrity in all dealings with co-workers and customers. There is no posturing nor are there positive spins placed on not so positive issues. The high performance organization understands that people work best when they know what the future holds – good or bad.

A few years ago, a local company president (for a business that will remain nameless) publicly announced that there would be no lay offs in the foreseeable future. Two weeks later 25% of the employees were given their walking papers. The fact that people lost jobs is bad enough, but think about how the 75% of those who remained employed felt about their leadership. Any semblance of trust was gone because the president told the employees what he thought they wanted to hear instead of the truth.

### **Instant Credibility**

New employees are welcomed with open arms. Having made it through the hiring process is enough for the new person to be recognized as member of the organization. There is no such thing as “doing one’s time” or “paying one’s dues” before being accepted. It is understood by all that the new employee has the necessary experience, knowledge, skill and behavioral traits to do an outstanding job. New employees are supported from the first day on the job.

### **Everybody’s Job is Everybody’s Job**

By this it means that the teamwork in the organization is incredible. All the employees in the organization are moving in the same direction and for a common goal. The support from all levels of the organization is a natural by product regardless of rank or seniority. The executives of the company can be seen helping the shipping clerks at the end of the quarter to ensure that all of the products get out on time. In this scenario, the shipping clerks are responsible for the work of the executives – not the other way around. On top of this, the shipping clerks are comfortable with the executives working with and for them.

### **Diversity Just Happens**

The high performance organization is not interested in what a person looks like or where they were born. The only important factor is what contributions the individual will make. Because of this, the high performance workplace is constantly looking for the best people - period.

### **Employment Candidates Find Them**

One of the biggest obstacles to the future of business today is the increasing difficulty in finding good employees. The high performance workplace has potential people seeking them out. In the airline business, who would you rather work for, Delta, United, American, Continental or Southwest? The answer here is pretty simple and Southwest Airlines has a data base of over 40,000 resumes of people who are interested in working for them. Companies that have been awarded as one of the best places to work report an increased interest in candidates wanting to work for their company. Companies that are not recognized as a great place to work have more difficulty recruiting and retaining good employees.

### **Gossip is Gone**

The grapevine dies if it is not fed. In the high performance workplace, there is little, if anything, to talk about or question. Since the communications are so good, there is very little left to the imagination of the employees. Less time is wasted talking about subjects of little or no importance. The nattering nabobs of negativity (See The McKenzie Mailer of May, 2005) will very quickly learn that gossip is not condoned by anyone.

### **Low Turnover**

High performance workplaces experience very low turnover. This means the company is properly staffed and no one has to work extra to make up for the people who keep quitting. Often when someone leaves a company, they take their knowledge, relationships and expertise with them. This is virtually impossible to replace. Therefore, the high performing workplace that experiences less turnover is able to sustain the level of performance over an extended period of time.

### **Continuous Learning**

The economy, marketplace and customer expectations are changing continuously and the demands placed on employees is increasing. The high performance workplace understands this and invests heavily in ensuring that its employees have the most up to date knowledge possible to better serve its stakeholders.

### **Better Bottom Line**

As stated earlier, the bottom line of high performance workplaces is higher than competitors because they have been able to engage their employees in the entire business model. Employees are aware of their contributions and expectations and since the communication is never ending, when the going gets tough, the workforce gets tougher.

These company cultures were not made overnight. It is a long and involved process. The Best Places to Work have a value structure in place that drives the culture. Even if you are not in a high level position in your company, you can have a very positive influence on your work environment. Only you can control your emotions and behaviors.