

# The McKenzie Mailer

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For a current list of openings McKenzieHR is recruiting for, click here.

<http://www.mckenziehr.com/jobposting.htm>

Bookkeeper –  
Jacksonville, FL

Custom Sales Manager –  
Apparel Industry  
Jacksonville, FL

Sales Consultant, Pest  
Control – Gainesville,  
Ocala and Jacksonville

Railroad Mechanics -  
Goleta, CA; Manassas,  
VA and Fredrick, MD

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PHR/SPHR Classes to  
start September 11, 2007  
and meet every Tuesday  
evening from 6 to 9 p.m.  
through November 27.

If interested in finding  
out more about the  
program, e-mail us  
directly.

[potential@mckenziehr.com](mailto:potential@mckenziehr.com)

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Bob McKenzie will be one  
of the one of the guest  
speakers for an audio  
conference sponsored by  
the Institute of  
Management and  
Administration (IOMA)  
scheduled for August 2  
from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

## Strategic Human Resources is Not an Oxymoron

We've all heard the jokes about military intelligence and jumbo shrimp being oxymoronic terms. We have also heard that the words "human" and "resources" when put together are mutually exclusive. Since the "Why We Hate HR" appeared in Fast Company magazine a couple of years ago ([http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/97/open\\_hr.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/97/open_hr.html)), there has been an ongoing debate about the role of the Human Resources Department in corporate America. See the many comments to the article:

[http://blog.fastcompany.com/archives/2005/07/27/why\\_we\\_hate\\_talking\\_about\\_hr.html](http://blog.fastcompany.com/archives/2005/07/27/why_we_hate_talking_about_hr.html).

Many HR professionals agree with the article while others have made it their personal mission to discredit the author. The HR professionals who agree with the article state examples of the HR Department being the equivalent of Dr. No. "No, you can't discipline that employee." "No, you can't give your best employee a raise now. It is against our compensation policy." "No, I cannot see you now. I have too much paperwork to do."

Others place blame on top management for having no understanding of, or respect for, the potential value of the Human Resources function. There is a lot of truth to this. It is difficult to overcome this perception when the CEO of the company refers to the HR function as the "Smiles and Giggles Department." Other executives see no other importance to the HR function than making sure that the hamburgers and watermelons are brought to the company picnic. Still others view the HR Department as the disciplinarians who ensure strict adherence to company policies and look out for and stop any violations.

### Too Much Administrivia

One of the major issues with HR is that most of the people in the field are caught up in a mountain of administrative details such as payroll, benefits administration, workers' compensation and unemployment claims, a seemingly continuous stream of employee questions and issues and the never-ending chore of keeping all of the open jobs filled. These are all important tasks that must be completed in a timely basis. Of course, the number one priority of any HR function should be the employees. They ought to be paid correctly and on a timely basis; the benefits should work the way they are supposed to; the HR Department should be approachable to all people employed by the company and HR should also serve as a consultant to the supervisory staff in motivational as well as disciplinary issues. Yet, when all of this is finished, there is little or no time to take care of the strategic issues.

### The Answer in the Form of Questions

The first question that has to be answered is how can you redistribute the administrative work to have more time to spend on strategic planning?

The Operations Department is charged with getting out the product or service in a timely fashion. The Finance Department monitors profitability and investments. The Sales Department is responsible for bringing in new business. Human Resources should be charged with enhancing the culture that attracts and retains talent, and develops and implements ways to improve productivity. For the organization to be successful, all of these functions must gel.

Is your performance management system a continuous process? Are the objectives and performance standards of all employees aligned to those of the department and the company? Do each of your department heads know of and support the goals of the other

department heads? Or is your performance management more of an annual chore in which managers simply check off boxes and asks the employee to sign where indicated?

How is the communications in your company? Do the employees know what your business goals are and their role in achieving them? Do employees get continuous updates on the progress of meeting these goals?

Do your training and development activities provide the necessary knowledge and skills required for your company to continually improve and provide promotional opportunities? When was the last time you provided training that was not required, such as harassment and discrimination training? Are your supervisors and managers trained on your company's values and how to manage to them?

Are you aware of the issues that other departments are having in meeting their objectives. What have you done to assist them? Do the department managers consult with you on business matters? Do you spend time with the managers to get to know their concerns? When was the last time you and the president of the company had lunch together?

Do you have an employee referral program with few employees referring their friends to the company? Do potential candidates seek you out as a good place to work?

There are many more questions and few answers, but the first step in strategic thinking is to do your own SWOT analysis and honestly evaluate your own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The best way to do this is to ask yourself as well as your staff a number of questions. Encourage them to be truthful with your answers. Then ask these same questions of your peers. You may be surprised with the answers you get.

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