

# The McKenzie Mailer

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## “ASK BOB”

Introducing “Ask Bob” this is a new feature to our web site. For no charge you have the opportunity to ask human resource related question of Bob McKenzie, President of McKenzieHR

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### The Second Annual McKenzieHR Human Resource Update

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

8:30- - 1:30

Topics to be Covered:

Wage & Hour Update  
Recruitment & Retention  
FMLA

\$70.00 per person for current clients  
\$95.00 per person for non clients

Includes continental breakfast and lunch.

## Do Machines Mean More Than People?

Let's say you will be purchasing a new computer for your office at an approximate cost of \$10,000. But before you can go out to the local computer store, the accountants make sure you complete long and elaborate cost/benefits analyses, calculating the break even point to make sure that the cost of the product is beneficial to the company. This process also typically involves obtaining a minimum of three quotes and references from three current users of the product or service. After all of the proper procedures are documented thoroughly and the purchase is approved by at least three layers of management, you must now issue a purchase order. The average time to obtain such approval is about 6 months. And three times the cost of the product itself. This is done to ensure that your organization is spending money wisely. Then again, even if you make a mistake and buy a lousy computer, your company can always return it for a new one, sell it at a lower price than the original purchase price or put it in the office of one of the managers who does not know how to use it (it makes him feel important to have a computer on his desk).

If the cost justification is so important to companies, why is it that many of us take the hiring process so casually? Many feel that they are a good judge of character. Others are just too busy to follow good hiring practices. Hiring a rotten employee is worse than purchasing a lousy computer. Unless you are a professional sports team, you can't trade an employee to your competitor for one of their employees and an entry level accountant to be named later. Hiring a professional level employee usually costs more than \$10,000. Taking the time to do it right the first time is better business practice than buying that new computer.

Here are a few common mistakes many hiring authorities make:

### Mistake #1 - Hiring Jane's daughter because Jane does a good job.

Just because Jane does a good job does not mean that Jane's daughter will too. Jane's daughter should be checked out and given the same hiring standards as anyone else. There are good points and bad points about hiring family members. On one hand, family pressure is usually stronger than peer pressure and a family may make sure that others in the family work hard. On the other hand, conflict can more easily enter the workplace – especially when it is necessary to discipline one of the family members.

### Mistake #2 - Going strictly by the gut feeling

Your gut feeling is important and not to be taken lightly. However, check your gut feelings by conducting reference checks and criminal background checks before making a job offer

### Mistake #3 - Hiring for technical skills only

Job skills are important but a cultural fit to your organization may be more important than raw skills. It is essential to ensure that the person you are hiring also thinks and acts in line with your company values. Spend the time necessary to get to know the individual, what motivates him/her, and whether he/she really enjoys doing the work required. How will the other employees in the department get along with the candidate?

### Mistake #4 - Talking too much

If the interviewer is doing more than 25% of the talking, then the interviewer is talking too much. Much more is learned from listening to a candidate than talking to them.

Imagine the potential of people. Take hiring as seriously as purchasing a new computer and your people will become your competitive advantage.