



Workforce Connection

▶ ▶ ▶ Our mission is to assist employers in acquiring and retaining a qualified workforce.

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WORKFORCE CONNECTION

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Invest Now – in Human Capital

While some investors are beginning to consider stock market investments, other organizations are taking this window of time to invest in human capital—those team members who have been faithful to an organization during a struggling economy.



As we begin to prepare for a recovering economy, doesn't it stand to reason that employees need training and development to adjust to new market demands?

*“Feedback from the
Sixty Second
Performance Review
has been highly
positive.”*

– Sam St. Clair
Abilene State School

A variety of workshops have been designed for organizations in this service area at a fraction of the cost of workshops offered by nationally known chains. The Business Solutions Team offers an array of workshops to help your team move forward. Topics such as “Ethics in the Workplace,” “Effective Communication,” “Sixty Second Performance Review,” and “Retaining A Quality Workforce,” can be delivered on-site for your

organization. Jackson Boen, Director of the Blue Cross Blue and Blue Shield Texas – UT System Account, commented “Blue Cross and Blue Shield appreciates the relationship we have with the local Workforce Center in Abilene. We have been able to work directly with the Center on several occasions to develop leadership training tailored to the needs of our management team. We are grateful to the Workforce Center for contributing to our success in Abilene.” Sam St. Clair, HR director for Abilene State School indicated “Feedback from Abilene State School Supervisors and Managers who have completed the Sixty Second Performance Review has been highly positive. Participants have expressed satisfaction with having learned a new tool that is both positive and timely in reinforcing performance expectations for those they supervise.”

■ For additional information on management development workshops, contact Ben Gray (915) 795-4310

Workforce Connection Grows – Electronically

Just a reminder the Workforce Connection is available – electronically. If you would like to receive future editions of the Workforce Connection electronically rather than bulk mail, then send your email address to: Kevin.Hull@twc.state.tx.us. To view current and previous editions of the Workforce Connection, we invite you to log on to our website below.



www.workforcesystem.org

Heavy Equipment Operator Training

Beginning February 2003, twelve individuals will start a 5-week training program to learn new skills in operating heavy equipment. This training program is a coordinated effort by Texas A&M Extension Service, West Central Texas Council of Governments, and the West Central Texas Workforce Center. These individuals will be trained in the operation of various types of heavy equipment including front-end loaders, backhoes, wheel loaders, dozers and dump truck operation. The course will provide hands on training in equipment and excavation safety, preventive maintenance, OSHA standards, work zone control, back filling, stockpiling, trenching and excavating, and hoisting. The class will be completed in mid-March and students will receive a certification.



If this program has the support of area employers and contractors, other classes could be held to fill the need for this specific skill and training. The funding source for this training has been provided by funds from the Workforce Investment Act.

■ For further information contact Steve Collins, (915) 795-4268

ACT WorkKeys – A Unique Workforce Retention Initiative

Texas State Technical College West Texas has implemented a unique approach to workforce screening that has proved highly effective at local industries. The assessment tools used are only a part of the hiring and promotion process. However, the interjection of a standardized screening method, adds increased validity to an effective job placement approach.

The process calls for first using ACT WorkKeys Profiling to perform job analyses for specific, and sometimes all jobs within their organization. Subsequently, the TSTC West Texas' ACT Center have followed that with ACT WorkKeys Assessments which uses the "cut-off levels" identified for specific jobs (during Profiling) to pre-screen the company's new-hires and also for promotions. This is done to provide both the individual and the company with uniquely pertinent information concerning their potential for success at that job position.

The ultimate benefit to the business and the individual is "retention." Companies spend thousands of dollars on training new employees and those promoted to higher positions, many times knowing little about the competence of the individual. The WorkKeys Assessment tool better ensures a more compatible match, saving the individual time and disappointment as well as saving the company their significant investment.

The WorkKeys system will become a valuable assessment tool for personnel directors to use when making hiring decisions. We are excited about the possibilities for area employers.

– Greta Estes
ACT Center Director, TSTC

■ For further information contact Greta Estes, ACT Center Director at TSTC, (915) 734-3665.

Employment Practices Claims May Not be Covered

Does Your Business Insurance Policy Cover Employment Practices Claims?

You open the mail and discover an EEOC notice that one of your employees filed a discrimination complaint against your business. You think, no problem, we have insurance that will pay for a lawyer to handle this claim, and will cover any liability. You report the claim and want to know where to send your lawyer's bills and discover that there is no insurance coverage at all for employment discrimination claims.



Many employers have found out the hard way that they do not have any insurance coverage for employment discrimination claims against them by current or former employees. Most businesses have a Commercial General Liability (CGL) insurance policy to cover liability and defense costs for bodily injury, property damage, personal injury, and advertising injuries (i.e., defamation suits by non-employees). However, many mistakenly believe that their CGL policy provides coverage for employment discrimination claims. Not so.

The employer's insurer promptly refers them to the "employment-related practices exclusion," which excludes coverage for claims or suits because of the refusal to employ a person, termination of an employee, or employment-related practices and policies including demotion, evaluation, reassignment, discipline, defamation, harassment, humiliation, or discrimination directed at that employee. CGL policies also typically exclude coverage for intentional acts, which include discrimination, retaliation, assault, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. These intentional torts are frequently alleged in lawsuits by employees claiming to have been wronged. Most policies also exclude coverage for sexual misconduct, which could be construed to exclude coverage for sexual harassment claims.

Employers should examine their existing CGL policies to find out if they exclude coverage for employment-related practices. Any questions about coverage should be directed to your insurance agent or attorney. Employers can help manage the risk of reemployment-related claims by maintaining up-to-date human resource policies and training programs. Additionally, employers may want to consider purchasing an Employment Practices Liability (EPL) policy, which is designed to provide coverage for employment practices claims excluded from coverage under the CGL policy.

■ Article by Vianei Lopez Robinson and Carolyn Foster
Attorneys, Robinson Law Firm

Best and Worst States to Run a Small Biz

*Wonder where
Texas was
ranked?*

Philipp Harper lists the best and worst states to start a business in December's MSN Business edition. His findings include such factors as taxes, electricity costs, workers' compensation costs, total crime rate, right to work, minimum wage, significant starts, and the number of young businesses created help to account for the rankings. To learn where Texas was ranked go to: www.workforcesystem.org/beststate.htm. If you are interested in the complete article, email your request to: ben.gray@twc.state.tx.us

Workforce Connection

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