

## **December 2008 HR-Xchange Summary: Job Readiness for Today's Workforce**

It was a treat to have Sinclair Community College host the December HR-Xchange Meeting. After networking and dining on the light breakfast provided, it was time to get started on the topic.

Geeta introduced this month's facilitator, Deb Norris, Vice President Workforce Development from Sinclair Community College, whom we were all excited to hear due to her wealth of knowledge and experience.

Deb set the tone by describing how it was 'back in the day' when a company (typically a large company) would 'take an employee in and groom them the company way.' Fast forward to present day and companies don't do that anymore; companies rather expect employees to 'hit the ground running' on day one....companies expect employees to come in with a basic understanding of how to act and behave within the culture of the company. Nowadays there aren't large companies that exist as much in our community but, rather, small to medium sized companies; the rules changed and we didn't tell anyone that they changed. Now employers expect employees to be able to wear a variety of hats and be able to hit the ground running, knowing what is expected of them.

*She posed three questions to the group and the feedback follows each one::*

### **As HR Professionals, what are the top 3 challenges facing you and your organizations in terms of Job Readiness?**

1. Company's policy about bringing people into the company
2. Creating realistic expectations for the new hire(s)
3. Selecting dynamic individuals
4. Being overstretched financially
5. Lacking social skills
6. Lacking effective communication
7. Current pool vs. salary expectations
8. Hiring short-term vs. long-term
9. Lack of development/marketability

### **What do you feel are the 5 top skills required for all employees?**

1. Flexibility

2. Adaptability
3. Accountability
4. Customer Service skills
5. Communication skills
6. Computer skills
7. Life skills

**As a community, how can we be prepared for job readiness in today's workforce?**

- As a community, we need to link together and be the employer voice to set clear expectations for today's workforce.

Deb suggested that employers from the Dayton Region could and perhaps should join together to create a definition of "job readiness" to transcend specific jobs and address the "soft skills" identified in today's discussion. Such a common definition would provide educational institutions and various local and state agencies with a definite target for what job readiness looks like for area employers. If such a defined target was prepared through collaboration, to create a strong and singular voice regarding job readiness expectations, Deb theorizes that educational institutions and agencies would be compelled to listen and perhaps develop programs and certifications around the common requirements.

The way things stand now, with individual employers providing varying lists of expectations of job readiness, providers are having a hard time coming up with resources to meet scattered definitions. Deb gently challenged the HR-Xchange to consider becoming the focal point for creating the common definition. To this end, a small committee will be formed to consider this undertaking on behalf of area employers. If you are interested in participating in this discussion, please email Cindy Swigert at [CSwigert@wpcu.coop](mailto:CSwigert@wpcu.coop).

We planned for another exciting year for our HR-Xchange in the coming year. During our 2008 planning session the committee deliberated over what was most important for our community and over what we heard from various attendees who regularly participated in our forum. As we go into 2009 we want to mirror the pulse 'out there.' So, what have we heard from you and what appear to be the pressing needs as you carry out your day to day responsibilities? Well, during nearly every discussion we have had since August we have noticed a recurring theme begin to emerge... **Doing**

**More With Less.'** Resources are constrained more than ever, especially in light of our economy and employers trying to manage their way through it. As such, we have heard and understood that this is impacting your role and we want to target this as an overarching theme for the next 6 months. We will be using **'Doing More With Less'** as an umbrella theme to steer the given topic that we will be addressing for each month over the first half of the year and will frame our discussion around this theme.

With that said, join us on January 20, 2009 at The Job Center — 1111 S.. Edwin C. Moses Blvd. Rm C2/C3 (enter at South rear entrance) as we discuss:

### **Onboarding...More than New Employee Orientation**

Come and learn why “Orientation is an event and onboarding is a process.” And why “Orientation is to onboarding as feeding is to nurturing.”

These two statements help set the stage to understanding onboarding. Onboarding is a process that begins even before you know someone is a potential candidate to join your organization, and extends through the first anniversary of employment.

Organizations invested in effective onboarding ensure that “bonding” begins to take place with the prospect as soon as—or even before—he or she becomes a potential employee, through hiring, orientation, and throughout year one on the job. Some of the important events throughout the onboarding process include the interview, day one on the job, the 90-day mark, and feedback experiences. Even if the employee/employer relationship doesn't work out in the long run, effective onboarding can help ensure that the individual who leaves your employ will still hold your organization in high regard and act as a satisfied alumnus, rather than a disgruntled ex-employee.

Our January HR X-Change will be facilitated by Rosalie M. Catalano, SPHR, MBA. Rosalie is owner of Keystone HR Consulting, LLC and is also our MVHRA Newsletter Chair. She will briefly discuss the differences between what we traditionally know as new employee orientation and the concept of onboarding. Rosalie will lead us in exploring what our organizations are (or aren't) doing to effectively onboard new employees. Rosalie has been trained in employee retention, a large part of which involves effective onboarding, by Joyce Gioia Herman of The Herman Group.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP at <http://mvhra.org/hr-xchange.php> by Friday, January 16, 2009.

We hope to see you there!

**Geeta, Erin, Sarah, Cindy & Sherri**

**Community Relations Committee**