



health-e headlines

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Industry insider information to help YOU do your job better, faster and smarter

Industry insider

9 resolutions to create a winning corporate culture

Paul Spiegelman, author of *Why Is Everyone Smiling? The Secret Behind Passion, Productivity and Profit*, knows what it takes to create a winning corporate culture. The Beryl Companies, a health care-exclusive call center he founded is recognized as one of the best places to work.

“Tough economic times call for a renewed and intensified focus on employees,” said Spiegelman. “The companies that will succeed and emerge strong from this economic downturn will be those with employees who are loyal, committed, and able to ‘ride the wave.’”

Spiegelman offers 9 resolutions to help leaders create an award-winning culture:

1. **I will show my coworkers that I care.** Let people know that you care about them personally. “At Beryl, we have a behind-the-scenes system that allows me to be notified of important events in employees’ lives,” noted Spiegelman. “People really appreciate a handwritten note, phone call, or other unexpected assistance or recognition during significant events in their lives.”
2. **I will make sure I’m available and approachable for all my employees.** Visit employees in their work environment—not to check up on them, but to provide them an opportunity to talk to you.
3. **I will let my coworkers know that their opinions matter.** Provide opportunities for employees to share their concerns, opinions, suggestions, and experiences. “We have multiple venues for coworkers to let us know what’s on their minds, what they’d like to see changed, or how something can be done better,” Spiegelman said.
4. **I will be a better listener.** Employees can be a bottomless well of information, but you have to listen.
5. **I will not shy away from making tough decisions about current members of our team.** Sometimes an employee who on paper seemed perfect for the position just doesn’t “fit in.” Take an honest inventory of the individuals on your team and

- reassign or remove as needed. A winning team has the right people in the right places at the right time.
6. **I will look for employees who can consistently deliver what our customers need.** The key to success is understanding your customers' needs and consistently meeting or exceeding those expectations. That means making sure that your employees have the right combination of skill and cultural fit.
 7. **I will infuse some fun into the workplace.** We work hard at Beryl, but we play even harder. Look for people who are energized personally and professionally by the joy of having fun.
 8. **I will provide more feedback.** People appreciate honest feedback and perform better as a result of it. Spiegelman has found that frequent, honest, and informal discussions about performance are extremely valuable to employees. This also can help a leader identify those employees who may not be in the right role or right for the company, in general.
 9. **I will help my employees be healthy.** Healthy employees are more productive and have fewer sick days and workers' compensation claims, but they often need help in developing healthy lifestyle habits. You can create your own programs or partner with an organization that specializes in health-management and early intervention for high-risk employees.

More information is available at www.whyyiseveryonesmiling.com.

Bottom-line business

When there's no compensation, will cuddles help?

In tough economic times, those who survive job cuts may suffer shell shock, guilt, and anger, especially with across-the-board spending and salary freezes, according to Michael Stanleigh, a management consultant for the Canadian company Business Improvement Architects. He urges managers to explain what fiscally responsible measures are being taken to protect the business and jobs—and show appreciation to employees for work well done both individually and as a team (when you can't increase salary or give bonuses). **Some of his ideas:** Acknowledge good work in a timely way, face to face with a tone of warmth (best way), a handwritten note (not email), a plaque, pizza lunch brought in, gift certificates for dining out, tickets to sports events or movies.

RESEARCH BRIEFS

- **Does shift work predispose employees to cancer by altering the body's response to hormones?** If so, can a dietary supplement such as selenium help? Researchers at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey hope to answer these questions in a new study looking at circadian rhythms, which control sleep, hunger, hormones, and activity in cells. Hospital workers and shift work volunteers such as police, airline, and factory personnel will be recruited for the study.
- **Migraines affect productivity**, according to a new survey of large employers released by the Midwest Business Group on Health. But most employers don't track

the costs or seriousness of the problem, nor do they know how effective health plans and wellness vendors are at helping employees manage the productivity and costs associated with migraine. The survey is part of an effort by the business and health group to educate employers on the importance of early and ongoing screening to prevent and identify health issues among the workforce.

- **The conflict between work and family demands is strongly associated with unfavorable personal, health, social, and organizational outcomes**, say University of Toronto researchers, writing in the journal *Social Problems*. The conflict comes when employees who have high levels of job autonomy and control over their schedules are more likely to bring their work home, which blurs the role between work and family. Employees wonder, say the researchers, when does work end and non-work life begin?
- **Bottom line.** Investing in employer-sponsored health programs could improve your company's bottom line by reducing medical claim costs, reaffirms a study in *The Milbank Quarterly*, conducted by two execs from the National Business Group on Health. Four wellness programs were targeted. Findings for one company: A hospital system reported direct cost savings of more than \$1 million for 324 participating employees in free annual health checks, Weight Watchers at Work, and an onsite fitness facility.
- **Healthiest states?** Utah, Hawaii, Wyoming, Colorado, and Minnesota, according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index (www.well-beingindex.com).

THE book. If you buy just one book this year with your limited budget, you want *ACSM's Worksite Health Handbook: A Guide to Building Healthy and Productive Companies* (new second edition) edited by Nicolaas Pronk, with chapters by everyone who is anyone in corporate health promotion. Published by Human Kinetics (\$52); order online at www.hkusa.com. You should be given a bachelor's degree just for reading this definitive text.

FREE-quent flyers

FREE Pesticide Shopper's Guide: Reduce exposure by 80% to pesticides by using this handy wallet-sized guide. Know which fruits and vegetables to buy organic (Dirty Dozen) or conventionally grown (Clean 15). Download at www.foodnews.org.

FREE physical activity guide: Download or order print copies at www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/ExerciseGuide of *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging*. Includes chapters on endurance, strength, balance, flexibility, healthy eating and more in 124 pages.

FREE diabetes cost calculation tool: How much money does your company lose each year paying for poor care for diabetes? The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's new tool is designed to help you better estimate how you can save money while still paying health care costs for employees with diabetes. Estimates are based on number of people with diabetes, annual related costs, productivity losses, and potential savings with better management. Go to www.ahrq.gov/populations/diabcostcalc.

Speak up: Join the discussion on health care reform at the government's site www.healthreform.gov. Also click for a copy of *Americans Speak on Health Reform: Report on Health Care Community Discussions*, a new HHS report.

FREE e-cards in support of physical activity: Use new e-cards (which include tips and tools to be more active) by sending motivational email messages based on the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. Go to www.healthfinder.gov (left nav bar). You'll also find the 2009 National Health Observances there.

FREE position paper: The Prevention Institute and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Institute for Health Policy have issued a position paper: *Reducing Inequities in Health and Safety through Prevention*. The paper emphasizes the need for a national commitment and elements of an agenda focused on achieving equitable health outcomes for all. View the paper at www.preventioninstitute.org/documents/HealthEquityMemo_012309.pdf.

FREE fact sheet on street safety: Encourage activity on safe streets. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels. Residents are 65% more likely to walk in a neighborhood with sidewalks. Bike lanes encourage biking. Spread the word on how streets can improve safety and health. Download and print fact sheets at www.completestreets.org/benefits.html.

FREE e-letter: Our sister publication is the *Consumer Health News Service*. In it, we provide health news you can use for your corporate intranet and in-house publications, by paid subscription. As a free download, we have created a 6-page PDF called *Make ends meet*—an e-letter compilation of the best stories over the past few months all targeted to employees during tough economic times. Stories focus on *how to bounce back*, *2 dozen ways to trim your health care costs*, *crisis management when money matters*, and *how to stress less when "ticker" shock hits*. Email publisher@health-eheadlines.com for this free e-letter. Use it. Email it to your employees. Tell colleagues to email us for a copy. There may not be a free lunch, but there is free health information.

Odds @ the end: Have you ever wondered why just one letter makes all the difference between here and there?

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