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## CORPORATE HEALTH REPORT / SEPTEMBER 2009

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

### **Bottom-line business**

#### **It pays to be nice**

Rude work behavior hurts job performance—even for employees who are not the intended targets of abusive workplace remarks—and affects the bottom line too. In their book, *The Cost of Bad Behavior: How Incivility Is Damaging Your Business and What to Do about It*, USC business professor Christine Porath and her colleague Christine Pearson, a management professor, said 80% of employees who were victims of insults or bullying in the workplace lost valuable work time worrying about the incident. Some 78% said their commitment to the organization declined.

Observing discourteous behavior erodes coworkers' ability to think creatively, solve problems, and be good team players. The study results were also published in the journal *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

**How do companies create a civil workplace?** Porath and Pearson outline their top solutions such as these:

- Set zero tolerance expectations.
- Establish norms for all employees, including managers and executives, to live by.
- Weed out trouble early in the employee hiring process.

It's important for executives to think about how good behavior can fit into each part of the company (from the mission statement to recruitment and training). Otherwise, good employees move on. Other examples of rudeness discovered in the survey for the book included employees taking credit for others' efforts and throwing a temper tantrum. Customers who witnessed rudeness did not re-patronize the business 50% of the time.

**What, me worry?** A survey, released by ComPsych, confirms that half of US workers say their work atmosphere felt "worried" due to the economy (16% describe their work atmosphere as "panicky"; 39% said "somewhat worried"; the remainder were cautiously optimistic and hopeful).

**Accreditation.** The CEO Cancer Gold Standard accreditation is given by the CEO Roundtable on Cancer, a nonprofit organization of cancer-fighting CEOs from major US companies. This distinction is given only after a company meets or exceeds the rigorous requirements (view the details and application at [www.cancergoldstandard.org](http://www.cancergoldstandard.org)). The CEO Cancer Gold Standard calls for companies to evaluate their benefits and environment and establish programs to reduce cancer risk among employees.

## RESEARCH BRIEFS

- **Snacks at the office.** Two out of 3 employees find it a challenge to eat healthfully in the workplace. The culprit? Snack options. Findings from the Peapod Biz Bits Survey show that employees say there are too many tempting snacks in their workplaces. Healthier options would be fresh produce (apples, oranges, bananas), but only 36% of companies provide fruits and veggies (in the break room, cafeteria, or vending areas).
- **Sick? Stay home.** Employees who often go to work sick (known as *sickness presenteeism*) have higher rates of future work absences due to illness, according to a Loyola University study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. The findings raise the possibility that measures attempting to decrease work absences could inadvertently have the opposite effect, if they encourage workers to come to work when sick. The fix: Encourage employees to stay home when sick (wise advice with H1N1 looming).
- **Active commuting.** A study in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* suggests that employees who walk or bike to work are more physically fit than their counterparts who get to work in other ways. Seems obvious, but the data confirm that both men and women who are active commuters are more fit and less fat. And of course the researchers recommend that companies promote active commuting.
- **Eat less, save more.** Eating 100 fewer calories per day for each adult would lead to more than \$100 billion in savings over the entire adult population based on today's costs. Savings would be \$58 billion in medical cost savings by reducing the number of cases of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and more. Add to that an increase in national productivity of \$46 billion due to reduced absenteeism and disability. ConAgra Foods commissioned the studies in the *Journal of Health Promotion*.

## FREE-quent flyers

**FREE EAP guide.** National Business Group on Health has released the 40-page *An Employer's Guide to Employee Assistance Programs: Recommendations for Strategically Defining, Integrating, and Measuring Employee Assistance Programs*. Realize the strategic value of and ways the EAP can help achieve business goals. Download at [www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/FINAL%20EAP\\_report\\_2008highres.pdf](http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pdfs/FINAL%20EAP_report_2008highres.pdf).

**FREE assessment of your health focus.** From Segal Consulting, an article, *Is Your Organization a Healthy Enterprise?* Addresses both the health and health care needs of employees, identifies the 3 generations of health focus (treatment, management, healthy) and where you are in the process. Download at [www.sibson.com/publications/perspectives/volume\\_17\\_issue\\_2/healthy.html](http://www.sibson.com/publications/perspectives/volume_17_issue_2/healthy.html).

**FREE white paper on behavioral health parity.** From Milliman, *Preparing for Parity: Investing in Mental Health*, a 4-pager that explains how TARP has affected coverage for behavioral/mental health issues. Is your company's health plan ready? Download at [www.milliman.com/expertise/healthcare/publications/rr/pdfs/preparing-parity-investing-mental-WP05-01-09.pdf](http://www.milliman.com/expertise/healthcare/publications/rr/pdfs/preparing-parity-investing-mental-WP05-01-09.pdf).

**FREE Organomics Calculator.** What's organomics? Being disorganized (files, paperwork, calendar) can cost your business: lost revenue, missed opportunity, added expense. How much? Lost wages, for example, for a company of 100 employees paid \$20/hour is \$500,000/year. Find out what you have to gain with organized employees at Smead's Web site: [www.smead.com/Director.asp?NodeID=977](http://www.smead.com/Director.asp?NodeID=977).

**FREE Web information on worksite obesity prevention programs.** *LEANWorks!* Web site features tools and resources to help businesses implement an effective worksite obesity prevention and weight control program. Includes an interactive cost calculator. Especially for small- to medium-sized businesses with limited resources. From the CDC at [www.cdc.gov/leanworks](http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks).

**FREE journal article on cost of diabetes.** Excess medical expenses and reduced productivity due to diabetes costs the US economy more than \$174 billion annually, a figure that could be reduced by lifestyle changes and preventive care. Three articles in the journal *Population Health Management* examine the challenges presented by the rising number of Americans with diabetes, prediabetes, and gestational diabetes. Free online at [www.liebertpub.com/pop](http://www.liebertpub.com/pop).

**Drive Safely Work Week tool kit available.** Traffic crashes cost employers more than \$60 billion annually, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says 80% of all crashes and 65% of near crashes are due to some form of driver inattention. Plan your campaign for **Oct. 5-9** or anytime with this helpful kit. Price based on number of employees. View materials and goals for *Drive Focused—Drive Smart—Get Home Safely* at <http://trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek/about-dsww.php>.

**From our bookshelf to yours:** Two books not to miss: *Gratitude at Work: How to Say Thank You, Give Kudos, and Get the Best from Those You Lead* by April Kelly, senior manager of the LinkedIn Customer Service Center. Available from [www.WoohooPress.com](http://www.WoohooPress.com). And for employees involved in elder care, this gem: *Caregiving without Regrets: 3 Steps to Avoid Burnout and Manage Disappointment, Guilt and Anger* by Dr. Vicki Rackner, a physician dedicated to enhancing the doctor/patient relationship and founder of The Caregiver Club, at [www.TheCaregiverClub.com](http://www.TheCaregiverClub.com).

**Odds @ the end:** Americans, on average, eat 18 acres of pizza every single day.

### **Is your company ready?**

Have you thought about what your company will do during a pandemic flu outbreak? Thought so. Half of surveyed companies are creating contingency plans, but a fourth of companies are, so far, doing nothing.

Can you answer these questions?

- What can your company do to keep employees healthy during an outbreak?
- Can you send sick employees home? Do you have to pay them?
- Can you require a fit-for-duty physical?
- What health information do we need to tell employees?
- Should you supply masks/respirators? Do they work?
- Will the seasonal flu shot protect against H1N1? Should we schedule flu shot clinics? How can we tell the difference between H1N1 and seasonal flu?
- Does our health plan pay for antiviral drugs?

These questions and more are answered in a comprehensive special report available to you, from the publisher of the *Corporate Health Report*.

Here are the facts:

The costs of absenteeism are expected to be high.

A disease outbreak falls in the same category as a workplace threat such as a fire or tornado. You are required by law to do what you reasonably can to protect employees.

Sometimes information is the best preparation.

Email us for your free copy of a 9-page Special Report entitled ***Pandemic Flu: What Your Company Needs to Do Now*** at [publisher@health-eheadlines.com](mailto:publisher@health-eheadlines.com). Spread the word and tell your colleagues and fellow health promotion practitioners about the availability of this free report.

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