

Chamber News

www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com

September/October 2008

News to Know

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Visit Every Member Campaign

From Membership Director Kevin Donahue

These visits are more than an opportunity for us to inform members about our products and services. They also provide the perfect opportunity for us to get to know our members, to see first-hand the diversity of the Rochester Business Alliance membership, ranging from small home-based businesses to major manufacturers, from rural offices to urban factories. We're also learning that in this electronic age, there's still nothing that beats personal contact, that face-to-face "thank you."

Friday Business Briefings

Sept. 5

Take Control of Your Benefits - Using Voluntary Benefits Effectively

Sept. 19

Benefits for Same Sex Spouses and Domestic Partners

Oct. 3

Investigations into Allegations of Harassment or Unlawful Discrimination

Time: 8-9 a.m.

Location: Rochester Business Alliance,
150 State St.

Open to: Members only (no cost)

To register, call Edna Smith at (585) 256-4641

or e-mail Edna.Smith@RBAAlliance.com

Rochester
Business Alliance
The Regional Chamber of Commerce

Tools for Your Small Business

The Rochester Business Alliance is focused on supporting small business, which is proving to be a key economic driver and our region's best hope for economic revitalization.

A look at the Rochester Business Alliance membership rolls tells the story: Nearly 90 percent of our members locally employ 100 or fewer workers. Your regional chamber of commerce is committed to providing resources and services aimed helping our members to be successful. And many of our offerings – be it advocacy on key issues affecting business, expert advice for start-ups, HR support, training, networking opportunities, affiliate membership or member-to-member discounts, – are particularly beneficial to small businesses.

With an eye toward developing businesses, we recently launched our Small Business Assistance Center, in partnership with SUNY Brockport Small Business Development Center and SCORE Rochester. Since May, the center has offered twice monthly, by-appointment sessions with counselors offering advice on such issues as developing business plans, obtaining financing, marketing and operations. This fall, we're supplementing our already extensive catalog of training courses with a series tailored to small business (see information below).

"Our partnership with the Rochester Business Alliance is an opportunity to reach small businesses that may not be aware of the free business counseling services available,"

said Larry Feldman, a counselor with SCORE. "And their great downtown location is a positive, giving the business community a feeling of trust."



Jim Soufleris, Jr. of SUNY Brockport Small Business Development Center offers free counseling advice

The Small Business Assistance Center is an excellent fit with our other offerings.

Our affiliate group, the Small Business Council provides its members with programs, including its motivational headliner speaking events, informational boot camp training and social events. To learn more about SBC, log on to www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com and click on affiliated groups under the "services" listing.

Our member communications – including Business Intelligence Report and the weekly e-mails – are filled with useful information.

Our HR Helpline, Business Information department and RBA Staffing Solutions stand ready with support. And our member-to-member discounts can help with the bottom line with savings on everything from office supplies to payroll to printing to marketing to technology support. For more information, contact Membership Director Kevin Donahue at (585) 256-4651. ★

Small Business Development Series

- Sept. 23 - How to Start a Business

Personal skills and personality as well as business plan quality, knowledge of customers, competition, financing record keeping and legal requirements all combine to determine the ultimate success.

- Oct. 21 - How to Write a Business Plan

Learn more about the basic elements required by funding institutions screening applicants for business loans. Learn how to create a business plan tailored to your individual strengths.

- Nov. 18 - Recordkeeping for Small Business

Learn the ins and outs of tax issues that are sure to affect your business. This seminar is offered to entrepreneurs with a new business idea and owners who have launched a small business.

Programs, offered at no charge, will be held 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., at the Rochester Business Alliance, 150 State St. Registration is required - sign up online at www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com.

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Sandra Parker
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Ellen Baniak
Vice President of RBA Staffing Solutions
(585) 256-4630

Barbara Cutrona
Vice President of business information and training
(585) 256-4642

Ellen Rosen
Vice President of marketing, communications and membership
(585) 256-4616

Chris Wiest
Vice President of public policy and advocacy
(585) 256-4626

Kevin Donahue
Membership director
(585) 256-4651

Nina Shelton
Director of group health insurance
(585) 256-4644

Kristin Purdy
Newsletter editor
(585) 256-4615

For a complete staff list, visit our website at www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com

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Articles printed are for information only and are not intended to render legal advice.

From the President and CEO...

September marks the beginning of a busy season for the Rochester Business Alliance and its affiliates.

The event-packed season kicks off Sept. 10 with the annual Transportation Council Clambake, held at the Burgundy Basin Inn, featuring an all-you-can-eat buffet and raffles.

The annual Rochester Business Ethics Awards Luncheon is set for Sept. 23. The Rochester Business Alliance is proud to be a sponsor of this event, along with the Rochester Chapter of the Society of Financial Service Professionals and St. John Fisher College. Keynote speaker is W. Michael Hoffman, Ph.D., founder and executive director of the Center for Business Ethics and the Hieken Professor of Business and Professional Ethics at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass. The award recipient will be named from among five finalists: Schuler-Hass Electric Corp., Midnight Janitorial, Siewert Equipment Co., Wayne Regional Orthopaedics, PLLC, and Doyle Security Systems Inc.

Then on Sept. 25, the Rochester Hispanic Business Association presents its Business Person of the Year award to Hiram Hernandez, Sr., CEO of First Capital Payments. This event includes a luncheon and a business expo.

The Small Business Council presents its Business Person of the Year Award on Wednesday, Oct. 15. The 2008 finalists are: Lofti Belkhir, CEO and founder of Kirtas Technologies, Inc., Suzanne Clarridge, president and CEO of My Brands Inc., John Doyle, Jr., president of Doyle Security Systems Inc., Karla Fichter and Kirsten Werner, CEO and president of Diamond Packaging, Kenton Fiske, president and CEO of SenDEC Corp., Erik Grimm, president of Suburban Disposal Corp., William Pollock, president

and CEO of Optimation Technology Inc., and Jerry Valentine, president of Surmotech Inc. Keynote speaker will be Arunas A. Chesonis, chairman and CEO of PAETEC Holding Corp. and a Rochester Business Alliance board member.



Sandra Parker

On Friday, Oct. 31, the Rochester Black Business Association hosts its daylong Annual Luncheon and Trade Show, featuring vendors, workshops and networking. The keynote speaker will be T. Andrew Brown, managing partner of Brown & Hutchinson and president of the Monroe County Bar Association.

Wrapping up this flurry of galas is the biggest business event of the year - the 2008 Rochester Top 100 Luncheon and Annual Membership Meeting. Set for Nov. 5., the Rochester Top 100 honors the fastest-growing, privately held, locally based companies in our nine-county region. Attendance last year topped 2,000, and we hope to draw another record crowd this year.

Each year, I look forward to these luncheons. They give all of us a chance to rejoice in the many success stories playing out in our area, a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit that launched our community and remains its best hope for the future.

For more details about these and other events, please visit our web site at www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com. ★

Upcoming Events

September 23	RBEA Awards	12 - 1:30 p.m.
September 25	Breakfast with Our CEO	8 - 9 a.m.
October 2	Meet the Top 100 - Diamond Packaging	7:45 - 9 a.m.
October 27	Business After Hours at Casa Larga	5 - 7 p.m.

For more information or to register, visit our calendar online at www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com.

Save the Date: RBBA Annual Luncheon

The Rochester Black Business Association has announced T. Andrew Brown as the keynote speaker for this year's Rochester Black Business Association Annual Luncheon and Tradeshow 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 31 at the Hyatt Regency.

Brown is the managing partner of the Brown & Hutchinson law firm and president of the Monroe County Bar Association. He and other guest speakers will speak to this year's theme

of "Growing Your Business to the Next Level." There will be workshops, vendor booths, networking, and more.

For more information about vendor opportunities and tickets, contact Mark Dulaney at (585) 225-3077 or email md@RochesterBlackBusiness.com. ★



JOBSAPALOOZA Event Scheduled

Employers are invited to join in the region's first job fair of 2009, JOBSapalooza, sponsored by the Rochester Business Alliance and Rochester area colleges. The goal of Jobsapalooza is to attract and retain the area's young talent.

Strategically scheduled during college winter break, the job fair always attracted soon-to-be graduates of Rochester area colleges and those students home on break. In 2008, more than 50 employers had the opportunity to present their openings to about 400 job seekers.

JOBSapalooza, set for 4 - 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 8 at the DoubleTree Inn, 1111 Jefferson Road, Henrietta, offers employers a great opportunity to recruit interns and new full- or part-time employees from a pool of students, upcoming graduates of area colleges and alumni who want to stay in the area. The job fair is a statewide event, being held the same day in Buffalo, Albany and Long Island.

Employers are encouraged to register early; space is limited and past years has sold out. Visit our website's calendar to register your company for the job fair (www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com). ★



Rochester Business Alliance Presents its 22nd Annual Top 100 Awards Ceremony and Annual Membership Meeting

November 5, 2008



Tickets are available for this luncheon held at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Tickets are \$75 per person or \$585 for a table of 10.

Nearly 230 businesses have been nominated for the Top 100 recognition. This is the 22nd anniversary of the event. Come network and cheer on

your favorite local businesses.

Last year's top three winners were: Ecovation, Inc., Terry Tree Service, LLC, and SenDEC Corporation.

Who will be the No. 1 company in 2008?

To purchase tickets, call Susan George at (585) 256-4612 or e-mail Susan.George@RBAAlliance.com

From the US Chamber

America, the Burdened

By Thomas J. Donohue, President and CEO



A recent report from the Competitive Enterprise Institute reminds Americans of the tremendous toll taken by the regulatory state - some \$1.6 trillion annually. Anyone running a business needs no reminder. Tentacles of the regulatory beast reach into every aspect of business operations of firms both large and small.

For many years, the U.S. Chamber has led an effort to bring common sense to the rulemaking process. We believe that regulations should address legitimate problems, be based on sound science, and provide more benefit than cost.

The Financial Accounting Standards Board has proposed a regulation requiring a company facing a lawsuit to list on its financial statement its best-guess estimate of what that litigation could end up costing. That would help trial lawyers put a price on their lawsuits. It's a perfect example of a regulation in search of a problem.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration wants interested parties to comment on a key climate change report without releasing all the studies on which it is based. Asking the public to comment on documents it has not seen is about as far from the scientific method as one can possibly get.

The U.S. Chamber is fighting a new proposal requiring virtually all federal contractors and subcontractors to enroll in the Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system (also known as the basic pilot program), which is intended to check the work authorization of employees. The only problem is that the system is riddled with flaws, prohibitively expensive, and unnecessarily difficult to implement.

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In each issue of Chamber News, we'll feature information on one of our six affiliated groups. This issue, our spotlight is on the Rochester Hispanic Business Association.



By Ed Navarro
Council Chairman

At the Rochester Hispanic Business Association, We Roc! 2008 has been a good year with a number of activities in the community in support of our mission, and we have welcomed several new members.

In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 through Oct. 15), RHBA and several of its members are sponsoring, in partnership with the *Democrat and Chronicle*, the Hispanic American History Supplement. The 16-page publication highlights this year our neighbor to the South, Mexico, and the influence and contributions of Mexican Americans in the US, the largest sub-group among Hispanics in the country. This educational supplement is distributed to schools and libraries in Rochester and near-by counties.

On Sept. 25, at our Annual Gala Luncheon at the Riverside Convention Center, we will honor the 2008 Hispanic Business Person of the Year. This year's honor is bestowed on Hiram Hernandez, Sr., CEO of First Capital Payments. Mr. Hernandez, a native of Puerto Rico, has been a business person for over 30 years, pursuing opportunities in his country of birth and Costa Rica before moving to Florida and eventually to our community.

To find out more about RHBA, please visit www.RochesterHBA.com. ★

Upcoming Affiliate Events

Greater Rochester Quality Council

- Implementing Quality Improvements: How Can I Gain Acceptance - Sept. 18
- Root Cause Analysis Presentation - Oct. 16

Rochester Black Business Association

- Annual Luncheon and Tradeshow - Oct. 31

Rochester Hispanic Business Association

- Business Person of the Year Gala Luncheon and Expo - Sept. 25

Small Business Council

- Small Business Boot Camp: Internet-based Marketing - Sept. 10
- Golf Scramble - Sept. 18
- Small Business Boot Camp: IT Infrastructure: Selecting the Right Tools - Oct. 1
- 24th Annual Gala Luncheon - Oct. 15

Transportation Council

- Clambake at the Burgundy Basin Inn - Sept. 10
- Controlling Freight Expense - Oct. 22

For more information, visit the [Affiliated Groups page on our website - www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com](http://www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com)



A Sound Marketing Strategy is a Must

Many people often equate marketing with sales and advertising. These are important elements of a marketing strategy. There is a host of tools and tactics that can increase the visibility and attractiveness of your business to potential customers.

The key is to think of marketing not as a single action but rather a combination of steps designed to identify, attract and retain profitable customers and to differentiate your business from the competition. It encompasses everything from your company name, logo, and service lines to advertisements, public relations, presence at trade shows, and community involvement.

To prepare yourself for marketing, create a detailed profile of your ideal prospect. As you create your marketing message, aim it at them and list the benefits they will receive. Be certain your message highlights the special knowledge and expertise you offer.

Look for ways to make the buying process easier for your customers. Simplify everything; eliminate potential interruptions in the sales

process and make decision-making painless for your customers.

Put your marketing budget in proper perspective. Customers are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages and images daily. Set a budget and a pace that lets you market continuously.

Match your marketing to your primary market. If it's a local market, then that's where your marketing focus should be. Broadly focused newspaper or radio advertising, for example, might be the wrong choice. Instead, consider marketing neighborhood-by-neighborhood.

A good place to find marketing help is the American Marketing Association's web site, MarketingPower.com. The Best Practices section contains valuable guidance for small businesses in research, Internet marketing, advertising, public relations, customer service tips, and many others.

To learn more, contact the Rochester SCORE office at (585) 263-6473 or visit www.scorerochester.org. ★

Unshackle Upstate Update



By Chris Wiest
Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy



Unshackle Upstate was pleased with the recent passage of a brownfields reform bill, a significant bill on its agenda, and is now focusing on additional priorities during the legislative recess.

Redevelopment of brownfields - blighted commercial properties with contamination problems that lower property values and hamper economic growth - is essential to the revitalization of Upstate, and has been a priority for Unshackle Upstate.

The new law provides greater fiscal certainty to the state through a redesigned tax credit process and ends the moratorium on applications to the program. It is intended to jump-start

redevelopment projects, which will support job-creation efforts. Unshackle Upstate was actively engaged on this issue and will continue to push for reforms not included in this bill, as well as for representation on the 15-member state Brownfield Advisory Board.

Coalition leaders applaud the Legislature and Gov. Paterson for adopting brownfield reform this session.

On to other issues:

The New York Property Tax Cap Coalition has called for the Legislature to adopt the governor's proposal to cap annual school property tax increases at 4 percent or 120 percent of the rate of inflation, whichever is less. On July 29, we hosted a public rally in support of the cap, featuring Kenneth Adams, CEO of the Business Council of New York State, and Thomas Suozzi, Nassau County Executive and chair of the New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief.

New York's property taxes are 79 percent above the national average, and continue to harm New York's economy by causing businesses and residents to leave Upstate for more competitive areas. To learn more, go to www.taxcapnow.org.

Near the end of session, both houses passed the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. Despite Unshackle Upstate's urging of a veto, the governor signed the bill into law.

Employers with 50 or more workers will now be required to provide notice of a mass layoff, plant closing or relocation at least 90 days in advance. Under federal law, the WARN act only applies to employers with 100 or more employees, and notification is required 60 days in advance.

To learn more about Unshackle Upstate and how you can help, log on to www.UnshackleUpstate.com. ★

Public Policy - Political Action Committee

On Nov. 4, Americans will go to the polls to cast their votes in a variety of races. While much of the focus has been on the race for U.S. President, we have some interesting races right in our own backyard - particularly in the state Senate.

Several local races will likely play a key role in determining if Republicans, who have led the state Senate for more than 40 years, maintain their majority in 2009. Democrats in the New York State legislature have targeted certain Upstate races in hopes of changing control of the state Senate.

The Rochester Business Alliance, through its political action committee, will be endorsing candidates in all local senate and assembly races this fall. Our

11-member political action committee - The Committee for a Strong Economy - conducts an endorsement process each year to identify candidates dedicated to the economic well-being of our community and supportive of member interests.

A candidate who wishes to be considered for an endorsement must complete a questionnaire that focuses on issues that affect employers and citizens in our region. In early October, the candidates are interviewed by the committee as well as other Rochester Business Alliance members, who then take a "straw vote" to determine which candidate, if any, deserves endorsement.

Endorsements are officially announced at our annual Endorsement Night in October and posted on our website prior to the election to assist employers and employees with voting decisions. Last year, the committee endorsed 15 candidates for local seats in Monroe County and the City of Rochester, of which 14 were elected.

If you have questions or would like to participate in the candidate interview process, please contact Colleen DiMartino at (585)256-4627.★

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Independent Contractor or Employee?

Lately, we have received several inquiries on the HR Helpline regarding independent contractors vs. employees. With increased enforcement by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Department of Labor, members should carefully review the information below as well as additional details available on the IRS website prior to using an independent contractor.

It is critical that you, the employer, correctly determine whether the individuals providing services are employees or independent contractors. Generally, you must withhold income taxes, withhold and pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, and pay unemployment tax on wages paid to an employee. You do not generally have to withhold or pay any taxes on payments to independent contractors.

Before you can determine how to treat payments you make for services, you must first know the business relationship that exists between you and the person performing the services. The person performing the services may be an

independent contractor, employee (common-law employee), statutory employee, or statutory nonemployee. In determining whether the person providing service is an employee or an independent contractor, all information that provides evidence of the degree of control and independence must be considered.

Common Law Rules

Facts that provide evidence of the degree of control and independence fall into three categories:

- Behavioral: Does the company control or have the right to control what the worker does and how the worker does his or her job?
- Financial: Are the business aspects of the worker's job controlled by the payer? (This includes things such as how worker is paid, whether expenses are reimbursed, who provides tools/supplies, etc.)
- Type of Relationship: Are there written contracts or employee-type benefits (i.e. pension plan, insurance, vacation pay, etc.)? Will the relationship continue and is the work performed a key aspect of the business?

Businesses must weigh all these factors when determining whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor. There is no "magic" or set number of factors that "makes" the worker an employee or an independent contractor, and no one factor stands alone in making this determination. The keys are to look at the entire relationship, consider the degree or extent of the right to direct and control, and finally, to document each of the factors used in coming up with the determination. After reviewing the three categories of evidence, if you are still unsure if a worker is an employee or an independent contractor, the business can file Form SS-8, Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes and Income Tax Withholding (PDF) with the IRS. The form may be filed by either the business or the worker. The IRS will review the facts and circumstances and officially determine the worker's status. For more detail on the factors above, go to the IRS website at: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=99921,00.html. ★

Source: Internal Revenue Service website

'08-'09 Senior HR Executive Forum Series

The Senior Human Resource Executive Forums meet monthly, providing invaluable opportunities for networking and discussion of critical issues likely to impact the success of their companies. These forums are based on organizational employment size and offer participation to the senior HR executive/top HR professional in Corporate and Partner member companies.

The two forums available by size are: Small Company Forum (less than 250 employees)

and Large Company Forum (more than 250 employees). A nonrefundable annual registration fee of \$185 is required and covers all eight meetings for the October 2008 - May 2009 series. For more information, please contact Kathy Novak at (585) 256-4618 or e-mail Kathy.Novak@RBAAlliance.com. ★

For more information on RBA forums, visit this address: www.rochesterbusinessalliance.com/2006/10/hr_forums.aspx and click on the forum of interest.

New RBA Forum Offered

The Employee Relations Forum is the newest Human Resource Forum hosted by Rochester Business Alliance. As you know, employment relationships are in a constant state of evolution, due in part to changing business needs, laws, and regulations, but also due to the work environment which can lead to personality conflicts between employees. This forum was created based on member feedback to help address employee relations issues by providing an opportunity for participants to discuss with other human resource professionals and learn from their past experiences and suggestions. When needed, a field expert, such as an employment law attorney, will attend the meeting to share his or her expertise. Sample meeting topics may include conducting an investigation, employee discipline, performance management, understanding generational differences, managing change, employee retention and engagement tactics, etc.

A nonrefundable annual registration fee of \$125 is required and covers all meetings for the 2008-2009 series. The forum runs every other month, October - May. For more information, contact Jennifer Suppé at (585) 256-4608 or e-mail Jennifer.Suppe@RBAAlliance.com. ★

Survey Spotlight

Survey	Questionnaires Mailed (week of)	Deadline Date (week of)	Release Date (week of)
Policies and Benefits		Sept. 15	Feb. 2009
Holiday Closing Report	In Progress		Oct. 1

There's still time to participate in the Policies and Benefits and Holiday Closing surveys. For more information, please contact Jennifer Suppé at (585) 256-4608 or Jennifer.Suppe@RBAAlliance.com

Choose Carefully: The Employee Free Choice Act



By David Kresock
Harter Secrest & Emery LLP



In 2007, Representative George Miller (D-CA) and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced legislation that would fundamentally modify the National Labor Relations Act. Dubbed “The Employee Free Choice Act of 2007” (H.R. 800/S. 1041), the new law proposes an expedited process for employees to form a union, and creates new procedures for a union to reach a first collective bargaining agreement. The EFCA also mandates federal court injunctions for certain unfair labor practices during union organizing drives, and substantially increases the penalties for violations of employee rights.

The EFCA proposes to amend the National Labor Relations Act in three key areas, the first of which is related to forming a new union. Under current law, if an employer declines recognition to a union claiming to represent a majority of its employees, then the National Labor Relations Board must conduct and supervise a secret ballot election before it can certify a union. Generally, unless an employer consents to a “card-check” by a neutral third party, a union is entitled to certification only if it

obtains a majority of the votes cast by employees in a NLRB election. The EFCA would require the NLRB to certify a union as the bargaining representative of a group of employees through a “card-check” process, without an election. Under the proposed law, if the NLRB finds that a majority of employees in an appropriate unit have signed valid authorization cards designating a union as their bargaining representative, then the NLRB must certify the union as the employees’ representative. The new process totally eliminates the need for either employer consent or an employee vote.

The second key provision of the EFCA proposes a new procedure for a union and an employer to reach a first collective bargaining agreement. Currently, employers have a duty to bargain in good faith, but are under no obligation to reach an agreement and there is no fixed timetable for the bargaining process. The amendments proposed by the EFCA require that the parties begin bargaining within ten days of a union demand for negotiations. If an employer and the union are unable to reach an agreement for a first contract within ninety days, then either party may seek mediation through the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. If no contract is reached within thirty days after a request for mediation, then the contract dispute is referred to mandatory interest arbitration. The results of the interest arbitration are binding on the parties for a period of two years.

The third key provision of the EFCA proposes stronger remedies and penalties against employers for violations occurring while employees are attempting to organize or obtain a first contract. Under current law, remedies are generally limited solely to “make whole” remedies such as back pay and reinstatement. In cases of egregious violations by an employer, the NLRB may order the employer to negotiate with a union without an election. Under the EFCA, the NLRB must seek a federal court injunction against an employer whenever it finds “reasonable cause” to believe that the employer has threatened or actually discharged or discriminated against employees, or engaged in other conduct significantly interfering with employee rights, while employees are organizing or attempting to reach a first contract. The EFCA also increases the penalties for discharging or discriminating against an employee during an organizing campaign or first contract drive. Under the EFCA, an employee subjected to unlawful discharge or discrimination is entitled to three times his or her back pay. In addition, an employer may also incur civil penalties of up to \$20,000 per violation if the employer is found to have willfully or repeatedly violated employee rights during an organizing campaign or first contract drive.

The House of Representatives passed the EFCA on March 1, 2007, and on the same day the EFCA was placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar. The EFCA was subsequently referred to committee when, by a vote of 51 to 48, its supporters failed to obtain the 60 votes necessary to end debate on the bill and call for a vote. Barack Obama co-sponsored the EFCA in the Senate, and John McCain opposed its passage.

Both supporters and opponents of the EFCA are closely watching the outcome of the November elections, and expect that a Democratic win will ultimately result in passage of the EFCA or some other proposal to amend the National Labor Relations Act. ★

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The Rochester Business Alliance will be hosting a trip to China in March 2009 with three departure dates: March 17, 18, and 19. The nine-day trip visits Beijing, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Shanghai with an optional side trip to Xi-an.






Details coming soon on our web site

Wellness in the Workplace

Worksite Wellness in the Long Term

By Patti Singer

Worksite wellness programs are close to becoming standard operating procedure. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 62



percent of all companies are trying to improve employee health and save money on health care. Because obesity is seen as a leading driver of health care costs (*Health Affairs*, 2004), many programs target weight loss.

Researchers know the programs work short term, but they can't tell how well the interventions do over time. Often, the programs aren't designed for scrutiny, don't have comparison and control groups and aren't reported in peer-reviewed journals. Therefore, the potential for worksites to have a sizeable influence on public health may go unfulfilled.

Drs. Michael A. Benedict and David Arterburn looked at the track record of worksite weight-loss programs (*American Journal of Health Promotion*, July-August, Vol. 22, No. 6).

Of 1,019 studies published after 1994, only 11 met their study criteria. Most focused on education and counseling. Only seven were randomized controlled trials. Details were sketchy or lacking about whether programs were held on company time, onsite, type of exercise used, and environmental (cafeteria menu) or economic (cash incentives) influences.

Most interventions met the goal of having participants lose weight by the end of the program. The programs lasted from two to 18 months, and after that, little to no tracking was done. Consequently, the researchers couldn't gauge the return on investment. That's not to say that the programs wouldn't pay off. But the resources spent implementing a wellness program must be matched by commitment to evaluate and track long-term results. ★

Patti Singer, M.S. Ed., is with the Worksite Health Alliance of Greater Rochester (www.whagr.org).

Health, Safety and Environment

How to Lose Good Employees Quickly

By Chip Dawson

It's common to have workers with what appear to be simple injuries out of work for extended periods of time, leading to frustration on the part of the employer and the employee and extensive operating and workers' compensation costs. When this happens, the employee often gets the bulk of the blame. Almost overnight, a "good, conscientious, long-service worker" becomes a malingeringer and someone who is trying to scam the workers' compensation system. The shame is it's rarely the employee's fault.

Studies confirm that less than one percent of injured employees are trying to scam the system. So, what's the story on the other 99 percent? Truth is, the system is letting them down. Dr. Elizabeth McGlynn of RAND Health has found in a study that an employee with a back injury has a one-in-three chance of getting prompt and appropriate care on the first medical visit. Too often, a physician may prescribe muscle relaxants and extensive diagnostic procedures requiring several days away from work when the proper treatment might be over-the-counter pain relief and return to work on modified duty.

Once out of work, the employee may be frustrated with the lack of progress. He or she may lose muscle tone, have side effects from drugs and develop an illness mindset. Add to this the social isolation of not being at work where friends and a support system can help keep spirits up. Busy supervisors may fail to check in on the employee and provide encouragement. There may be fear about job security (which may be real if the company does not see the injury as valid).

As the weeks go by, the chance for return to full employment lessens. One study reports

that after an absence of 12 weeks, there is only a 50/50 chance of return to full employment.

Another sad finding is in a report by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Only a small fraction of medically excused days are medically required. In other words, the person could be at work, even on modified duty, were it not for treatment delays, communications issues, management not paying attention to the needs of the employee and other factors having nothing to do with recovery.

The solution is simple. Pay attention to your injured people, lobby for the appropriate treatment, stay in touch, bring them in on modified duty and trust that model employees don't suddenly decide to stick it to the company.

Source material for this article comes from a June 2008 *Professional Safety* magazine article by Frank Pennachio titled "The Myth of the Bad Employee."

If you have HSE questions or column suggestions, or would like to be added to the e-mail HSE Update list, contact Chip Dawson at (585) 425-1639 or chipdawson@aol.com. ★



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www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com

The Rochester Business Alliance offers a variety of networking events each month. Below are some of the highlights from our Business After Hours event August 21 at the future site of Pier 45. For more photos, visit our Networking page on our web site. Check our events calendar to sign up for the next Business After Hours on Oct. 27 at Casa Larga Vineyards.

Business After Hours at the Port of Rochester August 21



Guests enjoyed frozen drinks and Caribbean themed appetizers and desserts from the Rochester Riverside Convention Center



More than 200 people registered for the event, set at the future site of Pier 45, a tapas restaurant at the Port of Rochester



A steel drum entertained our guests as they enjoyed the late summer weather and an incredible view of the Port of Rochester



Joe Floreano, executive director of the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Carlos Carballada, commissioner of economic development for the city of Rochester, and Sandy Parker, president and CEO of the Rochester Business Alliance, welcome guests

The Importance of Employee Retention

By Ellen Baniak
Vice President of RBA
Staffing Solutions



While the federal government reported unemployment at a 4-year high of 5.7 percent in July, the Rochester region is still experiencing shortages of qualified employees in many areas, such as healthcare and skilled trades. While having a solid recruitment plan is important to offset the challenges, it is equally important to have an effective retention plan.

Turnover among current employees is time-consuming and costly. Backfilling a position requires advertisements, training, interview time and pre-employment testing, which can add up very quickly. It is important to be aware of your retention rates and to take steps to improve it. Used together, employee satisfaction surveys and exit interviews are useful tools to learn what areas your organization needs to improve to help increase your retention rates.

The 2007/2008 RBA Policies and Benefits Survey showed that of the 130 respondents, 76.9 percent conducted an exit interview on or before an employee's last day. At its most basic level, an exit interview can be used to find out

why an employee is leaving your organization, but it is also an opportunity to gather useful suggestions and feedback as to ways to make improvements.

The web site Insightlink Communications suggests you take a systematic approach to performing exit interviews including:

- Gathering and collating the data in a structured manner
- Aggregating the results for the organization as a whole
- Analyzing the findings to identify trends, patterns and themes
- Using the results to determine and implement strategies to increase retention and reduce turnover

Unfortunately, while a high number of companies perform exit interviews, we often see a disengagement after the information is gathered. In order to be of value, the information must be reviewed and action taken on it.

For several years now, RBA Staffing Solutions has been helping our members as an outside, third-party performing exit interviews on their departing employees. Our members have found value in having the exit interviews completed by an impartial source. We are currently working on taking this program to the next level to

help not only gather the data, but support the analysis of it. Through changes in our website, we will be able to accept on-line ordering of exit interviews. This system will allow us to compile candidate responses into a database that can be used for generating analysis reports.

For more information, please contact me at (585) 256-4630 or Ellen.Baniak@RBAAlliance.com. ★

RBA Staffing Solutions Contacts

Ellen Baniak
Vice president of RBA Staffing Solutions
(585) 256-4630
Ellen.Baniak@RBAAlliance.com

Burt Parks
Contract staffing manager
(585) 256-4639
Burt.Parks@RBAAlliance.com

Scott Whipkey
Professional placement recruiter
(585) 256-4633
Scott.Whipkey@RBAAlliance.com

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Information you may have missed

The Business Intelligence Report, e-mailed to members each month as a complimentary membership benefit is a digest of the latest business news compiled from more than 150 sources. Watch your inbox each month for a new issue.

Trends

Shorter workweek proposed

In an effort to retain workers who might be considering quitting and finding a new job at a company that is closer to home, more employers are offering a 4-day workweek as a perk that reduces the number of gas-guzzling commutes.

Retail theft on the rise

Retail and law enforcement experts agree that they've seen an increase in store theft — and not only from customers. Less expensive technologies are available to monitor employee action.

Tips

Improve customer retention

At least once a quarter, touch base with the 20 percent of your customers who generate 80 percent of your business. Act fast when someone grouses - a complaint addressed with swiftness can turn a dissatisfied customer into a highly loyal one.

Responding to a lead from your website

A salesperson is 100 times more likely to reach a prospect immediately after getting an online lead compared to waiting just 30 minutes later.

Chamber Membership...What's In It For Me and My Business?

By Kevin Donahue
Director of
Membership and
Business Development



There's a common misconception that chamber memberships are only valuable if you attend all of the events. While participation is ideal, the reality is that time is precious, and we recognize that it's tough for a chamber program to compete with job responsibilities and family events.

That's why we want to ensure that your chamber membership provides value in a variety of ways that don't burden your busy schedule. How can we do that? Every member we talk with is looking for two things – a way to save time and a way to save money. So the services we provide are aimed at just that.

Have you ever spent time on any of the following?

- Finding the lowest price office supplies
- Looking for a qualified candidate for employment
- Conducting reference checks
- Tracking down an answer to a human resource issue
- Training employees
- Researching NYS Labor Laws

If you answered yes to any of these, your Rochester Business Alliance membership includes services that can help – services that provide you an obvious return on your annual dues investment.

Below are the services available to you as part of your membership, along with the actual market value if you had to purchase those services separately. You can see that even minimal use of these services can easily offset your dues investment. For example:

Human Resource Helpline (Value: \$800+)

Need a quick answer to a human resources question? An attorney will charge on average \$200 a call. But members can call our HR Helpline for free as many issues don't require legal opinion. (Business Builders are entitled to up to four calls per year; unlimited access for Corporate or Partner members.)

New York State Labor Law Guide (Value: \$145)

An electronic version is provided free of charge to our members at the Business Builder, Corporate and Partner levels. The guide, published annually in conjunction with Nixon Peabody LLP, answers the most commonly asked labor law questions in an easy-to-read format.

Surveys (Value: \$500/survey)

Our surveys, free to all participating Corporate and Partner members, provide

valuable benchmarking on local business practices and human resource trends.

Staples Office Supply Program (Value: \$1,640 per month)

Members who joined this program report saving an average of \$1,640 a month off list price on a wide variety of everyday office supplies.

Training Seminars (Value: 25 percent discount, averaging \$70/course)

Rochester Business Alliance members get a 25-percent discount on registration fees for our training courses, with a wide variety of classes offered throughout the year.

Placement Services (Value: \$1,040/year in savings)

RBA Staffing Solutions, a division of the Rochester Business Alliance, is a full-service staffing business working with both Rochester area employers and job seekers. Rochester Business Alliance members have access to preferred rates of 5-10 percent savings on average.

The Rochester Business Alliance values your commitment and investment in our organization and our community. We will always work to provide services that justify your investment. For more information on any of the services mentioned above, please contact me at (585) 256-4651 or Kevin.Donahue@rballiance.com. ★

The Rochester Business Alliance welcomes its new members

Brown & Hutchinson
www.brownhutchinson.com

Capstone Information Technologies Inc.
www.capstoneitinc.com

Champion Windows of Rochester
www.championfactorydirect.com

Creative Ambiguity LLC
www.creativeambiguity.com

Cross Bros. Co.
www.crossbros.com

Durst Image Technology US, LLC
www.durstus.com

IK Systems
www.iksystems.com

Lanovara Specialty Foods, Inc.
www.lanovara.com

Marketplace Events
www.homeshowrochester.com

Mastro Graphic Arts, Inc.
www.mastrographics.com

Radax Industries, Inc.
www.radax.com

Rent-A-Center
www.rentacenter.com

Rochester Precision Optics LLC
www.rpoptics.com

Rosilio Hardwood Flooring
www.RBAMember.com/RosilioHardwoodFlooring.com

Roundtable Broadcasting, LLC
www.roundtablebroadcasting.com

Sheen & Shine Inc.
www.sheenandshine.com

SiMPore, Inc.
www.simpore.com

Tipping Point Media
www.tippingpointmedia.com

Titan Insurance & Employee Benefits Agency, LLC
www.gettitan.com

Ward Norris Heller & Reidy, LLP
www.wnhr.com



Rochester Business Alliance
 150 State St.
 Rochester, NY 14614-1308

Seminars

Date	Seminar	Time
September		
3	Critical Thinking	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
12	Managing Time and Priorities	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
15	Communication Suite (3 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
15	Communication Power	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
15	Leading the Safety Process (2 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
16	OSHA Record Keeping	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
16	Supervision (8 sessions)	1 - 5 p.m.
17	Dynamic Listening	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
17	Managing the Emergency	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
17	Project Management (2 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
18	Accident Investigation	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
18	Managing Meetings	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
19	Thinking Strategically	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
19	Understanding Messages from Others	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
22	Presentations	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
23	Personal Effectiveness	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October		
2	Assertiveness	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
9	Dealing with Difficult Personalities	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
14	Negotiations	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
16	Finance for Non-Financial Professionals	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
21	Labor Law Updates	8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
23	Gaining the Title, Earning the Respect (2 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
27	Coaching, Mentoring, Motivating (6 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
29	Business Writing and Emails (4 sessions)	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Computer Training

Date	Seminar	Time
September		
3 & 5	MS Windows Vista	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
4 & 5	MS Access Report/Form Design	1 - 4 p.m.
4 & 5	MS Excel Introduction	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
8 & 12	MS Excel Advanced Part 1	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
8 & 10	MS PowerPoint Introduction	1 - 4 p.m.
9 & 11	MS Access Advanced Part 1	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
15 & 19	MS Excel Advanced Part 2	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
15 & 17	MS Excel 2007	1 - 4 p.m.
16 & 18	MS Access Advanced Part 2	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
19 & 10/3	MS Word 2007	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
22 & 24	MS Word Introduction	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
23 & 25	MS Power Point Advanced	1 - 4 p.m.
25 & 26	MS Access 2007	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
29 & 10/1	MS Windows Introduction	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
October		
2 & 3	MS Word Advanced	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
6 & 10	MS Windows "How do I..."	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
7 & 9	MS Access Introduction	1 - 4 p.m.
7 & 9	MS Excel Introduction	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
16 & 17	MS Access Report/Form Design	1 - 4 p.m.
16 & 17	MS Excel Advanced Part 1	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
21 & 23	MS Access Advanced Part 1	1 - 4 p.m.
27 & 31	MS Access Advanced Part 2	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.
28 & 30	MS Excel Advanced Part 2	8:15 - 11:15 a.m.

For more information or to register, visit our calendar online at www.RochesterBusinessAlliance.com.

Seminars are held at the Rochester Business Alliance, 150 State St.
 Computer courses are held at Accent Training Center, Gateway Plaza, 2352 Lyell Ave.