



Your Advantage

NEWS AND INFORMATION TO HELP YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS SUCCEED

MARCH 2011 ISSUE

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**EMPLOYER
ADVANTAGE**
A Professional Employer Organization

1027 South Main Street, Suite 401
Joplin, Missouri 64801

PH 417-782-3909 | TF 800-467-3909 | FX 417-782-3802

EM info@employeradvantage.com | WS www.employeradvantage.com



Employer Advantage announces

Employer Advantage is one of the Dynamic Dozen! Vatterott College determined Employer Advantage is one of the twelve fastest growing companies in the Tri-State area. To be considered, companies must meet criteria including: demonstrated growth during 2008, 2009 and 2010, as well as having the company's headquarters located within a 50 mile radius of Joplin, Missouri. The Dynamic Dozen were recognized at an event at The Ramsey on March 27, 2011.

Tax Withholding Changes-

Employees who want to make tax withholding changes should complete a new W-4 and fax it into Employer Advantage.

Information Changes - Please make sure employee name, address, phone changes are sent to Employer Advantage. Employees should complete the bottom section of the Employee Change form and fax it to the Payroll Department.

Spring Cleaning

I don't know about you, but this year I am possessed with spring cleaning my house. Nooks, corners, hard-to-reach areas, they are all fair game for my cleaning. It's so bad that anything left unattended too long will be cleaned, stored or put in the ever-growing rummage sale pile.

Spring cleaning can be attributed to several different histories. One is that when many of us had coal or fire burning fire places, springtime was the time to clean out the ashes and soot that gathered all winter. Other histories indicate that spring cleaning was a preparation for Passover or Great Lent. I think one thing that spring cleaning does for us (other than making our homes more livable) is that it takes us out of the "routine" and creates a new environment.

What if we applied spring cleaning to our business lives? I'm not just talking about the 4 or 5 half filled coffee cups on the back edge of the desk, but about attitudes. We have come through a recession where record numbers of workers have been laid off and employee morale has dipped to the lowest level in decades. Employees who aren't happy at work typically spend less time on work, have low motivation, and lack attention to detail.

So, some suggestions for spring cleaning attitudes:

- Focus on positive and communicate to employees. We all like to hear good news and good things about ourselves, our coworkers, and our company.
- Celebrate something. Find a reason to bring in a cake, breakfast, or call a casual Friday to celebrate warmer weather.
- Talk to your employees. You may think you know what is bugging them, but you may be surprised. Sometimes it's simple things that you can fix. (Sometimes just listening is even better than fixing a problem.)
- Look at your own attitude. Do you need a little spring cleaning? Good leaders lead by example. Make sure you greet your employees with a smile so they'll want to pass it on.

Now, back to thinking about washing windows, and the curtains, and maybe a little fresh paint in the kitchen...

Employees Could File Their Taxes – For Free!

Everyone can use Free File, the free way to prepare and e-file federal taxes either through brand-name software or online fillable forms. Individuals or families with 2010 adjusted gross incomes of \$58,000 or less can use Free File software. Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms, has no income restrictions.

“Free File saves you money and time preparing and e-filing your federal tax returns,” said Cecille M. Jones, acting director, Electronic Tax Administration and Refundable Credits. “Free File really does make taxes less taxing.”

Free File software is a product of a public-private partnership between the IRS and the Free File Alliance, LLC. The Alliance is a consortium of approximately 20 tax software providers who make versions of their products available exclusive at www.irs.gov/freefile. All Free File members must meet certain security requirements and use the latest in encryption technology to protect taxpayers’ information.

Seventy percent of taxpayers are eligible for Free File software. It’s perfect for first-time filers, families looking to save money or older Americans adept at using the Internet.

People with an adjusted gross income of \$58,000 or less are eligible for at least one software product if not more. Each of the Free File software providers sets their own eligibility requirements, usually based on qualifiers such as income, state residency, age or military status. The easiest way to locate a software provider is to use the online tool that, with a little of a taxpayer’s personal information, can identify matching products. Or, taxpayers can review all providers and their offers. Some software providers also offer state income tax preparation for free or for a fee.

For taxpayers whose incomes are more than \$58,000, there’s Free File Fillable Forms. This program is best for taxpayers experienced in preparing their own federal tax returns. For people who prefer doing their taxes the old fashioned way – by paper – this is an electronic alternative.

Free File Fillable Forms performs some math calculations and provides links to some IRS publications. It does not use the familiar question-and-answer format used by software. Taxpayers can e-file the forms for free. It also does not support state income tax returns. Taxpayers must access the tax products through IRS.gov to avoid any charges for preparing or e-file a federal tax return. Free File partners also are prohibited from repeatedly trying to sell taxpayers other products. Once taxpayers have selected a Free File software product, they will be directed away from IRS.gov to the partner’s site to prepare and e-file their returns. The IRS does not retain any personal information from the taxpayers.

This year, taxpayers also will see a redesigned Free File page to make it easier for them to navigate the Free File steps. A microsite with additional Free File information and video also has been updated. The microsite, www.freefile.irs.gov also includes a ‘spread the word’ page that encourages other organizations or businesses to help spread the word about Free File. For example, other organizations or businesses can upload a tax-day countdown widget to their Web sites or make social media postings to help inform their employees, clients or customers about Free File’s availability.

From IRS.gov website.

The Importance of Onboarding

“Onboarding” is a business term that describes a company’s process of getting a new employee “settled in”. For some companies, onboarding describes the first day of employment, where an employee completes a stack of paperwork and either listens to a half day orientation or immediately goes to work. After the first day, the employee pretty much is treated like any other employee. These companies, if they track turnover rates, may wonder why they have the highest turnover in the first year of employment.

Goals of Onboarding

If you think of onboarding as a process to change an outside person to a valuable and engaged employee, you may view it as something totally different. After all, the goals of onboarding a new employee is:

- Make the new person feel comfortable, and
- Shorten the learning curve to the employee being productive.

By meeting these goals, you will decrease turnover costs and add to your bottom line.

Basic Elements of Onboarding

There are four basic elements of a good Onboarding process.

- **Paperwork** – Nobody enjoys paperwork. However, completing paperwork is essential to getting the employee in the payroll system and to begin building the employee’s personnel file. Make

sure the paperwork you have for your new employee is important (such as the I-9, W-4s, payroll information) and meaningful (handbook receipt, company property receipt).

- **Company Overview** – Yes, your new employee should know what your company already does before they applied for work. Now is the time to tell the employee about your Mission and Vision Statements and how the employee fits into the “big picture” of the company. This is also the time to roll out companywide policies and procedures such as Harassment, FMLA, and Open Door Policy.
- **Departmental Expectations** – Employees need to know what is really expected of them and how to succeed at your company. A clear job description with an explanation of expectations on the first day may decrease the confusion later in an appraisal meeting.
- **Departmental Information** – Not all departments work the same. The manager should get the employee acquainted with policies, coworkers, and necessary locations (bathroom, copier, mailbox, break room) so that the employee can start acclimating on the first day. Also, if the department has casual Friday, a bowling league, or any other fun thing, let the employee in on it so he can participate.

If you are interested in setting up an Employee Onboarding program or checklist, contact your Human Resources Professional at Employer Advantage. We can help you make it a smooth transition for your new employees.

Employing Youths in the Workplace

Over the next few months, many employers will consider teenagers to fill temporary summer jobs. There are Federal and State laws regarding employing workers under 18. We have listed the Federal laws regarding teen employment below. If you are considering hiring workers under 18 this summer, please contact your Human Resources Professional so we can ensure that you are aware of any State laws which may affect you.

Ages 13 or Younger may:

- deliver newspapers,
- work as a babysitter,
- work as an actor/performer in TV, radio, theater or movies, or
- work in a business solely owned or operated by parents (as long as the job isn't on the hazardous jobs list).

Ages 14 and 15 may work in an:

- office,
- grocery store,
- retail store,
- restaurant,
- movie theater,
- baseball park,
- amusement park, or
- gasoline service station.

Age 16 may work in any job that isn't considered a "hazardous occupation" by the Secretary of Labor. Generally, teens may not work in following hazardous jobs:

- manufacturing and storing of explosives,
- driving a motor vehicle and being an outside helper on a motor vehicle;
- mining, including coal mining,
- forest fire fighting and prevention, timber tract management, or forestry services,
- logging and sawmilling,
- operating power-driven machines,
- exposure to radioactive substances,
- meat packing or processing,
- power-driven bakery machines,
- manufacturing brick, tile, and related products,
- wrecking, demolition, and shipbreaking operations,
- roofing operations and all work on or about a roof, or
- excavation operations.

If you have specific questions about youth in your workplace, please contact Employer Advantage.

Entertainment Discounts Available at Employer Advantage

Hollywood Theatre Movie Tickets

- \$6.00 per ticket – SuperSaver (*Must be purchased through EA – MAY NOT be used for newly released features stating "no supersavers accepted"*)
- \$7.00 per ticket – Ultimate SuperSaver – (*Must be purchased through EA - MAY be used for ANY movie including newly released features.*)

Theme Park Passes in Branson, Missouri

- SDC Season Pass \$80.61 adult \$69.86 child
- SDC (1-Day) \$53.74 adult \$42.99 child
- White Water (1-Day) \$36.83 adult \$30.13 child
- 2-Park Season Pass \$130.83 adult \$120.08 child (*Includes: Silver Dollar City & White Water*)

Adults are age 12+

Child is age 4-11

Tickets may be purchased through payroll deduction, but must be paid in full before receiving.