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Pro Says Communications Strategy Should Address Transparency, Consistency

Whether a company is announcing pension and benefit changes, a merger and acquisition, or a layoff, the success of the initiative hinges, in part, on the company's ability to communicate effectively with employees—initially and on an ongoing basis according to communications consultant Christopher Chiamas of F&H Solutions Group, LLC (www.fhsolutionsgroup.com), a human capital and management consulting firm. “Any organization needs to really understand how much information channels and media have changed,” he states.

It used to be that companies making major announcements dealt with only a handful of media outlets, and they “segmented” their messages to specific audiences (i.e., employees, investors, and regulators).

However, with 24-hour news cycles and changes in disclosure practices under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regulations, “now everything is transparent,” and companies need to deliver “a consistent message across all audiences,” Chiamas says.

Ongoing, Open Communication

Disclosure and security laws make it difficult for employers to notify employees first about impending changes. However, Chiamas says it's important to at least share information simultaneously with employees and the public.

“You're always going to have employees feeling slighted that news was on CNN before they heard it from

(continued on page 2)

Weighing the Pros and Cons of Blogging

Blogs have been exploding onto the Internet and into the news. Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary defines a blog (short for Web log) as “a website that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer.”

David Ritter, chairman of the Labor & Employment and Practice Group for Neal Gerber Eisenberg, based in Chicago, says that although blogging is still not commonplace for all organizations, the phenomenon can be compared to the proliferation of websites. “Ten years ago, not very many companies had websites, but now every company has one. In the next 5 years, companies will be in the same place with blogs. If a company doesn't have a blog then, it will not be considered very forward-thinking.”

A blog, in its truest form, provides objective discussion about a topic, product, service, or company. A person can read a company's blog and form his or her own opinions regarding purchasing decisions, career decisions—you name it, says Ritter. “A blog builds brand loyalty efficiently and effectively and not that expensively. It's a communications device to the world,” he says.

Blogs on Intranets

Who is using blogs? Large organizations, such as IBM and GM, and smaller organizations, such as Stonyfield Farms in Vermont, are beginning to use both internal and external blogs.

(continued on page 2)

Strategy (continued from page 1)

their supervisor," he says. Issuing simultaneous internal and external announcements will help demonstrate a commitment to keeping employees informed. "The internal information needs to be consistent with the external announcement and elaborate on what the employees' concerns are."

Chiames says companies should provide "honest, objective discussions" about the change on an ongoing basis. "There are too many other places for employees to get information."

HR as Employee Advocate

HR can help ensure the success of change initiatives by advocating that all employees be given relevant information and by working with

communications staff to prepare clear internal communications, according to Chiames.

"You need frontline employees to understand what is going on, because they're going to be in contact with customers," he says. "You don't want employees to send negative vibes to your customers."

"It is important for senior management to be visible and actively communicating," Chiames says, "but an often-overlooked element is to keep frontline managers and supervisors informed and prepared to be effective ambassadors for the company. Ultimately, it is that personal relationship that is the most important one in the labor/management equation."

"If an employee asks his or her supervisor a question, and the

response is a shrug, and an 'I don't understand why we were making these changes' comment, then all the sophistication of a broad communications program is rendered worthless."

Managers need opportunities to ask questions freely and a clear understanding of what is expected of them, Chiames says. "Sometimes, you have to be quite literal in ... what you want them to do: Say 'We need you to share this information. We need you to be advocates for this. We need you to engage your employees.'"

He says managers who disagree with the change should be reminded of their role, with wording such as, "We may not all agree with this decision, but it's our job as managers to explain it and make sure our people understand it."

Blogging (continued from page 1)

Ritter notes that employee blogs, contained on an organization's intranet, can become the catalyst for a dialogue between employees and company leadership.

Employees can post questions and comments that other staff would also be interested to read, such as "Why can't I carry over vacation time?" or "Why don't we have dental insurance?"

Company blogs that are accessible on the Internet for the public (and employees) to post to may assist in selling products and services, as well as recruiting new staff.

Policy Components

Because blogging has the potential to hurt a company's reputation and pose legal difficulties if not controlled, Ritter suggests that setting an organizational policy and procedures covering blogging

by staff on internal and external blogs as well as their own personal blogs is a good idea. Disciplinary procedures up to and including discharge can be the penalties for not following the policy.

Some of the areas that Ritter says should be covered in the policy include:

- Indicating when it is appropriate to blog, and whether a company limits blogging to personal time or allows it on company time.
- Requiring bloggers to identify themselves by name (which may partially alleviate the concern of people posting negative information).
- Prohibiting the posting of confidential, copyrighted, patented, or other proprietary company information.
- Prohibiting links to company website pages (an individual company preference).

- Defining respectfulness in terms of not posting negative comments about products, services, people, managers, the company, and co-workers, and staying away from topics that might generate problems for the organization, such as politics, religion, or other topics that might spark controversy.

Even with a blogging policy, employers should be aware of potential gray areas of legality. For example, Ritter comments that there are federal laws (such as Sarbanes-Oxley) and some state laws protecting whistleblowers that could protect an employee writing his or her concerns regarding questionable corporate practices, etc.

However, with a blogging policy that is understood by staff and a healthy respect for fellow bloggers, the Internet's latest popular practice can become an effective, positive communication tool for an organization.

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Employee-Centered Initiatives Create Satisfied Workers at Nortel

Corporate leadership and HR keep the information flowing at Nortel's Network Management Centers (NMC) so employees can feel challenged, intellectually stimulated, and satisfied with their jobs. Nortel, a corporation with 32,000 employees in 150 countries that provides a wide range of technology solutions to enterprises and service-provider customers, has 600 employees in three main network management centers: London, United Kingdom, New Delhi, India, and Raleigh, North Carolina.

The 600 employees cover work schedules encompassing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They install and manage communication and technology networks for customers such as Verizon and Rolls Royce, as well as Nortel's own networks.

Human Resources Leader for Global Services Richard Beed, based in Toronto, Canada, explains that one of the challenges Nortel faces is retaining key staff. Apparently, Nortel's training and communication, as well as its salaries, benefits, and work/life flexibility, keep Nortel NMC employees happy. The annual employee turnover rate in the NMCs is only 4 percent, according to Beed.

HR is responsible for several functions for Nortel, including setting the people-related strategy for global services through its core strategy team; a core services center that is a single source of contact for managers and staff to access when they have HR-related questions, concerns, or problems; and a hotline that employees can call. Here's a closer look at some specific employee-centered initiatives.

Evaluate Employee Wants, Needs

Nortel has used employee satisfaction surveys and feedback from completed evaluations after training sessions for employee satisfaction information for many years, but Nortel recently brought their employee satisfaction survey back in-house after using an outside vendor. The result was a

significantly higher employee survey completion rate. The survey data are shared with small groups in an effort to solicit feedback and suggestions for improvement. The overall results show a high level of job satisfaction, particularly within the NMCs, notes Beed.

Adopt Flexible Work Arrangements, Schedules

He explains that many employees in the NMCs work the evening, night shift, or weekend schedules for 3 to 4 years before changes in their lives and interests make them opt for other Nortel jobs or schedule changes. He comments that some staffers also move back to the NMC and nontraditional work schedules after being on more traditional work shifts.

Nortel encourages work/life balance, not only with varied schedules, but also with flexibility regarding *where* work must be done. Often employees will opt to work from home, particularly on Fridays, says Beed. Nortel's technology allows many employees to access their work by logging in from virtually anywhere via company-issued laptop computers.

Customize Training

Training is accomplished in many different venues including in-person and online in self-administered sessions and interactive sessions through Web conferencing technology. The Nortel Career Academies, launched 3 years ago, provides training in tracks covering leadership, technology, sales, and operations. The Employee Learning & Development Team partnered with internal staff with expertise in the areas covered by the Academies to customize the content. Employees consistently score the value of the Academies with a rating of 8.9 (highest possible rating is 10).

For new employees, the "NEW Academy" provides orientation and information regarding Nortel with an interactive, online program and in some locations, an in-person, 2-day program.

Who: Nortel, Ontario, Canada
(www.nortel.com)

What: Views employees as its most valuable resource and provides significant training, communication, and flexibility for its staff.

Results: Nortel's Network Management Centers have an employee turnover rate of only 4 percent.

Technology changes quickly, so employees constantly update their skills through learning modules available online. Some programs are created by Nortel for its products and others by outside vendor technology partners such as Microsoft. On-the-job training is an everyday occurrence, with staff teaching one another new technical skills.

Share News, Information

An effort to keep communication open and fluid within Nortel's international organization has led to regular "Z-mail" to all employees from President and CEO Mike S. Zafirovski. For example, after a global sales meeting, Zafirovski immediately shares news to staff from his laptop computer as he is traveling by plane to another location, notes Beed.

Nortel uses technology, including Podcasts, webcasts, videos, and audio conference calls, to allow company leadership to share information in real time or to be watched later at an employee's convenience. *The Compass* newsletter is also shared through the employee intranet and website, but Beed says that the most important communication is from employees' line managers. Managers interpret and explain Nortel initiatives, so that employees understand how their roles drive Nortel forward, he explains.

Open communication is critical for all organizations, but Beed stresses that the single most important factor in any company is the people and treating those people with respect and integrity. He explains, "If you do that, then most aspects of the people strategy, the HR strategy, fit in and work together. At Nortel, we put people first as the most important factor and that provides a much higher return for an organization."



From the Courthouse

Terminations Leave Bad Taste For Food Company Workers

A 41-year-old warehouse manager and his 43-year-old second-in-command alleged that they were terminated on the basis of their age, and that their former employer violated wage and hour laws by not paying them overtime compensation.

What happened. After working for Metropolitan Food Services from 1985 to 1998, José Rivera-Rosado was transferred to and named warehouse manager at NCE Foods, a business in Puerto Rico that imports, warehouses, and distributes canned and frozen foods.

Nelson Velázquez-Fernández, who was transferred from Metropolitan to NCE in 1989, worked as a salesperson. Later, when he became Rivera's second-in-command, he stopped making in-person sales calls. However, he continued to have access to a company car and to receive a car allowance.

Both men had positive employment records under a "hands-off" owner. When the owner died, his wife, Edwina Navarro, took over.

In April 2003, Velázquez was notified that his salesperson position was being eliminated. He was offered a new warehouse assistant manager position that included the same job responsibilities he had been performing for several years and the same salary, bonus, and benefits. However, he would no longer receive a car allowance or use of a company car since he was not required to make sales calls.

Velázquez declined the offer, and the new position was filled by two employees 22 and 29 years old.

Over the course of several months, Navarro sent three memos to Rivera addressing problems with his performance and other issues.

After yelling at Navarro and other employees, Rivera was asked to

take a 2-week vacation and write a report explaining how he would improve his professionalism. In a June 2003 letter, Navarro warned him that he faced possible termination upon his return if improvements were not made.

Rivera did not complete the report. He was terminated, and a 24-year-old NCE warehouse worker was appointed to replace him.

Rivera and Velázquez filed suit against NCE and Metropolitan, alleging age discrimination under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and state statutes regarding age discrimination and wrongful termination.

In addition, they said they should have received overtime compensation under state and federal versions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

A district court ruled in favor of the companies on all claims, except Velázquez's overtime claims, which were later resolved out of court. Rivera and Velázquez filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit, which covers Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, and Rhode Island.

What the court said. The appeals court affirmed the lower court's decision, saying that the age

THE LAW

Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Fair Labor Standards Act

The federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibits employers with 20 or more employees from discriminating against employees aged 40 and older in the terms and conditions of employment because of age. In addition, the laws of particular states may set a lower age limit at which the state age bias laws apply.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires enterprises engaged in interstate or foreign commerce and state and local governments to pay overtime of *1 1/2 times* an employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked in *excess of 40 hours* in a workweek. Certain executive, professional, administrative, computer professional, outside sales, and highly compensated employees may be exempt from the overtime rules.

discrimination claims failed because Velázquez did not suffer an adverse employment action, and Rivera did not show that NCE's justification for terminating him was pretext.

Although Rivera maintained that Navarro's complaints about his performance were "subterfuge," the court found no evidence that her

(continued on the next page)

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- **Document performance problems.** Navarro put her concerns about Rivera's performance in writing and gave him opportunities to improve.
- **Review job functions periodically.** In this case, Velázquez's job title did not change until several years after his responsibilities did. He might have been more receptive to the elimination of his car allowance and company car use if the change had been made when his responsibilities shifted.
- **Conduct a wage and hour self-audit.** A self-audit can help employers determine whether they have accurately classified jobs as being exempt or nonexempt and address any problems that could lead to potential court battles or enforcement actions.

Collaborative Conversations Help Difficult Communication Sessions

Everyone has difficult conversations with staff. HR managers and executives probably have more of them than any other manager or executive in an organization. In fact, Karen Kimsey-House, one of the authors of *Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life* (Davies-Black Publishing, Mountainview, CA, 2nd edition) and president and co-founder of The Coaches Training Institute, says, "You [HR executives] are the ones that hold the relationships in the organization, and it can be difficult to maintain boundaries and policy structure, but still maintain empathy and understanding with employees."

Kimsey-House says the first thing to remember is that there is a distinction between the outcome of the conversation and the experience of the people having the conversation. Human nature and past experience may tell you that the best way to handle a disciplinary action/employee development or job termination conversation is to sit down, tell the employee what's going wrong, what the solution is, and then be done with it.

You might feel more comfortable getting the conversation over quickly because it is uncomfortable for the staff member—and for you. How you both play your roles, your parts in the conversation, may not change the conversation's outcome, but will change the direction and impact of the conversation.

Acknowledgment, Containment
Kimsey-House explains that the best way to start the conversation is to design an alliance, to create a container in which to have the conversation that acknowledges the relationship between the two of you and sets some parameters for the conversation, such as mutual respect, caring, and understanding. For example with a termination conversation, Kimsey-House says that you might tell the employee that you need to have a conversation with him that may be challenging for both of you.

You can ask, "Are there any requests that you have of me, that you want to ask of me before we begin?" Letting the person know that it's OK to ask you to stop for a moment, to provide the employee with the opportunity to take a breath, acknowledge and deal with any emotions that he or she might be feeling, and collect himself or herself may keep the conversation more positive and better for both parties, she notes.

A discussion with an employee regarding performance problems and corrective actions that must be taken may also flow more smoothly when you craft a container or alliance in which to have the conversation, says Kimsey-House. In general, no one wants to do a terrible job.

If you design an alliance for a conversation regarding a development or disciplinary situation, you can collaborate on a solution with the

employee, she explains. Even before this discussion is initiated, you can ask yourself some questions to help you structure this conversation. Here are two of them: "What am I after?" and "What are we both after?"

To structure the container or alliance, you can also ask the employee: "What do we need to do to move forward in being more effective?" Collaborating on a solution to the problem will help the employee buy into the corrective action and development requirement.

Questions, not Solutions

"People are naturally creative and resourceful," Kimsey-House emphasizes. "They want to do a great job, but there's something in the way. They don't need solutions; they need good questions. The more collaborative the conversation can be, the better the outcome."

Showing you care about people and being brave enough to convey that will help you in making the difficult conversations more productive, notes Kimsey-House. "Setting the scene, giving the person time [during the conversation] to process what you're telling them, and letting them express their feelings is important."

Lastly, Kimsey-House offers some basic advice. "Honesty and courage must be present to convey information and craft solutions. Being honest to your own feelings is being truthful." For more information, visit www.thecoaches.com or go to www.amazon.com.

Courthouse (continued from page 4)

"repeated memos regarding Rivera's underperformance were inaccurate, unbelievable, idiosyncratic, or misleading."

The court also sided with NCE and Metropolitan on the wrongful discharge complaints.

According to the court, Rivera was terminated "after a series of infractions and warnings and attempts by NCE to remedy the problem," and Velázquez was neither terminated nor constructively discharged.

The appeals court also said Rivera was an exempt executive employee and, as such, was not entitled to overtime compensation (*Velázquez, et al. v. NCE Foods, Inc., et al.*, No. 06-1205, U.S. Court of Appeals, 1st Cir., 1/26/07).

Tips & Tactics

Wellness Initiatives Can Result In Significant ROI for Employers

Studies of the wellness plans of 200 companies completed by the *American Journal of Health Promotion* conclude that the return on investment (ROI) for employee wellness programs can be as high as 348 percent in 3 to 6 years! This figure certainly suggests taking a closer look at instituting a wellness program if you don't already have one in place at your company. And if you do, review your wellness plan and program to make certain that your ROI is as high as it can be, says Heather R. Hunt, editor of *Workplace Wellness: Healthy Employees, Healthy Families, Healthy ROI*, a comprehensive workplace wellness guidebook published by BLR, Inc.

When wellness programs are not successful, it's often because there's a lack of senior management support and/or the original planning wasn't as comprehensive as it should have been, Hunt explains. Senior leadership must communicate the importance of the wellness initiative to employees up

front. They should also participate in the program once it is up and running to set an example for other staff.

Assess Employee Needs

To begin planning, says Hunt, "You should start out by assessing your employee needs." She provides an example of a company that runs an excellent breast health program—for an employee population that is 80 percent male. The ROI on that particular program would be low since only a small percentage of the employees can take advantage of it.

Assessing employee needs can be done through employee surveys, focus groups, and analysis of employee demographics. For example, if you have a very young employee population, or an older population, or the majority is female, their needs might be quite different from another employer such as the one noted above. If you have many smokers, you might institute a stop smoking plan, suggests Hunt.

Develop Operating Plan

Once you have determined the health needs of staff, you should develop a comprehensive operating plan that includes a mission statement for your wellness programming, says Hunt. The plan should incorporate the SMART method; it should include Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timed objectives and action steps, she explains.

Even if a company doesn't have enough internal human resources to staff and run a comprehensive program, it can often partner with outside vendors or community organizations to achieve the employee wellness goals and objectives that have been set, Hunt explains. Often an employee health insurance carrier offers some programming, and local branches of the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association, for example, offer community preventive programs that an employer can also access.

Achieving better employee health is a goal that will afford employers cost savings in less absenteeism, lower increases in health insurance premiums, and a more productive workforce. The comprehensive, 400-plus page guide includes surveys, forms, wellness program communication pieces, and metrics by which to measure your organization's success and is available at www.br.com/product.cfm/product/30529200/funcode/WI04.

Multitasking—Is It Right for You?

Multitasking can be a good idea when done correctly, but more often than not, employees can become stressed out by trying to handle too many tasks and projects at once and react to critical business needs as well.

Ron Knaus, M.D., a psychiatrist, sports medicine physician, and consultant to physicians and corporations, comments, "A recent Harris Interactive poll found that one-third of workers ages 25 to 39 feel burned out by their jobs." Physicians are seeing many stress-related illnesses, such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, back-ache, and migraines, he adds. "In fact, primary care physicians report that

between 70 percent and 90 percent of their patients are seen because of underlying emotional stress."

Tips from Dr. Knaus's white paper, titled "Multitasking: Slow Down to Speed Up," follow:

- *Know when a task requires undivided attention.* If you keep switching back and forth between complex tasks that require undivided attention, your brain can become overloaded. Don't multitask if something requires your full concentration. If you do, you'll be more likely to make mistakes.
- *Use a tool to help you multitask.* Keep lists of items you need to refer

to often handy—next to the desk or telephone—and free your mind for more complicated work.

- *Allow your mind to reboot.* The brain uses more energy than other parts of your body so it needs constant replenishment. Every 2 to 3 hours, stop multitasking and concentrate on one thing for 15 to 20 minutes. This will refresh your brain, readying to juggle more tasks.
- *Do more with less stress.* By simply slowing down and learning to gradually work up to the performance level you desire, you can multitask more effectively.

To read the entire white paper, request it by sending an e-mail to Jennifer Quint, PRpro@prpr.net.

Core Values Help Employees Focus on Common Purpose

Avnet, Inc. (www.avnet.com), a distributor of electronic components, computer products, and technology services and solutions, doesn't waste any time introducing new-hires to its core values. Each new employee receives a key chain with the company logo on one side and a list of its core values on the other side, according to Robin Hollis, vice president of training and leadership development for Avnet.

New employees are also given a "Core Values Pocket Guidebook," listing the company's prioritized core values: integrity, customer service, accountability, teamwork, and innovation, Hollis explains. The guidebook includes information about each core value, as well as examples of "what each core value looks like in action."

The key chain and guidebook are distributed as part of Avnet's Values Initiative, which was rolled out globally in 2004 to its 70 locations. Avnet was recognized for its Values Initiative with a 2006 BEST Award from the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD).

Connecting with Core Values

In 2000, Avnet unveiled 10 core values, but soon decided to revisit those values. "Employees didn't connect with them. They were wordy. Having 10 [core values], folks really couldn't focus in on them," says Hollis, who served as project manager for the Values Initiative.

As the company looked for ways to streamline and refocus its core values, it tapped its global executive teams for input and considered feedback from its annual employee survey. Avnet replaced the 10 core values with five core values, created clear explanations for each, and identified the types of behavior that are consistent with each value, according to Hollis.

Avnet employees see constant reminders of the core values on posters, in company publications, and

during training programs. Employees and business units who have demonstrated one of the company's core values are recognized in internal publications or in messages from the company president, Hollis explains.

Certain business units have expanded on the corporate initiatives. For example, posters listing the core values are available with and without the signatures of top management. At least one business unit requested the unsigned posters and had its own employees sign them instead, Hollis says.

Getting Creative

Some business units have opted to tap the creative side of employees' minds to reinforce the core values. For instance, they have created crossword puzzles for employees to complete or handed out finger paint and Play-Doh and asked employees to create something that describes a particular value. Employees made smiling faces to represent customer service and handprints placed together for teamwork, she says.

The values, dubbed ICATI (i.e., integrity, customer service, accountability, teamwork, and innovation) and pronounced "I cat I," have generated quite a buzz among employees, who even share ideas about the core values online and suggest ways to demonstrate them, Hollis says. "It's just taken on a life of its own in a very positive direction."

The core values give Avnet employees a sense of connectedness and help the company focus on its efforts to create a "values- and performance-based culture," she says. "It's important for us to know who we are and how that aligns with our strategic vision and where we want to go."

Results of its internal employee survey show that "numbers regarding all of the core values are moving in a positive direction," Hollis says. In addition, "the company has seen

Who: Avnet, Inc.
What: Launched a global initiative to promote and reinforce its five core values
Results: 67 percent of employees have a positive perception of the company's core values and its efforts to demonstrate those values

significant increases in core values awareness among its operating groups and across Avnet overall."

According to Hollis, 67 percent of employees have a positive perception of the company's core values and its efforts to demonstrate them—a statistically significant increase from the 63 percent who indicated so before the Values Initiative was launched. The percentages are even higher for certain values, such as integrity, accountability, and teamwork, she says.

Secrets to Success

Hollis recommends getting all key stakeholders involved when implementing such an initiative. "You can look at core values as a grassroots effort or a top-down effort," she says, adding that it's important to have both top management and rank-and-file employees participate in the process.

She also identifies three keys to success:

- 1. Communication.** Keep stakeholders updated about the implementation process. Look for ways to promote ways in which employees and business units are demonstrating your core values.
- 2. Collaboration.** If you have global offices, consult with representatives of each office to make sure that the initiative will work well in their particular culture and that any written materials are translated well.
- 3. Teamwork.** Work with other business units to address any logistical issues and to ensure the success of your initiative.

HR Tool Box

Wellness Do's and Don'ts For Employees Checklist

This checklist is from BLR's new book, *Workplace Wellness: Healthy Employees, Healthy Families, Healthy ROI*. A trial subscription is available through www.blr.com or by calling 800-727-5257.

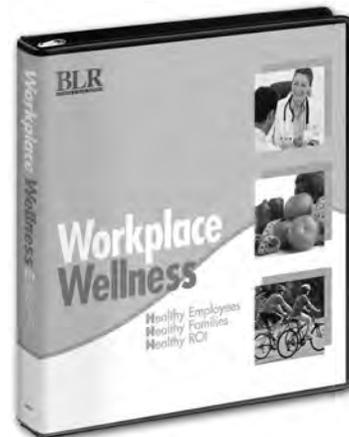
DO:

- ✓ Be honest with yourself about your habits.
- ✓ Find out from your doctor if you should lose weight—and how much and how to do it.
- ✓ Consult a doctor before starting an exercise program.
- ✓ Reduce food portions.
- ✓ Eat a balanced diet: raw fruits and vegetables; lean meat, poultry, and seafood; whole grain breads and cereals.
- ✓ Learn—and stick to—your limits when drinking alcohol.
- ✓ Eat early in the day, not before going to bed.
- ✓ Drink water or decaffeinated drinks rather than coffee, tea, or caffeinated soft drinks.
- ✓ Avoid stressful situations.
- ✓ Exercise regularly—hopefully in ways you enjoy.
- ✓ Look for ways to reduce, if not yet eliminate, smoking: making cigarettes and ashtrays inconvenient, spending more time in nonsmoking areas, putting off the next cigarette, and finding things to do with your hands.

- ✓ Start slowly on an exercise program, building up over time. Walk more—up stairs, across parking lots, around your yard.

DON'T:

- ✗ Eat fatty, sugary, or salty foods and snacks.
- ✗ Use food as a reward or means of coping with upsets.
- ✗ Drink alcohol because you “want” or “need” it.
- ✗ Use illegal drugs or overdo use of prescription drugs.
- ✗ Smoke cigarettes, pipes, or cigars.
- ✗ Salt your food before you taste it.
- ✗ Overdo on exercising.



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