



# ***ENABLE YOU INC***

## **NEWS & NOTES**

Issue 2

### **ENABLE YOU INC.**

Enable You Inc. provides the resources to complete the ongoing work or special project you haven't the time or staff expertise to address. Our services include a comprehensive range of business planning, human resources, marketing and communications support. Ask about our complimentary Opportunity Audit (with recommended action plan).

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### **TRUE OR NOT TRUE?**

**Test your knowledge. The first person to email the correct response wins a Starbucks Coffee Card.**

For 58 years, at a cost of over \$2,000,000, Rani Bhawani of India had honey poured into every ant hole in the country so that no ant would ever go hungry.

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"Anna and the King" was banned from being released in Thailand in 1999. At one stage, pirated video CD's were being sold there. One government official was reported in the newspapers as saying that the people could do what they liked in the privacy of their own home. However, the police put their foot down and threatened to prosecute not only the people that were selling the pirated CD, but also anyone that owned copies at home.

### **USING INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS TO INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS**

More than a decade ago, a survey of 400 Canadian HR practitioners showed 42% used retirees on special projects and 39% hired former employees as consultants.<sup>1</sup> If the same group were queried in 2005, statistics on the use of independent contract workers (including, in some cases, former employees) would likely show the majority of companies participating in such relationships.

**Why such rapid growth in contracting out? Simply stated, executed properly, it's highly cost-efficient.** Benefit costs, vacation and sick days, work supplies, equipment, etc. add an extra 25% to 45% to the base salary cost of a typical employee. Conversely, Workers Comp., employee programs and termination costs don't apply to independent consultants.

Moreover, smaller and mid-sized companies that can't justify the cost of a full-time executive often find they can structure a financially beneficial monthly retainer to obtain additional or specialized services. And, companies of all sizes are attracted by the flexibility of short-term contracts to support corporate initiatives that are increasingly project-driven.

Demographic, cultural and economic trends ranging from the impact of aging baby boomers to less hierarchical "boundary-less" workplaces are encouraging (and even forcing) HR professionals to pursue the economic and other benefits offered by contingent workers of all types.

Managers can ensure a low-risk, optimal relationship with outside service providers by:

- creating a standardized template that can be used for most contracts
- ensuring the contract specifies a protocol for managing deliverables
- modifying any existing orientation/training for contractors, if required
- preplanning and cross training for knowledge transfer prior to the contract conclusion
- identifying in the contact who will administer independent contractor arrangements.

Within 15 to 20 years, half of all workers will be self-employed.<sup>2</sup> Leading companies are learning to turn this trend to their advantage now, through judicious, performance-focused outsourcing and contracting.

<sup>1</sup> Workforce 2000 (Toronto: Hudson Institute Canada and Towers Perrin, 1993)

<sup>2</sup> Peter Drucker, "Welcome To Tomorrow" (Toronto Star, November 24, 2001)

## **COMMUNICATIONS & CORPORATE CULTURE: ESTABLISHING STRATEGIC LITERACY**

Corporate culture refers to a company's values, beliefs, business principles, traditions, behaviours, ways of operating and internal work environment.

In organizations, corporate culture is what employees perceive; i.e. how they perceive values, operating methods, management behaviours and work environment. If company values, business principles and beliefs, which form an organization's strategic literacy, have not been stated in a structured way that helps employees understand them, they are left to figure it out for themselves. On the other hand, when people clearly understand the strategic direction, priorities and realities of the business, **and they focus their daily work on achieving these primary strategic objectives**, winning in the marketplace becomes a sure thing.

The first step in establishing strategic literacy is to determine where the company is now. For example, is there a vision? Are business objectives documented? Can employees tell you what the vision and objectives are, and, more importantly, do the employees understand how they personally contribute to accomplishing them? This type of research is typically done through employee surveys, focus groups and individual interviews and is the building block for internal communications.

Internal communications ensures that everyone in the organization has an acceptable level of strategic literacy, that is, they have a basic grasp of essential knowledge about the company, its business, the competitive environment, the (Continued on page 3)

## **IS YOUR COMPANY AT RISK?**

What's your potential exposure in the event of a lawsuit? Many businesses have an unrealistic sense of security, based on past freedom from lawsuits, or the false belief that HR "tools", once created, are being consistently followed.

However, we are becoming an increasingly litigious society and the courts can be an unforgiving environment for companies unable to demonstrate compliance, due diligence and good faith. For example, recent changes to the law now hold persons of authority or influence personally responsible for certain health and safety violations, with provision for 6 months imprisonment and/or fines of up to \$25,000 applying to executives, managers, supervisors and even independent contractors.

### **Check your corporate (and personal) risk exposure against some of the most commonly made mistakes:**

1. Job descriptions not accurate, current or consistent with job postings.
2. Interview process unsupported by standard interview questions, documented responses or candidate rating system.
3. Reference checks incomplete (at least 2 recent business contacts).
4. Lawyer-vetted letter of employment not presented properly (or signed copy not retained on file).
5. Structured new employee orientation not delivered in a timely manner.
6. Policy & Procedures manual not reviewed with new employees (and at minimum, key information/changes reviewed annually with other employees).
7. Employment contracts don't make use of probationary periods, or employee progress isn't reviewed prior to end of probation (termination steps taken if required).
8. Documentation and use of progressive discipline is not complete or consistent.
9. A user-friendly annual performance management process is not followed.
10. A harassment policy is not documented in the Policy & Procedures manual, or is not enforced.
11. A Joint Health & Safety Committee is not functional, per provincial requirements.
12. Health and safety programming (an Emergency Response plan, First Aid certification of required number of employees, WHMIS and other training as required) is not in place.
13. An employee equity program isn't documented, as required under law.
14. WSIB reporting is not done, or is forwarded late.
15. Sufficient care is not taken in the treatment of an employee to mitigate exposure to a claim of constructive dismissal.
16. Termination for "just cause" is inadequately supported by documentation or the specifics of a situation.
17. Labor relations specialists aren't consulted re attempts to unionize.
18. Retirement criteria are inconsistently applied.
19. Planning for corporate events fails to include precautions to minimize risk of litigation.

## **STRATEGIC LITERACY (Cont)**

organization's strategic imperatives and their individual role in achieving these strategies.

Building strategic literacy first requires a definition of strategic knowledge and an assessment of the understanding of the knowledge and strategic behavior of everyone in the company. Next, design and implement employee communications and training to increase knowledge and behavior to acceptable levels, and last but not least, constantly assess, measure and maintain these new knowledge and behavior levels.

Well informed employees, who know what they need to do, will react faster and with greater precision to market opportunities, allowing the company to overtake other organizations where people are unclear, uncertain and unable to act quickly.

**Next Issue:  
Communications & Corporate Culture: Part II  
Smart Marketing Campaigns**