

## Managers on Overload?

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In 2008 over 95,000 claims of discrimination were filed with the EEOC – up 15% from the prior year and the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour division recovered in excess of \$185 million in back wages - assessing more than \$9.9 million in penalties. Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and is considering passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. On top of all that you have California Overtime and Labor Law!

Rest breaks, meal breaks, overtime, wage and hour, exempt or non-exempt, unions, turnover, discrimination, sexual harassment, medical leaves....so many important things your supervisors and managers must know!

You work hard to select the best people to lead your teams. How do you make sure, through all the noise of legislation updates, news stories of lawsuits and overall economic anxiety, your managers have the essential skills to prevent these kinds of problems from occurring in the first place?

What are employees saying? ...**“I have so many ideas about how to make the work go easier...but my boss never listens to me” “I never know what is going on in the company, that probably means things are bad and I should be looking for a new job” “I want to move ahead in my job but when I ask my boss, she acts like it’s a bad thing!”**

**“I never get any feedback on my performance except once a year and then I really don’t understand it!” “My boss has favorites and it’s not me. Some people can do whatever they want – come in late, goof off and nothing happens.”**

Surveys indicate that employees want their managers to be leaders not just the “boss”. Successful managers understand what it means to be a leader. They know how to interview and select the best person for the job, they know how to train and evaluate employees. They’re skilled at active listening, giving feedback and defusing emotional behavior. They understand how to motivate employees through encouragement and appropriate rewards. They’re not afraid to engage employees in honest open discussions. Disengaged employees -- those who don’t feel heard -- are more apt to be disgruntled and pursue legal avenues to resolve their issues.

The best problem prevention is education and the good news is successful manager behaviors can be learned. There are steps you can take to help: Start by developing and publishing core values and train your managers on behavioral observation of these values in action. Provide training on the basics of employment law - for example why is it important to give hourly paid employees rest periods. Teach your managers how to effectively use your existing policies and procedures to give guidance to employees. Using real on-the-job situations practice active listening and feedback skills.

With budgets tight it is more important than ever to be laser-focused on keeping your workforce productive, engaged and avoiding unnecessary, time consuming, and distracting employment-related issues. Training your managers on these “basics” of how to manage effectively is a key step.

*YES! Your Human Resources Solution: Kathi Guiney SPHR, President YES!, and Sara Snoy, SPHR, CCP, GRP, Senior Compensation and Training consultant deliver high impact HR which is customized and scalable to meet your business needs. For more information on this article or how our HR services will have a return on investment for your company, please call Kathi Guiney at 949-842-2848 or e-mail at [kathi@yeshrsolution.com](mailto:kathi@yeshrsolution.com)*