HR Themes from a "Troubled Organization"

- Need to understand the different places/experiences people are coming from (e.g., younger vs. older; single vs. married with children; life situation); taking time to get to know your employees may assist with teambuilding and job fit.

"Troubled" Themes

- Need clear policies that are consistently applied (don't look the other way just because an employee is very productive).

"Troubled" Themes

- Deal directly with rumors or "elevator gossip." In the case of private personnel matters, address the "elephant in the room" as best you can...consult your legal counsel first. It is important for employees know that as the manager you are on top of difficult situations and not out of the loop or abdicating your responsibility.

"Troubled" Themes

- By his or her actions, a manager has a very significant role in shaping the climate and culture of an organization, i.e., what are the values or principles that guide daily conduct. A key part of this responsibility is setting parameters for behavior in the office (e.g., language, treatment of each other).

"Troubled" Themes:

- Salary constraints are a given in public and nonprofit organizations; need to consider non-monetary incentives and methods of recognition.
- Consider training and development opportunities; job rotation and enrichment.

"Troubled" Themes

- Know the career aspirations of your employees, recognizing that they will differ by where people are in their stage of life and personalities.

- Assist employees in developing career paths, even if it means eventually leaving your organization…they will be more productive while you have them.

"Troubled" Themes

- Establish clear performance standards and expectations.

- Document both positive and negative performance/behavior and provide immediate feedback.

- Recognize and reward your stars and good worker bees; bite the bullet and deal with unsatisfactory performers.

"Views from the Field" Article

- HR field continuously concerned about the "triumph of technique over purpose" critique.

- Workforce has changed dramatically in terms of age, gender, ethnic and racial composition, and job expectations.

Views from the Field

- Public personnel managers must balance efficiency with other values such as equal employment, equity, merit, political responsiveness, professionalism, flexibility and accountability…not always easily reconciled.

Views from the Field

- Staffing & Selection Issues

    -- use of temporary workers

    -- performance testing

    -- computer-assisted testing

- Compensation & Benefits Issues

    -- cost of living, merit pay, skill-based pay

    -- health care insurance

    -- professional development

Views from the Field

- Performance Appraisal Issues

  -- use of new performance appraisal techniques (peer, client, subordinate, team-based evaluations ("360")

- Job Design and Process

  -- virtual office

  -- cross-training

  -- automated customer service

  -- performance management

Views from the Field

- HR administration remains in a state of flux and turbulence.
- Information technology will be a driver of change.
- Centrality of strategic human resource management is key…
  -- a goal-directed and strategy-driven integration of HRM into the key operations of the agency.

HR in State Government Article

- Ongoing civil service reform efforts

  -- hallmarks of civil service (or merit) system include tenure, the use of written, competitive examinations, and neutral administration.

  -- concern is that in the process of making government more accountable (i.e. based on objective merit principles and less influenced by politics), we have made it very difficult to manage effectively by taking away flexibility and discretion.

HR in State Government

- Locus of Personnel Authority

  -- considerable authority delegated to agencies in selection process

- Role and Mission of Central Personnel Departments

  -- shifting to a more consultative role

- Workforce Planning

  -- not being done much...mode is still reactionary

HR in State Government

- Selection Process

  -- need to streamline to be more competitive

- Classification Systems

  -- trend toward broadbanding and fewer classification categories

- Performance Evaluation & Reward Systems

  -- more collaboration in setting expectations

  -- nonmonetary incentives such as job & time flexibility

HR in State Government

- Emerging strategy to decentralize authority for personnel functions is increasing the autonomy of state agencies and managers.

- Be careful what you ask for...more responsibility comes with more autonomy!

Participative Decision Making

- Employee participation produces intrinsic personal benefits, including personal growth and development, job satisfaction, and willingness to change.

- Job satisfaction translates to organizational commitment, which is linked to high performance levels and low turnover.

- Overly centralized organizations are unable to respond to turbulent environments.

Participative Decision Making

- Conditions necessary for successful PDM:

  1. Viable collaborative mechanisms must be available and understood by management and employees;

  2. Win-win expectations (and realizations) must be present among the parties;

  3. The parties must be committed to investing the time and effort needed for a successful program.

  4. A basic level of trust and mutual respect must exist among the various parties
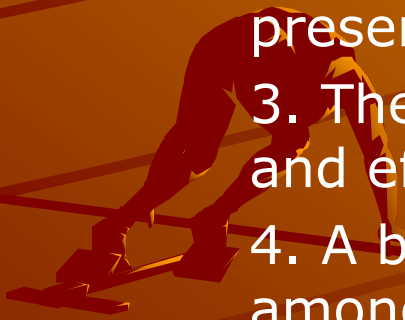
Participative Decision Making

- Impediments to PDM

  -- American-style labor management relations may be so ingrained with adversarialism that sustained collaboration is impossible.

  -- Lack of trust

  -- Commitment of time and energy is problematic in a society and workplace focused on short-term

How to Build Trust

- Practice openness
- Be fair
- Speak your feelings
- Tell the truth
- Show consistency
- Fulfill your promises
- Maintain confidences
- Demonstrate competence

Lessons from Corvallis Case

- As a manager, need to find a delicate balance between focus on process and results.

- Be aware of history/culture of organizations and relationships.

- Understand different approaches to resolving conflict and consequences (e.g. domination, cooptation, balance of power, compromise)

Lessons from Corvallis Case

- Principles of interest-based bargaining:

  1) Separate the people from the problem
  2) Focus on interests, not positions
  3) Invent options for mutual gain
  4) Insist on the interests of parties
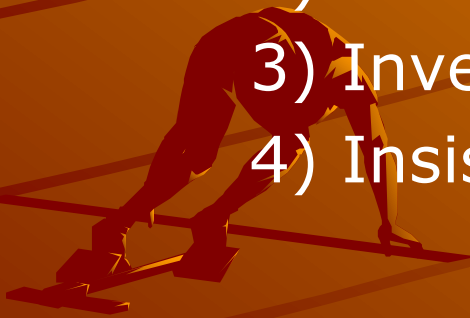
Lessons from Seattle Case

- Challenges illustrated by case: both philosophical and operational

    -- philosophically, the initiative was based on an intuitive sense of "the right thing to do." But the SCA leadership fell short in making the philosophical commitment operational. They failed to convey to staff the concrete connections between the anti-racism initiative and the agency's day-to-day work in fighting poverty, prejudice and neglect.

    -- see UNCW example of how to attempt to make the connection between diversity and institutional mission

    --case raises the issue about what it means to be culturally competent, or anti-racist in an increasingly diverse society and workplace.

Lessons from Seattle Case

- A public or nonprofit agency cannot isolate itself from issues in the community (e.g., race deaf employees will not understand/address race issues in the community…see youth violence)

- What outcomes are you trying to achieve with a diversity initiative (is it better numbers or something else?)

- Although race is huge, diversity is multi-dimensional…must also consider sex, social class, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

Succession Planning

+ An intentional process to ensure leadership continuity in key positions, retain and develop intellectual capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement.

+ Designed to answer three questions:

-- What is my future in this organization?

-- Who will be our future leaders?

-- Do we have people to replace older workers with critical KSAs?
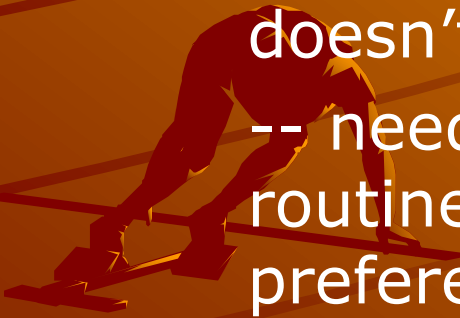
Succession Planning

+ Know the demographics of your workforce

    -- in PA, 13% of employees were eligible to retire and 28% within four years (note: this doesn't mean they will retire!)

    -- need to supplement demographic data with routine surveys that capture employee preferences and plans.

Succession Planning

+ Examples of model programs

-- internship-type leadership development initiatives to attract and develop new talent (features may include rotational assignments, management issue team projects, agency briefings, management development training and placement processes). Note PMF program at federal level.

-- knowledge management and transfer initiatives (documenting core business processes on websites, cross-training, job shadowing, mentoring, sharing of best practices and lessons learned)

Succession Planning Model

1. Identify functions and when positions are expected to be available.
2. Identify initial competencies required for each position.
3. Conduct a competency gaps analysis
4. Design developmental opportunities for each set of competencies.
5. Develop and maintain a talent pool.
6. Reassess and track overall progress and maintain a skills inventory.

Municipal Gov't Benefits Survey

- Municipal governments very competitive in terms of traditional benefits (health pensions, dental coverage).

- But they lag behind the private sector in hey family-friendly benefits such as childcare, eldercare, flexi-place, flexi-time and job sharing.

Municipal Gov't Benefits Survey

- Most frequent family-friendly benefits:
    - -- unpaid family leave
    - -- employee assistance programs
    - -- compensatory time
    - -- college tuition remission
    - -- paid family leave
    - -- wellness programs
    - -- flexible cafeteria plans
- Cafeteria plans, flex-time and childcare assistance are most frequently suggested.

Municipal Gov't Benefits Survey

- Younger, female respondents deem family-friendly benefits more important…women still bear a disproportionate share of household duties and experience greater levels of work-family conflict.

- A key to effective benefits plan management is a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies key characteristics and employee requirements.

Focus Group on Work-Family Experiences

- People often juggle church, community volunteer work, child and elder care demands, second job or school, family crisis, household maintenance.

- Challenges have been exacerbated by problematic staffing patterns and poor personnel practices, negative attitudes of community, and city council accusations.
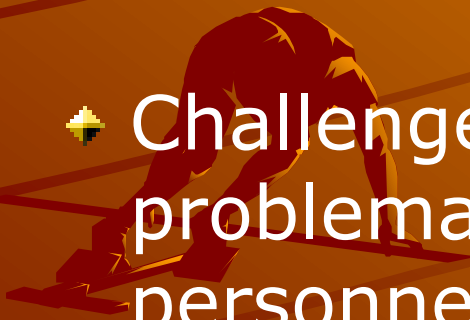
Focus Group on Work-Family Experiences

- Lack of reliable, quality child and elder care and lack of back up, emergency, sick child care keep people from doing their job well.

- A barrier is supervisory reluctance and inconsistency in allowing employees to take earned leave time and managerial indifference to family needs.

Focus Group on Work-Family Experiences

- Useful structural changes include:

  -- employee work-family advocate

  -- cross training employees

  -- broaden definition of "family"

  -- use of guidelines rather than rules

  -- increase opportunities for job-sharing, telecommuting, and reduced-day jobs.

Focus Group on Work-Family Experiences

- Resources needed to support use of temporary employees to ease staffing shortages, and on-site sick rooms or nursing services for employees.

- A family friendly culture would be enhanced by supervisory training, employees rating supervisors, and joint supervisor-supervisee training sessions.