



HC Newsletter

June, 2012

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the June edition of the HC newsletter. We've had a busy month, and are happy to announce that we have a new team member. This month Jasmine started working at HC and we are really excited to have her on-board.

In this edition we have two articles from special guest contributors. Darren Nelson writes about home-based work and your duty of care to these employees while Dean Mannix has written an article on workplace harassment. Both guest contributors prompt us to ask ourselves some pressing questions that, as an employer, you need to know.

In previous editions of our newsletter we have introduced our new Helping Hands team building activity. In this newsletter we dive a bit deeper into this activity by sharing a case study from one recent client. We have also explored the problem of landmines in detail and shared some alarming statistics that highlight the devastating global problem that creates the need for our program.

On a lighter note, this newsletter also includes a competition where you can win one of three free 360 degree assessments just by "liking" our Facebook page. Each 360 assessment is valued at over \$200 and there is more information about this competition listed at the bottom of this page.

Like our Facebook page to win one of 3 free 360 degree assessments!!

If you 'like' the HC Facebook page, you're in with the chance to win a FREE individual 360 degree assessment for your company!! All three winners will be randomly selected at the end of June.

To find out more about our 360 degree assessments, go to: <http://www.henricksconsulting.com/news/2012/360-team-report/>

So go to our Facebook page and get liking: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Henricks-Consulting/204948412871211?filter=1>



The Shocking Truth About Landmines



It's not an uncommon occurrence to be walking through the office with a file in one hand and a coffee in the other, when your phone begins to ring. The resultant juggling act we perform in order to answer our phone without spilling coffee often leads us to wish out loud for more than one set of hands.

We who live in developed countries often wish for more than we need and it's easy to forget the plight of those across the globe who only wish for the things that we take for granted.

It's a shame, but the issue of landmines appears to have dropped out of the news in recent years. Before getting involved in the Helping Hands project I was one of those people that assumed the problem had gone away or at least lessened. Unfortunately this isn't the case. With over 100 million active landmines in around 60 different countries, there are about 2,000 landmine accidents every month (that's one accident every 20 minutes).

One of the most terrible things about landmines is that they aren't designed to kill people... just severely debilitate. 95% of landmine victims survive and of those people that survive, 75% will lose the use of at least one limb. The presence of landmines has a debilitating effect. Not only do they severely injure and kill innocent civilians, communities are often cut off from schools, fresh water and farmland, due to fear of the landmines that surround them.

The truth is we were very lucky to be born in the country that we live in. If you happened to be born in another place like Swaziland, Uganda, Columbia or the Dominican Republic you too might have been one of the 300,000 people globally who are landmine related amputees. Your child might have been one of the 50,000 children who have lost a hand due to a landmine. We believe we have a responsibility to help these people if we can.

Most of the places where landmines cause such awful problems unfortunately do not have good health systems and getting assistance can be very difficult or impossible.

So what can you do to help?

No one expects you to fork out the \$3,000 that a standard prosthetic hand costs in the developing world, and definitely not the \$70,000 it can cost in Sydney, but you can so easily change someone's life forever by being involved with our Helping Hands Team Building Activity. For just a **tiny** fraction of the cost of a prosthetic hand here, you can build with your team a hand that will be sent to someone who is struggling to live day to day without one. With no cost to them!

Not only does this activity change the life of an amputee, it more often than not changes the lives of the teams who build the hands. We've witnessed individuals be moved to tears by the gravity of what they are taking part in. We've also been excited to see the renewed purpose and focus people find in the work they do.

We are so excited about this activity and the change it can bring to someone's life. If your company is currently considering running a team building or training activity why not consider running this activity at your workplace!



Helping Hands Case Study

Last month a client and partner of ours, Human Synergy, took part in Helping Hands, the team building activity we can't stop raving about at HC. Human Synergy is a training and engagement company, who used the Helping Hands activity amongst its own employees.

Recently we spoke to Jason Murray from Human Synergy about his experience with running the Helping Hands activity.



"This was a very unique experience that lets people make a difference in a short space of time and provides an opportunity to reflect on how what they do every day also makes a difference"

Human Synergy decided to use Helping Hands as a "trigger activity", which just means it was used to trigger employees to think about the purpose of their work. Jason believes it more than achieved this purpose, as the feel good factor of contributing and making a difference enabled the team to reconnect with their own purpose .

Jason's innovative use of this activity highlights the versatility of Helping Hands. Not only is it a great team building activity (especially when doing the one-handed-build), but it can also be used to meet other needs in the workforce, such as being a motivation and reflection tool.

For Jason's team, the question Helping Hands pushed them to ask of themselves was "are we truly connected to what we do and our purpose?" They were challenged to reflect on the importance of communicating. In particular, communicating the success of what they did with their customers and clients back to those who were involved in making it happen, especially to those employees that are not necessarily on the 'front line' of it all.

Human Synergy used the self facilitation kit for running this activity. Jason says he was surprised at how well presented the kit was, and how straight forward the instructions were, but that the real benefit of having this kit are videos which were included. For him, these videos perfectly framed up and closed out the activity.

Human Synergy has really taken a shining to Helping Hands. Not only do they say they would recommend it to other organisations, they are planning on integrating the program into the training and development services that they currently offer clients..

"What was particularly great about Helping Hands was that it succeeded in doing in 1 to 2 hours what a workshop would do in 6 to 8. "

HC Welcomes Jasmine to the Team

HC has recently welcomed another new team member. Jasmine Baghaei joined HC in March as our HR administrator. She is currently studying a double degree in Bachelor of Business administration and a Bachelor of Arts -Psychology. We're really excited to have her with us



Workplace Harassment – The Good News and the Bad!

Could your business and your brand survive a publicised case of workplace harassment, bullying or discrimination?

With workplace harassment actions becoming main stream in the SME space; business owners need to give serious consideration to taking positive and deliberate steps to ensure their workplace environment is free of inappropriate behaviour.

Over 125 years of research tells us that our environment will have a greater impact on our behaviour than our personal attributes. I had a lot of trouble digesting this concept when it was first shared with me; but after 15 years of consulting in more than 25 countries I'm confident that it holds true for the workplace environment.

As a business owner this presents both an opportunity and a risk.

The more we focus on creating a high performance environment the more likely it becomes that our people will "lift" and strive to do and be more.

Provide better training in the environment and people become more committed to personal development and learning new things. Give people meaningful measurements of their performance and activity and most will increase both. Bring a "top gun" performer into the team and others around them tend to lift their performance and beliefs about what's possible. Introduce coaching and more credible leadership into an environment and people tend to commit to a higher personal standard and be more open to seeking and receiving feedback.

I've seen all of these things happen in workplace environments all around the world.

But the reverse is also true.

Allow someone that's not pulling their weight to remain in the team without consequences and standards across the team will drop. Fail to introduce measurements that are credible into an environment and people will do less. Allow leaders to turn up late to internal meetings and watch people's punctuality diminish.

Think Facebook.com and the impact this environment has on people's behaviour. Many very well balanced and generally kind hearted people have been guilty of doing and saying some very stupid and nasty things in this environment. Most have no explanation for their "brain snaps" after the fact.

So the question is, what does all of this have to do with workplace harassment and other inappropriate workplace behaviour such as discrimination and bullying?

The answer is everything!

Many of the people found guilty of harassment, bullying and discrimination are not "bad" people. Many didn't think they were doing the wrong thing. Many were reflecting similar behaviour they had seen others engage in and for many; their workplace environment was a significant contributor to their terrible behaviour.

Let me make myself clear.



In no way does this excuse their behaviour. In no way does this make them any less culpable. There is simply no excuse for inappropriate workplace behaviour in our society and every person deserves to work in an environment free of these evils.

The point I'm making is that there's a reason employers are held vicariously liable for the inappropriate behaviour of their people. There's a reason that ignorance of the behaviour is not an excuse at law. There's a reason that ignorance that an act constituted bullying, sexual harassment or discrimination is not a defense.

And the reason is quite simply that the behaviour is taking place in the workplace environment created by the business owner.

As a business owner you have a duty to create an environment free of inappropriate behaviour and this should involve taking positive and deliberate steps. Legislation, language and requirements differ from State to State but a recent case (*Cooper v Western Area Local Health Network* [2012] NSWADT 39) is a timely reminder of the importance business owners need to place on taking reasonable steps to ensure they create an environment free of inappropriate behaviour.

In this case the employer was spared from significant fines and reputational damage when the court found that despite the employee being guilty of harassment the employer was not vicariously liable because they had taken reasonable steps.

"Reasonable steps" is obviously a highly discretionary term but we suggest employers consider the following questions at a minimum:

- Can I prove I've provided adequate training on appropriate workplace behaviour?
- Can I prove my people understood the training?
- Can I prove everyone in the team had read and agreed to our workplace behaviour policy?
- Can I prove everyone in the team knew how to make a formal complaint?

The "bad news" is that if you answered "no" to any of these you and your people are highly exposed to inappropriate workplace behaviour and the damage and consequences that flow.

The "good news" is that if you can answer "yes" to these four questions you've gone a long way towards creating a workplace free of harassment, bullying and discrimination. The bonus is that at the same time you've reduced your personal liability in the event someone in your business has a "Facebook moment".

Watch the video: http://tiny.cc/EndHarassment_Promo



This article was written by special guest contributor Dean Mannix, Dean is a Director of www.endharassment.com.au



Home Based Work

Having employees perform Home Based Work (HBW) on a regular basis can have great benefits for both you and your employees. However, you must remember that you have a duty of care to **ALL** employees who work for you, regardless of where that work is undertaken.

If any of your employees work from home on a regular basis, you have an obligation to make sure their home office environment is safe. In other words, you will need to carry out a risk assessment of any home office before you allow employees to work there.

Procedure

Employees may apply to undertake some work responsibilities from home. It is important to note that HBW is not a substitute for child care or other dependent care. Employees are responsible for ensuring that appropriate child care or dependent care arrangements are in place whilst engaged in HBW.

The following characteristics should be taken into consideration when assessing an employee's application for HBW:

- The nature of the work and whether it is able to be performed as effectively at home as it is at the workplace
- The impact of HBW on overall business performance and work done by other employees
- The employee's home workplace environment – can the work be completed safely at home and adhere to applicable occupational health and safety legislation?
- Any other applicable matters.

A detailed risk assessment of an employee's home workplace environment must be completed by your company's third party risk assessment provider and reviewed by a Health & Safety representative. The risk assessment must occur prior to an application for HBW being formally approved by your company. The initial third party assessment should be paid for by the Company – plus one re-assessment to verify that any required rectifications have been implemented.

The Company will not be responsible for providing or paying for any facilities required for an employee to conduct HBW. Any adjustments, modifications or additional equipment required to ensure the safety of the employees home workplace (as stated by the third party provider) will be at the employee's own expense.

Formally recognised employees engaged in HBW will be covered by workers' compensation legislation for their home workplace environment during the agreed hours of work



Other points to consider

Firstly, you should determine whether or not their job is suited to being done from a home office before you agree to an employee's request for HBW. If you decide that this can be done then you need to remember that it will be much more difficult for you to supervise and assess how they are performing. You will need to establish exactly how the employee's performance will be monitored and assessed. Keeping this reduced supervision in mind, they may therefore need more comprehensive training to be able to perform their work safely.

It is also important to establish the specific days and hours the employee will work from home, and the procedure for recording these hours. As well as this, you will need to make sure that the employee is familiar with safe working procedures in regards to the equipment they are using.

If you are going to have employees who work from home on a regular basis, it is a good idea for you to introduce measures that ensure these employees don't feel isolated or ignored



This article was written by a special guest contributor, Darren Nelson. Darren is an Associate of Henricks Consulting and the Managing Director of Global People Solutions P/L
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