2007 HR Statewide Conference Hosted by UT Health Science Center

Every year the UT HR offices around the state gather for the HR Statewide Conference. Formed in 2003, this conference provides a forum for all UT HR staff to meet and collaborate on policy, procedures and operational issues. In recent years the conference has been held on the UT Chattanooga and UT Martin campuses. UTHSC hosted the one and a half day conference on April 10-11. This years conference was themed: “HR is Making Music in Memphis: All Jazzed up about our FUTURE.” Session topics included: “Improving Relationships within HR Offices: Building Respect,” “Recognizing Recognition,” “Ethics in HR,” and “Building Client Respect.” These sessions allowed HR professionals to learn and discuss issues that would help them reach professional goals and ultimately improve each HR office in the UT system. Attendees also participated in teambuilding exercises conducted by UT Martin’s David Belote. A few of the exercises required the group to separate into two teams and maneuver around the gym using wood planks. It was challenging having to make every team member move and work together to win the challenge. While the activities and sessions were informative and interesting, the highlight of the conference was on the first night with dinner at the World Famous STAX Museum. The barbeque dinner was catered by Just Catering. After dinner and a short program, the attendees had a chance to tour the museum and get a “taste of Memphis Soul Music.” Many of the attendees were impressed and complimentary of the conference and they seemed to enjoy their visit to our campus. Next year the conference will be hosted by UT Knoxville and we are all looking forward to attending.

Striving to relieve stress

In recent months, many if not all higher learning institutions have seriously addressed the issue of safety on their campuses. In light of the tragedy that occurred on Virginia Tech’s campus, Chandra Alston, Team Leader in Benefits along with staff members from Campus Recreation, OED and Human Resources have made a proposal to implement a Stress Management Support Group. If approved, this support group would allow a safe environment for UTHSC staff and faculty to de-stress. Faculty and staff who are experiencing high levels of stress would meet once a month for an hour and a half. The meetings would be used to help gauge stress levels and address areas of concern for those participating. EAP professional counselors and trainers would facilitate some of the meetings which will be held in a spa like environment and would include lunch. We hope to hear more about this proposal in the near future as we strive to make UTHSC a safe and less stressful place to work.
Using Educational Assistance

On April 27, an overview of the Educational Assistance Program was presented. Highlights of the session were the rules and procedures that are involved in the Program, such as eligibility, forms required, and the procedures to get the forms approved. In addition, detailed information was given regarding which form or forms are needed for each college or university that is being attended and where to find these forms. All forms can be found on the HR webpage at: http://www.utmem.edu/hr, under benefits with specific instructions and an area where some forms are interactive. In addition, although not the interactive version, the forms are available in the Quick-links pull down menu, if you know which form you need. It was discussed how each individual college or university have their guidelines that need to be followed in submitting the forms for credit. Not mentioned but important as well is when an employee is using the PC191, it is necessary to follow the guidelines as outlined in the University Handbook for each campus being attended. Each school has a different date when we are allowed to register for classes covered by the PC191. If an individual chooses to register prior to the set date, the class will be purged and you will be expected to re-register for the class, and it is the option of that university to require you to pay for the class out of pocket because of the early registration. Additional sessions will be conducted throughout the year and will be announced in email and listed on the HR128 Training site for your registration.

Know your stuff!

We are halfway through 2007! As the year progresses, some employees experience unexpected illnesses or medical emergencies and have to inquire about a particular insurance and how to use it. As some make their inquiries, they discover their coverage is not what they thought it was or they do not have coverage at all. In most cases the employee can wait until the Annual Enrollment and Transfer period to make necessary changes to their plans. However, there are a few employees who are devastated when they discover they either lack certain coverage or do not have the coverage at all. This can cause hardships, especially issues regarding long term disability and health care. It is vital for all employees to know what insurance plans they are enrolled in and the details about their plans. A quick call or visit to the insurance office can provide the information you need so you “Know your stuff!” The insurance staff can be reached at 8-5577 or 8-8547. You may also visit us at 910 Madison, Ste. 727. Employees should also pay close attention to their personalized benefits statement mailed every year in October. For a quick review of the insurance plans, visit our website at: http://www.utmem.edu/hr.

HR cannot sign educational assistance for employees until TBR finalizes tuition rates. Hopefully we will be able to sign them by the end of June!

May I have your attention please!

- Managers and Supervisors! Performance Evaluations were due on March 30, 2007. Any outstanding reviews should be forwarded to Human Resources immediately!
- Sick Leave Bank enrollment is coming to an end. Please send your enrollment forms to HR by June 30th at 5pm. You can download the form here: http://www.utmem.edu/hr/Benefits/sick.htm
- Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) evaluations have been completed and Human Resources is in the process of meeting with upper level Administration to discuss evaluation results. Complete evaluation results will be disseminated after July 1st.
The Fourth Annual Administrative Professionals Conference themed “Unlocking Your Potential,” on April 24, 2007 was a success! We would like to thank everyone who played a part in the Conference and helped to make it a success.

Special thanks to:

**Donors**
- Abbot, Bobby Walker
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**COMING SOON………**
- Chancellor’s Chat  Employee Service Recognition Luncheon
  - Wednesday, July 18th  Friday, July 20th
  - *Emails will be sent to selected attendees with times and locations.*

**HR Reporter Staff:** Debbie Jackson, Darlene Fredericks, Mac Re Jackson, Damon Davis, Karen Weatherly, Darnita Brassel, Chandra Alston, Tiffany Trice
Do You Annoy Your Co-Workers?
By Kate Lorenz, CareerBuilder.com Editor

Every office has at least one jerk, pest or loudmouth who drives the rest of the workers crazy. Could it be you? Take this quiz to find out how annoying you might be:

How many of these statements describe you?

1. You make provocative statements to "foster dialogue" or needle others.
2. You often find yourself delivering a discourse consisting solely of buzzwords and catch phrases.
3. You make up nicknames for all of your co-workers and refer to them only by these monikers. (e.g. "Good job, Chachi!", "I'm going to have to disagree with you there, T-bone!")
4. Your office is completely decorated in your children's pictures and artwork.
5. You have plastered your cubicle with photos of yourself taken with famous people.
6. It is your trademark to recite rhyming or other cutesy messages as your voicemail greeting.
7. The questions you ask at meetings are preceded by long monologues of your views and accomplishments.
8. You routinely eat odiferous lunches at your desk.
9. You bring in dishes that you tried to cook, but didn't turn out quite right as "special treats" for your co-workers.
10. People seem tense -- even panic-stricken -- when they see you coming their way.
11. Others back away from you as you speak.
12. You send flurries of e-mails to the rest of the company telling them what you are doing. (e.g. "If anyone needs me, I'll be in the bathroom.")
13. You vigorously chew or pop your gum.
14. You wear strong perfume or cologne.
15. You assume your co-workers are fascinated by your personal problems and exploits.
16. You interrupt others while they are speaking or are deep in conversation.
17. You are moody and don't care who knows it.
18. You often give others assignments as they're walking out the door for lunch or to catch the train home.

If you only counted one or two... not to worry, you can quickly make changes before you're labeled a pest.

If your actions match three to five of these statements... take heed. You are on your way to becoming the source of many an eye roll.

If you do six or more of these on a regular basis... chances are you are already on the office watch list and have been anointed by your co-workers as annoying. It's time to do a reality check and make some changes.

Ask your boss and colleagues for feedback, and be ready to listen. If what you hear doesn't fit your self-image, ask them to help you understand what they are saying by giving examples. You might say: "Tell me more about what I do that leads you to believe that." Then listen, without arguing, defending or justifying your actions.

Remember, there are countless ways to aggravate co-workers -- you can even annoy them by trying too hard to please or being too nice! As long as you avoid the aforementioned behaviors, use your energy for the good of the organization and treat others as you would like to be treated, you should be all right.

And remember, it's perfectly OK to annoy others sparingly. It reminds them that you still exist!