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# EAC *Supervisor Wire*

Employee Assistance Center at CARE

Published by the staff at EAC to help supervisors in their goal of maintaining a safe, drug free, productive workforce.

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## What to Examine When Exploring Employee Work Options

Your administrative assistant suddenly finds herself unable to work 40 hours a week. She asks if she might work four hours a day, five days a week and will train someone else to handle the more routine tasks when she's not there.

While you are willing to consider this possibility, can you substantiate that the advantages of keeping a valued employee will outweigh any additional costs or inconveniences of having her work part time? If your company does not already have a policy on part time employees, it will take more effort on your part to put together a workable plan.

### Exploring New Options

Before making any proposals, review current responsibilities with your staff member. Some of the duties might be handled by another member of your staff or a different department. Explore the option of installing a word processor and modem in her home so she might work there part of the week.

Perhaps the position does not lend itself to the possibility of job-sharing. It may be better to hire a full-time replacement and create a new part-time position in which to use your administrative assistant's skills. For example, she could remain on staff to train the new employee and devote her attention to special projects or regular reports.

### Administrative Glitches

Be sure administrative issues do not sabotage the proposal. Accounting procedures or benefits may have to be altered to accommodate a change in schedule.

Ask if insurance benefits can be prorated based on part time hours. If the work option is new to your company, seek out examples of how other companies have succeeded in making it work.

### Writing a Proposal

Help your assistant write a proposal outlining duties and schedules. Discuss how possible problems would be resolved and list back-up systems. Address any inconveniences which the new schedule might create, but emphasize potential benefits to the company.

The extra steps taken to put together a well thought-out plan can pay off by keeping an experienced and loyal employee on staff.

## A Day Without Email



In a time when our first task upon reaching our desks is to turn on the computer and check our emails, it would seem absurd, if not impossible, to live without this powerful communication medium. However, one company is experimenting to see if a no-email day would actually improve productivity.

Sending emails has amounted to an addiction to some, and hard to stay away from, at least, for everyone else. Employees at Veritas Software are slowly getting the hang of it, with everybody making adjustments to cope with the ban. The company says the ban has been a success and plans to continue it indefinitely. The number of emails in the personal in-boxes of employees have been cut in half on those days. Not only do they get work done more quickly, the office is less cluttered because there are fewer email printouts taking up space.

Interestingly, the number of daily emails in North America has tripled since 1999, to 11.9 billion, according to IDC, a Framingham, Mass., research firm. That figure does not include spam e-mails, which are another problem entirely. The ePolicy Institute, of Columbus, Ohio says 48% of all office workers spend one to two hours a day on e-mail. Some 10% spend more than half the day on the stuff.

Before we go the drastic route of banning emails, it might be a good move to evaluate our email usage and cut down on communication that might be accomplished by walking over to the next desk.

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*“The value of achievement lies in the achieving.”*

— Albert Einstein



## “I Quit”

### *What you can learn from an exiting employee*

Exit interviews present a great value in helping to give insight to what you do well as an employer and in what areas you can improve. It is essential to take this information and incorporate it into your company’s overall strategy in the future.

Employees are more likely to offer straight talk during exit interviews than they are during performance interviews. Feedback is likely to be more honest because the employee has nothing to lose at that point.

Always be aware of situations that could develop into a legal issue such as an employee expressing to you that they feel they are being harassed by a fellow employee. A smart organization will not ignore this information. If you plan on looking into the situation, make sure to tell the departing employee that the exit interview may not be kept confidential for this purpose.

Take a situation and turn it into an opportunity for training. Maybe there are those on your staff who don’t realize how they might be perceived in the workplace.

#### **Do’s during the exit interview:**

- Listen respectfully
- Try to help the employee leave on “good terms”
- Pay attention to how you frame the questions you ask to make sure you aren’t misunderstood
- Have a third party conduct the exit interview, not the direct supervisor

- Keep a record of what you are told during the interview
- Communicate feedback you receive to those who can best use the information to evaluate and make appropriate changes
- Follow up on any received information that relates to inappropriate behavior
- Be consistent with exit interviewing only those who are leaving your organization voluntarily

#### **Don’ts during an exit interview:**

- Argue with the individual
- Try to defend your organization, or any particular individual in the organization
- Let the person leave the exit interview angry

#### ***The following are legal and acceptable questions to ask during the exit interview:***

- What led you to accept the initial job offer with us?
- How have your feelings about us changed since then?
- How do you feel about the training you have received here for your job?
- How would you rate your personal performance?
- How do you feel about the overall work environment?
- What did you like most about your position?
- Did your salary range and/or benefits affect your decision to leave?
- What would you identify as strengths and weaknesses of your supervisor?
- What could we have done to prevent you from leaving?
- What can management do to improve the atmosphere and environment?

***The more valuable information you obtain during an exit interview, the better your chances of finding areas where you can implement positive changes.***



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**Clinician on call 24/7**

The EAC is located within the CARE office, which is on the southeast corner of Utica Road & Masonic (13 ½ Mile Road) in Fraser