



J. Mack Robinson College of Business
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY



W. T. BEEBE

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the W. T. Beebe Newsletter, written by the students of the W. T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations in the Department of Managerial Sciences at Georgia State University. Along with providing information on Beebe events, it provides interesting reading for HR professionals and students alike.

HR FIELD RESEARCH

Last semester, the Department of Managerial Sciences and the Beebe Institute once again offered the HR Field Research class to Georgia State University students. This unique course was a collaboration between the students, the professor and HR practitioners; all of whom worked together to make this endeavor successful. Dr. Lucy McClurg taught the class, and she began early in the summer by contacting HR practitioners who might be interested in sponsoring a project or who might be willing to serve as advisors. Dr. McClurg states, "I have found incredibly supportive practitioners in the community who are willing to share their time with the students as they learn how to apply theories and best practices in the workplace." Some sponsors and advisors are former students who participated as students in the past. Students this semester have enthusiastically praised the class. Dixon Stapleton, one of the students this semester who worked on the NAPA project, shares, "This class really engages the students to apply the theories but be realistic about their recommendations because of the constraints that the sponsors have. Nothing is hypothetical in these projects, and that makes everything more challenging and more rewarding as well."

Each project presented different challenges to the students, and the topics ranged from preparing job descriptions to the application of Sarbanes-Oxley. Recruiting, however, was a common theme in some of the projects, which reflects the reality of what HR practitioners are facing these days. Anyone who is interested in becoming a sponsor or an advisor during future offerings of this course may contact Dr. Lucy McClurg: mgtlnm@langate.gsu.edu.



From left to right: Abigail Stone; Nancy Vepraskas, Vice President of Human Resources; Dixon Stapleton; Melissa Boggs; John Kalusa, Director of Recruiting and Retention; and Ebony McGee.

Ms. Nancy Vepraskas, Vice President of Human Resources for U.S. Automotive Parts Group, Genuine Parts Company, is no stranger to this course. She has sponsored ten projects and participated in one of the early offerings of this course. Finding competent part-time help is an ongoing challenge for the company and Genuine Parts was interested in the viability of recruiting college students who might eventually transition into management positions. The group designed a flexible work program for college students. They created the structure, candidate selection criteria, compensation schedule, and a marketing plan. In addition, the group presented the program to Ms. Vepraskas and other executives who would be implementing the program.



From left to right: Bradley Lawhorne; Lauren Killion; Kevin Cruse, Principal of HR Cruse & Associates; Theresa Milazzo, Associate VP of Human Resources of Emory University, Yvette Wareham; Erin Thomas; and Eddie Gammill, Manager of Wellness Programs of Emory University.

Emory University sponsored one of the projects in relation to their Wellness Center. They were interested in determining the return on investment (ROI) in their Wellness Center, which provides various health services to all of their employees. The group of four graduate students set out and learned about scorecards and developing ways to track the costs and benefits related to the Wellness Center and wellness programs that companies offer in general. In addition, the group conducted countless interviews with industry experts on wellness initiatives. They then compared their findings with the data that Emory has gathered or was in the process of gathering. At the end of the project, the group presented recommendations to the Emory executives regarding ways to define their strategic goals for the Wellness Center and its initiatives and the related measures for those goals. The group presented their findings to the Emory executives, delivered a report and a turn-key evaluation system.

In the Hooters of America group, both the sponsor, Patricia Kellner, Human Resources Manager for Hooters of America, Inc., and the advisor, Mary Beth Davis, are Beebe graduates. Ms. Davis is also an alum of the HR Field Research class. The group finished two projects for the sponsor: preparing job descriptions for their Information Technology department which has grown tremendously in a short period of time; and preparing a recruitment report for the hourly workers that the company needs in the restaurants. When asked what challenges these projects presented, Margarita Almeda stated that for the second project the recruitment report had a twist in that they had to consider the image factor that the restaurants want to maintain. She adds that they spoke with current hourly employees and managers to gain a better understanding of this image and how it affects how they recruit currently and that they tailored their recommendations to ensure that they preserved this image that the company values.



From left to right: Chris Jones, Mary Beth Davis, Nick Tilford, Margarita Almeda, and Patricia Kellner.



From left to right: Keia Borden, Angela Vela Ramirez, and Catrina Pritchett

The “SOX” team investigated the implications for HR professionals of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. As part of their project, Keia, Katrina, and Angela researched practitioners’ and academic journals, law reviews, and case law; in addition, they spoke with HR professionals and law experts, including Mr. Jason Stevens, J.D., MBA, and manager at Betts & Associates, in Atlanta. Mr. Stephens spent much time engaging in lively discussions with this group regarding the Act and other laws, in addition to serving as an advisor for another group.

The final product of this team’s research was a thorough, professionally-written 40-page report and presentation exploring the role of HR in SOX compliance and outlin-

ing the specific tasks and best practices for each area of Human Resources, including HR Development, Employee & Labor Relations, Occupational Health, Safety & Security, Workforce Planning, and Compensation & Benefits. In addition, the report included a background on the Sarbanes-Oxley act of 2002, and sections on the costs of compliance, and the financial and corporate governance implications.

The sponsor for this project was Mr. Gary Wheeler, former SHRM Atlanta President. He currently consults at his own company in Atlanta, Human Resource Business Partner Consultant, LLC, and coaches business owners as part of Action Coach Business Consulting. The advisor for this group was Mr. Jack Huddleston, who is a student liaison for SHRM Atlanta and works as the Director of Human Resources at Tomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley.

From left to right: Jose Vejarano; John Carson, Vice President of Herschend Family Entertainment; Audra Leper, HR Manager of Stone Mountain Park; Connie Kasputis, Employment Manager of Stone Mountain Park; Linda Launey; Christina Hall; and Detra Green.



The sponsor for this project is Herschend Family Entertainment, which runs Stone Mountain Park and other theme parks such as Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri, Dollywood’s Splash Country in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, and Adventure Aquarium in Camden, New Jersey. Again, this project is rooted in the company’s concerns regarding recruiting and the tightening labor market. They asked the students to prepare a five-year labor forecast for the hospitality industry in the Metro Atlanta area and to give recommendations on how to address their findings. Furthermore, the company requested an analysis on compensation trends for some of the frontline positions at Stone Mountain Park. The main contact with Herschend Family Entertainment was Mr. John Carson who is a Beebe alumni, while their advisor is Mr. Jason Stephens, J.D. of Betts & Associates.

IN MEMORY OF MR. KEN LESLEY



With sadness, we would like to extend our condolences to the family of Mr. Ken Lesley, who passed away late last year. Mr. Lesley is a friend of the Beebe Institute whose generous donation funds a scholarship for our students. Mr. Lesley was a personal friend and colleague of Mr. Beebe from his time at Delta Airlines and remained involved with the Beebe Institute after receiving his MBA at Georgia State University. Most recently, in September 2006, in addition to making a generous charitable gift to the Beebe Institute, Mr. Lesley spoke to students on the topic of Strategic HR in the 21st century, sharing his wealth of experiences from a nearly 40-year career in Human Resources.

In 1995, Mr. Lesley retired as the Vice President of Human Resources and Public Relations of Burlington Industries, where he also served on the Board of Directors. Before his successful 27-year career at Burlington Industries, he worked for Delta Airlines and Baxter Laboratories. Mr. Lesley was born in Easley, S.C., July 10, 1936 and graduated from North Greenville Junior College and Louisiana College, later to receive his MBA from Georgia State University. He was an active member of the Rotary Club, a Paul Harris Fellow, chaired the United Way of Burlington in 1974, and served on the Board of Directors for the Burlington N.C. Chamber of Commerce and several non-profit entities. He also served as an Elder in the Presbyterian Church for many years.

Mr. Lesley was preceded in death by his son, Barton Hale Lesley. He is survived by his mother, Vertie M. Lesley of Burlington, N.C. and wife, Loyce H. Lesley. Children are Beth and Richard Roessler, Todd and Lu-Ann Lesley, Karyn Couvillion and Andy Hunter, Kirk Lesley and special friend, Katherine Hardy. Grandchildren are Stephanie Roessler, Scott Roessler and wife, Christy, Leslie Kernodle and husband, Clark, Sarah Gray Lesley and Mina Rose Hunter. Great grandchildren are Cameron Roessler, Benjamin Roessler, and Aiden Kernodle.



Erin Thomas

Erin is a Beebe student working on her Master of Science in Human Resource Management

Business Continuity and the Human Resource Field: Understanding the necessity to protect corporations in the wake of September 11, 2001

By: Erin N. Thomas

The events of September 11, 2001 continue to alter lives nearly six and a half years after the terrorist attacks. Understandably, the focus has been on the lives lost that day, and the families of those killed in the attacks. The victims were parents, children, grandchildren and friends. But a topic less frequently discussed is that when those buildings were hit, entire corporations were affected by the loss of coworkers and employees. With the lives of 2,800 individuals taken and countless businesses affected, corporations began refocusing on plans to protect their employees at work and continue business after an unanticipated crisis.

Human Resource Management holds the task of protecting their employers and employees in everyday business. In the past, the task focused more on protecting the assets of the company, hiring the best individuals for the job and continuing development of those individuals to further growth of the company. Since September 11, focus has shifted to each employee's safety and establishing plans to continue business in the wake of an unanticipated crisis. With increased federal and state regulations, organizations are being forced to focus on efforts to make the workplace safe by penalty of fine or even imprisonment. Though many of these regulations are primarily focused on the prevention of smaller-scale incidents, OSHA also requires that employees are continually trained in plans relating to egress in the incident of large-scale incidents, first aid, etc; expectations of continued training and communication as well as the requirement for support from the highest ranks of an organization make the Human Resources department a viable fit for managing safety and business continuity throughout the organization.

Gerald Lewis discusses business continuity in his book, *Organizational Crisis Management: The Human Factor*. He defines business continuity planning as "a process of developing advance arrangements and procedures that enable an organization to respond to an event in such a manner that critical business functions continue with planned levels of interruption or essential change" (27). Lewis' definition holds that the plan would be in place with the assumption of various levels of crises within a corporation. After the attack on September 11, Americans were forced to deal with an event that changed the scope of crisis planning. With each new potential loss to an organization, the business continuity plan must be adjusted and reinforced by the highest levels of management. Lewis describes this as the business continuity program, or "an ongoing program supported and funded by executive staff to ensure business continuity requirements are assessed, resources are allocated, and recovery and continuity strategies and procedures are completed and tested" (Lewis, 27). With the inability to assume any specifics of a disaster, this plan would be the foundation for continuing business and must be managed as a high priority. Richard G. Renckly confirms the success of these strategies in his book, *Human Resources*, "As a case in point, most financial companies affected by the September 11, 2001, World Trade Center attack were able to almost immediately resume operations because of good back up procedures. Their experience has served to alert and convince many companies of the necessity of duplicate secured data, regardless of cost" (256). Unfortunately the issue often faced by organizations is ensuring managers understand the necessity by both developing and maintaining this plan for their departments. The importance of ongoing maintenance requires a project manager. When an organization selects a Human Resource Specialist/Manager to maintain the business continuity plan, the company is selecting an individual with the propensity to work closely with all levels of employees, a bonus for any individual attempting to manage a large-scale project. In many organizations, the highest level Human Resources manager/vice president works directly with the highest level managers, an added level of influence should the Specialist/Manager be required to escalate an issue. A Human Resource department's influence enhances the ability to manage the business continuity strategy for an organization.

In the event of an unforeseen circumstance, the business continuity plan must also take into account the potential hardships the employees would face outside of the office. Human Resource individuals, though focused on the employer/employee relationship, already find themselves immersed in the private lives of many employees. With the knowledge of confidential information and the function to provide support to the needs of employees, Human Resource individuals can add a more personal approach to the business continuity plan.

As stated previously, since September 11, federal and state regulations require that organizations focus on the safety of their employees. Many of these regulations act as preventative measures for incidents that may impact a few employees, but some regulations involve continued training and communication of various safety-oriented measures such as First Aid and locating safe egress when the need to evacuate the facility occurs. Many Human Resource departments are already responsible for communicating and reporting incidents as required. Although terrorism is the least likely reason why an individual would be forced to evacuate a facility, the events of 9/11 prove the need for a structured plan to achieve rapid evacuation. With no foresight for a terrorist attack, the only way to protect employees is to develop a plan that enforces immediate action. OSHA's regulations and threat of fine further the importance of developing such a plan. It falls on the facilities manager and the Human Resources department to ensure that the plan be continually communicated to the employees to increase the chances of immediate reaction and evacuation. Because the Human Resources department is already responsible for communicating information related to unforeseen circumstances, they could extend the communication to also include business continuity plans. Further, Human Resources responsibility for OSHA-regulated training could also include information on post-crisis response. With a more widespread communication plan and further defined training programs, an organization's business continuity plan would be implemented more quickly.

Though business continuity plans existed prior to 2001, the terrorist attacks of September 11, brought to light the necessity for a plan to protect employees and continue business after large-scale tragedy. Companies in the World Trade Center that had well-prepared and communicated plans proved more ready to react when the incident occurred. This act of terrorism led to a heightened need for business continuity programs to protect employees and regain business after a disaster. The maintenance, training and continued communication of business continuity plans require management by a Human Resource department in order to establish an effective strategy for continuing business in the wake of an unforeseen crisis.



HR Certification Exams

Students and recent graduates can take the PHR and GPHR exams at a reduced initial registration rate. Passing students and recent graduates must pay the balance of the exam fee once they have graduated and documented two years of exempt-level HR work experience. They have five years from the date of passing the exam to obtain the two years of exempt-level HR work experience. Student/recent graduate candidates are not eligible to take the SPHR certification exam. Student/recent graduates who meet the two-year exempt-level HR work experience requirement must apply as an HR professional and pay the full exam fee. Student/recent graduate candidates must take the exam no earlier than 12 months before their graduation date and no later than 12 months after graduation from a bachelor's or graduate degree program.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.hrci.org/Certification/OV/>

