



**March 2005**

Welcome to the eighth edition of 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.

## **FOCUS ON THE GSU SHRM CHAPTER**

### **GSU SHRM Chapter Rings in the New Year**

After wrapping up the year 2004, the GSU SHRM started the new year with an informative first meeting of the Spring Semester on January 20. The guest speaker was **Tim Swoger**, Director of Recruiting for the Consolidated Container Company. He discussed careers in Human Resources, citing his own HR career and offering job search and career development.

In February the chapter welcomed **John Carson**, Vice President of Human Resources for Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation. He gave a great presentation on his challenges as HR Director for Saab USA and success in transitioning Saab employees to the GM headquarters in Michigan or providing support and outplacement services for employees electing to remain in Atlanta. In addition he offered great career and interviewing advice to students.

At the March meeting, the students heard **Tom Darrow**, President-Elect SHRM Atlanta and Principal, HR Connections & Consulting LLC. He offered students great advice on what it takes to be an HR Consultant and emphasized the importance of becoming involved in the HR community.

## **FOCUS ON STUDENTS AND ALUMNI**

In this section of the newsletter we recognize accomplishments made by both students and alumni.

### **Promotions**

**John Carson** recently accepted a position as **Vice President Human Resources** for the Herschend Family Entertainment Corporation located here in Norcross, Georgia.

**John A. Kosky** has accepted a position to lead the compensation function at Emory University beginning in March 2005

### **Certifications**

Tameika Scott passed the Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification in January 2005.

John Carson recently passed the PHR certification exam.

Tom Allen is now certified as both PHR and SPHR.

**Congratulations on your successes!**

### **Networking**

Beebe is a great stepping stone for students to begin and practice their networking skills because the professors and staff at Beebe are in contact with HR professionals and alum constantly. They connect students with not just jobs but the people as well. Reciprocally, it is very important for former students to remain connected to help create opportunities and mentoring for current students. So as an alum take advantage of the opportunity you may have to give back by helping other Beebe students enter and be successful in HR!

## FOCUS ON CURRENT RESEARCH

### Civility in Today's Workplace

A recent study in the Academy of Management Executive called "*On the Nature, Consequences, and Remedies of Workplace Incivility: No Time for "Nice"? Think Again*"<sup>i</sup> looked at the impact of workplace incivility today and some potential consequences.

In a recent survey of more than 2,000 respondents, nearly four out of five believe that lack of respect and courtesy is a serious problem; three out of five believe it is getting worse.<sup>ii</sup> That is a startling statistic and clearly something not addressed in workplaces publicly today. The results of the paper were based on interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, experiments and executive forums with a total of 2,400 people in the US and Canada.

They argue that incivility is very common in the workplace today and can often escalate into aggression and possibly a physical confrontation. They report that incivility is a "regular occurrence at work" and that "the complexity of fast-paced, high-tech, global interactions feeds incivility because people believe that they don't have the time to be nice". Incivility is often times perpetuated in the workplace by escalating spirals and cascades between two parties, leading to higher and higher levels of incivility that could wind up as aggression. It spirals when both employees try to get back at one another in an escalating manner, with each trying to out disrespect the other. A cascade occurs when co-workers who were never involved become so when they are told about the incident and then chose to become involved.

*"When incivility thrives, targets suffer and organizations lose. When incivility cascades within and beyond organization boundaries, it can malign organizational interactions, tarnish the company's reputation, and create spillover effects that diminish customer satisfaction and bottom line objectives."*<sup>iii</sup>

Incivility, also referred to as workplace deviance, is not illegal and therefore companies don't offer training or policies as a means of prevention. Although the costs of incivility are hard to pinpoint, it does cost a company lost productivity, target time and turnover. Often times when an employee is disrespected they lose productivity not only thinking about what happened, but also getting back at the other person and co-workers also lose work time listening to the employee discuss the incident.

Too often incivility starts with management. Every company has certain managers that are notorious for their disrespectful behavior but are tolerated because of their contributions to the company's bottom line. The authors argue that these managers do cost the company money and their attitude and

reputation can spread through an organization like a virus. Lower level employees then retaliate by cutting back their productivity, blotch tasks important to the instigator or withhold information the instigator may need, causing the company's bottom line to suffer.

To combat incivility in the workplace, here are some steps that leaders can take to protect their workplace and employees<sup>iv</sup>:

1. Set zero-tolerance expectations
2. Take an honest look in the mirror
3. Weed out trouble before it enters your organization
4. Teach civility
5. Put your ear to the ground and listen carefully
6. When incivility occurs, hammer it
7. Heed warning signals
8. Don't make excuses for powerful instigators
9. Invest in post-departure interviews

Organizations need to take very seriously this form of organizational deviance and train all employees, especially management that civility and respect for all co-workers is not only desired but mandatory.

They argue that incivility has become common place and many employees often feel they are targets. Often times it is a superior who begins the cycle and once an employee has experienced incivility then they may lose productivity causing the organization to experience turnover and lost target time. Then of course if the employee decides to retaliate, it could continue to escalate in an upward spiral. This is especially true if the incivility occurs between peers. Consequently this could be the beginning of a vicious cycle of incivility with each employee trying to outdo the other and the insults become more and more aggressive which could ultimately lead to workplace violence. If it occurs from boss to employee, the employee won't directly retaliate but may do so using subterfuge by reducing productivity, talking to others and spreading the hostility by getting other employees involved who then in turn lose productivity as well.

**Dr. Kay Bunch**, SHRM GSU faculty advisor and faculty member of Beebe conducted a workshop entitled "Promoting Workplace Civility" at Clayton College and State University.

**FEATURED PREVIEWS: LOOKING AT SUMMER SEMESTER'S TENTATIVE  
COURSE OFFERINGS**

**Summer 2005**

Course No.	Course Name	Days	Time	Faculty
MGS 8140	Management Science	Mondays Wednesdays	7:40 - 10:25 pm	T. Whalen
MGS 8300	Human Resource Management	MTWTF	7:15 – 9:45 pm	K. Bunch
MGS 8425	Coaching for Leadership	MTWRF	4:30 – 7:00 pm	D. Butler
MGS 8430	Negotiation	Mondays Wednesdays	4:45 – 7:30 p.m.	E. Miles
MGS 8730	Project Management	Mondays Wednesdays	4:45 – 7:30 p.m.	R. Deane
MGS 8730	Project Management	Tuesdays Thursdays	4:45 – 7:30 p.m.	R. Deane
MGS 8860	Study Abroad: China			

## **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Current and previous editions of the Beebe Newsletter are available online at [www.robinson.gsu.edu/beebe/newsletter](http://www.robinson.gsu.edu/beebe/newsletter). If you have any comments, suggestions, submissions, or for more information about our programs, please email the Faculty Advisor at [mgtlnm@langate.gsu.edu](mailto:mgtlnm@langate.gsu.edu), visit the Beebe Institute website at [www.cba.gsu.edu/beebe](http://www.cba.gsu.edu/beebe), or write to:

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<sup>i</sup> Pearson, Christine M. & Porath, Christine L. 2005. "On the nature, consequences and remedies of workplace incivility: No time for "nice"? Think again". *Academy of Management Executive* 19 (1).

<sup>ii</sup> Remington, R., & Darden, M. 2002. "Aggravating circumstances: A status report on rudeness in America". NYC: Public Agenda.

<sup>iii</sup> Pearson et al.

<sup>iv</sup> Pearson et al.