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Healthy Companies

"**H**ealthy people and healthy leaders make healthy companies. And healthy companies produce—more often and more consistently—healthy returns on their investments."

That belief forms the cornerstone of a new not-for-profit organization, explains its president Robert Rosen in the first issue of *Healthy Companies*, the group's eponymously named flagship newsletter.

According to Healthy Companies, the concept of organizational health rests on a single principle: A company's health, productivity, and survival depend on its ability to foster the health, success, and development of its people.

The group, a collaboration of business, government, labor, and research institutions, promotes its agenda for organizational health through leadership seminars, learning networks, publications, conferences, workshops, research, and other activities.

The MacArthur Foundation sowed the seeds for Healthy Companies in 1988 when it asked a multidisciplinary group of experts to examine relationships between people and their work organizations.

"The study confirmed what experience tells us is true—that old models of work are ineffective in this age of global competition and relentless social change," *Healthy Companies* reports.

The research identified 13 interrelated dimensions of "organizational health." (See the listing below.) In 1991 Healthy Companies was founded to encourage all types of organizations to use the dimensions as "a values-based organizing system for investing in, managing, and
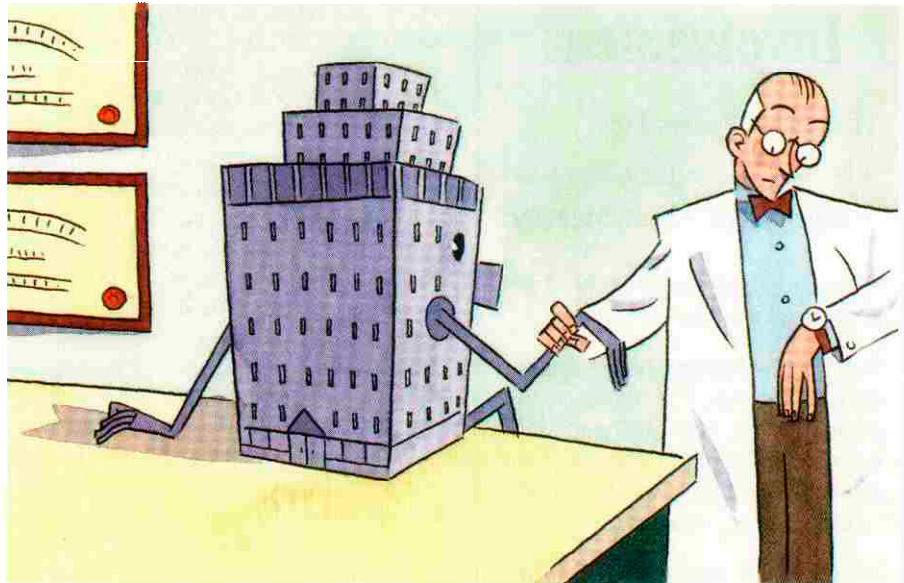
developing human assets."

This kind of people-based competitive strategy—evident at such high-performance companies as Motorola, Ford, and Corning—holds the key to the nation's economic and social survival, Healthy Companies contends.

According to Healthy Companies, the 13 dimensions of organizational health are evident at the individual level as well as the organizational level. Here are the dimensions as they play out at healthy organizations:

▶ Open communications. The organization freely shares information at all levels about its conditions, operations, choices, and plans. People respect the confidentiality of such information and contribute to honest, forthright discussions.

▶ Employee involvement. The organization seeks employees' involvement and leadership in making decisions, planning, designing work, and solving problems. Employees contribute ideas, take responsibility for decisions, work in teams, and play

Steven Guarnaccia

How healthy is your company? A thorough examination looks at 13 possible trouble spots.

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leadership roles in the company.

▶ Learning and renewal. The organization offers ongoing opportunities for employees to expand their knowledge and skills and contribute to organizational learning. People become lifelong learners who take advantage of these opportunities and share knowledge.

▶ Valued diversity. The organization values and promotes diversity as a source of stimulation and enrichment, ensures equal opportunities, promotes tolerance, and censures discrimination and prejudice. Individuals contribute their unique talents and experiences to the workplace, adapt to the prevailing culture, appreciate the uniqueness of others, and share responsibility for promoting tolerance and stamping out bias.

▶ Institutional fairness. The organization promotes and protects privacy, equity, respect, and dissent as rights of all employees. Employees respect the policies and practices of the organization and share responsibility for improving the quality of work relations.

▶ Equitable rewards and recognition. The organization motivates employees in ways that reinforce the company's values. It develops employees' potential by recognizing individual contributions, rewarding performance, and sharing profits and ownership. Individuals give full value in their work and recognize the organization's multiple financial obligations.

▶ Common economic security. The organization recognizes that its economic security and that of its employees are one and the same; it vigorously seeks a common security. Employees recognize that individual security is directly linked to long-term organizational success and share the commitments and burdens.

▶ People-centered technology. The organization seeks and applies technologies that eliminate bad jobs, provide safe and ergonomically sound work, and enhance human capabilities and satisfaction. People adapt to new technologies, learn to use new tools, and support innovation and technological changes that yield competitive advantage.

▶ Health-enhancing work environments. The organization works to promote physical and psychological health in the workplace, encourages employees' pursuit of health, and takes steps to protect them from catastrophic costs of illness. Individuals take personal health seriously, observe safety rules, share the cost of managing health and illness, and actively seek to maintain optimum fitness for work.

▶ Meaningful work. The organization inspires pride and a sense of purpose; creates jobs that have variety, integrity, significance, and responsibility; and commits to high-quality, ethically sound products and services. Employees strive to achieve high levels of ethical behavior and customer satisfaction.

▶ Family and work-life balance. The organization encourages and supports employees' needs to balance work, family, and personal interests. People actively seek to balance their commitment to work, family, and self.

▶ Community responsibility. The organization leads and invests in public interests, providing benefits to the social well-being of the community and nation. Individuals share public responsibilities as active citizens and as volunteers.

▶ Environmental protection. The organization commits itself to preserve and restore environmental health, and engages in ecologically sound practices. Individuals share similar personal commitment and responsibilities and assist the organization in fulfilling its commitment.

For more information, contact Healthy Companies, 1420 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202/234-9288.

Watch Your Back

As workplace pressures mount, beware of back-stabbers. According to Tony Lee, writing in the *Wall Street Journal,* cutthroat maneuvering among co-workers is on the upswing.

Back stabbing takes many forms, Lee writes, from rumor-mongering to secret, excessively harsh criticism.

Unemployment lines are filled with victims who did not protect themselves, he asserts. Based on interviews with several job coun-

selors, Lee suggests you take the following precautions:

▶ Build a reputation for quality and integrity that's hard to assail.

▶ Develop strong relationships with co-workers and open lines of communications with higher-ups.

▶ If necessary, confront anyone who makes false accusations about you.

But no matter what happens, never plot revenge or malign a former employer. That course of action "guarantees an extended job hunt," Joe Meissner—the president of Power Marketing, an outplacement firm in San Francisco—told Lee. "Potential employers will label you a malcontent, or worse, as deserving of your fate."

Executives: Get Real About Reengineering

In theory, business-process reengineering enables a company to improve quality and customer satisfaction, boost productivity, and increase revenue. But in practice, most reengineering initiatives fail. Why?

They fail because many executives still don't understand what reengineering is, how it works, and what it can accomplish. That's the word from Gateway, a management-consulting and professional-services firm that specializes in reengineering. Based on its surveys and experience, Gateway says most companies fail at reengineering for the following reasons:

▶ Many managers mistakenly believe reengineering is an intuitive, creative endeavor. In reality, reengineering is a new engineering discipline. When a company reengineers, it carries out a fast and fundamental overhaul of certain key business processes and the structures, systems, and policies that support those processes.

▶ Many senior executives confuse reengineering with other improvement programs, such as total-quality management or restructuring. Or they confuse automation with reengineering. Technology enables reengineering, but it's not a substitute.

▶ Many businesses pick the wrong processes to reengineer. Reengineering focuses on two types of processes— those that support a company's busi-

ness strategy (strategic processes), and those that deliver value to customers (value-added processes).

▶ Many companies confuse functions with processes. Businesses can't reengineer functions; they can reengineer processes, which often are cross-functional.

▶ Many executives do not handle the "how-to" aspect of reengineering

well. They fail to use a detailed methodology, they do not wholeheartedly support the effort, or they do not invest enough money and staff time in reengineering.

▶ Senior executives often have unrealistically high expectations for reengineering. Some companies have realized performance improvements of 3,000 percent, but such cases are

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rare; more often, a 30 percent improvement represents a breakthrough. Senior executives also expect fast results. Most reengineering programs show results in three years to five years. But according to Gateway's research, 59 percent of senior executives expect reengineering to produce results in one year or less; 92 percent expect results in two years or less.

To avoid the most common reengineering mistakes, Gateway recommends that, among other things, businesses do the following:

❯ Start with the processes that are critical to your customers and to your business strategy.

❯ Address support processes—those the customer never sees but benefits from.

❯ Analyze the benefits of outsourcing nonstrategic activities.

❯ Rethink the benefits of centralization versus decentralization.

❯ Make it easier to share information.

For more information, contact Bryna Millman, Gateway, 237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017; 212/880-9300.

Greater gains

Female corporate trainers are showing greater salary gains than their male counterparts by a margin of four to one, reports a new survey by *Training* magazine.

That's the good news. The bad news: Female corporate trainers still earn less than males do.

Based on the responses of about 2,000 *Training* subscribers, the magazine's November 1993 issue reports that women's salaries climbed by 8 percent in 1993, while men's pay rose by just 2 percent. Female trainers earned about $3,500 more in 1993 than in 1992. Men earned about $1,500 more.

This means the average female trainer now earns 82 percent of the salary of her male counterpart, an improvement from the 70 percent reported in 1991—and also better than the 72 percent of male salaries earned by women in other industries.

A copy of the salary survey costs $6. Contact Lakewood Publications,

50 South Ninth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402; 800/328-4329.

Writing Successful Proposals

By Steve Trautman, Worldwide Products Group Educational Programs Manager, Microsoft, 1 Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052.

HRD departments are rarely profit centers with overflowing budgets. Many have to get funding for their projects by convincing the managers they serve that the money or time would be well spent.

When you need to persuade a manager, you can increase your chances of success. Try following these steps when writing your proposal or preparing a verbal pitch.

Define the problem. A successful proposal starts with putting yourself in management's shoes. Why should managers want to do what you are proposing? Define the business problem that you aim to solve with the resources you are requesting. If you can't define the problem in this way, then you should drop the idea altogether.

For example, if you propose adding staff members to your team, you should be able to identify specific services currently sought by managers that your team can't provide with current staffing. Describe the situation as clearly and specifically as possible. Remember that managers don't have unlimited budgets either; everyone has to answer to someone for the resources he or she spends. Think of your proposal as a way of providing a manager with the sound reasoning needed to justify approval.

Keep your tone realistic. Do not sensationalize the extent of the problem. You won't get away with it. Do not become emotional ("I really need help!") or voice opinions ("There is no other way to get this done!"). Don't whine about what's not working; just document it and let managers draw their own conclusions.

Avoid jargon. The latest HRD buzzwords won't mean much to others in your company. Jargon doesn't make you sound important; it makes you

sound out of touch with others' needs. For example, don't request funds "to provide organization development consultation to manage change related to downsizing." Instead, outline the problems your organization faces since it laid off employees. Explain how your plans to help managers and remaining staff to adjust will boost productivity.

State clearly what you want. Contrary to what many of us learned in school, bigger is *not* better. A concise, well-organized proposal that quickly gets to the point is more likely to get a response. Follow these steps to make your proposal as tight as possible:

▶ Get a friend with an editor's eye to pare down your prose to the essentials. Don't try this on your own. Even professional writers don't edit their own work.

▶ Highlight key points with bullets or other easily spotted elements.

▶ If the proposal runs more than two pages, preface it with an executive brief to give a quick overview.

▶ If you must include a lot of background information, use appendixes.

Present alternatives. You will present a more credible case if you provide a list of alternatives to your recommendation. This shows that you are thinking about the big picture as well as your own interests.

Invite others who understand the situation to brainstorm possibilities with you. Encourage them to criticize, aggressively test your ideas, and look for flawed thinking. It's better to have poorly supported ideas pointed out by your peers than by a manager.

Explain why your proposal offers a better, more cost-effective choice than an alternative or the status quo. Even if management rejects your proposal, you've contributed significantly to the decision-making process and will probably be invited to do so again.

Present all of the pieces. Then stop writing and let managers draw their own conclusions. Remember that managers want to make their own decisions; they depend on you for the information. Give them sound reasoning for making a good business decision, and you are more likely to get what you're after.

Medium Is Beautiful

Most managers would rather swim in medium-sized employment ponds, a survey finds.

Management Recruiters International (MRI), one of the United States' largest recruitment firms, asked 3,000 executives nationwide where they would build their careers if they were starting out today. Thirty-six percent of respondents said they would opt for a medium-sized company.

Twenty-one percent said they would choose a large company, and the same percentage said they would choose a small one as their preferred career launching pad. Another 13

percent of executives said they would go into business for themselves.

"All the downsizings and 'rightsizings' that have occurred over the past few years have probably contributed to the perception that the too-large and the too-small companies limit potential," observes Alan R. Schonberg, president of MRI. "And very few of today's executives are eager to be in business for themselves."

Consumer Pulse of Cleveland conducted the poll for MRI. For a free summary of the survey, contact Nancy Valent, MRI, 1127 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1400, Cleveland, OH 44115; 800/875-4000, extension 300.

"Paperless" Resumes

Printing your resume on off-white paper used to qualify as a daring move. Now, job-seekers try to stand out by forsaking paper altogether.

"We're seeing more and more 'paperless resumes' in the marketplace," including resumes on videotapes, e-mail, and diskettes, says Jackie Greaner, CEO of EnterChange, a national outplacement and human resource consulting firm.

Some companies, such as National Semiconductor, list job openings on national computer networks and accept resumes via modem.

Others use interactive voice mail to screen applicants: "Press 1 if you have a college degree in electrical engineering; press 2 if you have a degree in computer science...." These systems can record information about years of experience, past responsibilities, salary requirements, and other factors.

Westinghouse has taken a high-tech approach to outplacement: The company sent human resource managers at other companies diskettes containing brief descriptions of management and professional employees who were seeking jobs because of Westinghouse's downsizing.

Some job-seekers—particularly in such fields as advertising and sales, where creativity and chutzpah count—introduce themselves to potential employers through video-

Tips for Paperless Resumes

If you decide to experiment with a paperless resume in your job search, Enterchange offers these tips:

▶ Be careful to follow all directions for logging on and accessing a computer network to respond to job listings. Many of these systems are designed to hang up after a certain amount of time or after you enter a certain number of words.

▶ Choose your words carefully. Computerized resume-scanning programs seek key words. The programs are designed to eliminate most candidates.

▶ If you send a resume on diskette, find out what kind of computer system your target company uses and send a compatible diskette.

▶ Some companies will respond poorly to a videotaped resume. Do your homework before you invest in a video resume.

▶ Most importantly, don't forget that ultimately all "paperless" resumes are distilled on paper. Experiment with new technologies if you want, but summarize your skills and experience on paper as well.

taped "docudramas" recounting their professional lives and accomplishments.

"Job-seekers are desperate to stand out from the pack," says Greaner. "They are willing to try anything that will increase their chances of being noticed first."

Break It Down

By William F. Worth, Instructional Design Consulting, 1360 Nicolet Place, Detroit, MI 48207-2838.

You can bring your reps to headquarters, but can you get them in sync? That's the question Ford Motor Company faced in 1992 as it moved to streamline the processing of employee benefits.

Until then, employee-benefits rep-

resentatives worked out of Ford's far-flung factories and offices. They specialized in different benefits areas, worked autonomously, and devised their own methods for processing benefits and keeping records. Many had private offices.

To launch its centralized processing center, Ford had to teach reps new, uniform ways of handling telephone inquiries about 150 different benefits. The company also had to prepare reps to work as members of self-directed work teams. A comprehensive task analysis, carried out by service reps with support from university-based consultants, enabled Ford to meet both challenges.

Ford's training coordinator recruited a consulting team of graduate students and one recent Ph.D. from Wayne State University's instructional-technology department. Each consultant focused on one benefits area and worked with three benefits representatives who served as subject matter experts. Reps met with the consultants twice a week to conduct task analyses.

First, each group developed a flowchart for each benefit in its assigned area. The charts illustrated the wide variations in the ways reps handled benefits. More importantly, the flowcharts uncovered inefficiencies and oversights in the reps' responses to employee needs. The discovery of such problems helped build support for the need to standardize procedures.

Working on the flowcharts also helped Ford lay the foundation for teamwork. In their work with a consultant, the three benefits reps on each team designed their own work procedures and mapped them as flowcharts. (See the figure, "Sample Flowchart: Early Retirement Benefits for Salaried Employees," for an adaptation of one of the flowcharts.)

The reps then regrouped into new teams, which expanded to include new members. These teams checked and revised the new procedures. A team of benefits specialists and supervisors conducted a final review and approved the design.

Another team of benefits reps, supervisors, and computer-systems staff designed a field test, in which teams of reps used the new processes

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Sample Flowchart: Early-Retirement Benefits Procedures

This figure flowcharts requests for normal and regular early retirement at Ford Motor Company. It includes immediate or deferred regular early retirement for salaried employees.

CALL RECEIVED

Access computer files to review for missing creditable service.

Service review required? — No → Subsidiary service? — Yes → Refer employee to subsidiary or Canadian operations. For other service, PBR works with staff specialist.

Service review required? — Yes → Request for service review from local ER office. → Pend in computer notepad system.

Subsidiary service? — No → Eligible for retirement? — No → Employee still requests application? — No → END

Employee still requests application? — Yes → Send application. → END

Eligible for retirement? — Yes → Counsel employee on all benefit plans and needed documents: marriage certificate, birth certificates, spouse's SSN, and Medicare card if over 65. Advise employee to inform local ER office of pending retirement.

Terminate call.

Prepare retirement application using computer system.

Request required retirement forms package and, if employee was ever hourly, optional hourly retirement package.

Prepare benefit estimate, using computer system, if applicable.

SEE NOTE

Prepare computer-generated Medicare A and B application, if applicable.

NOTE: Grow-in estimate may need to be done manually.

Pend file awaiting receipt of retirement package from forms service.

When forms are printed, administrative group establishes file; PBR retains retirement form in pension folder (unless requested by employee), inserts retirement estimates, and adds manual forms "Your Retirement."

Administrative group mails package to employee and updates notepad entry to reflect action taken.

END

and equipment to respond to simulated experiences. Finally, each original benefits-representative team worked with the university consultants again, this time to design training in its benefits area for all reps.

After training and a short practice period, the first benefits-rep work team went on-line. The team worked as a tight unit, largely because its members had become partners during the preparation stages. Initial feedback from teams and from employees who call for help indicate that the benefit-processing center is a success.