



# HYDER & ASSOCIATES MANAGEMENT REPORT

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## How Protecting Privacy and Preserving Productivity Go Hand In Hand

It seems hardly a day goes by without a news report on identity theft. The term alone is terrifying because it implies that someone is out there just waiting for the opportunity to steal the essence of who you are...and then who will you be?

The phenomenon of identity theft has been around long enough that you'd think by now companies would have started taking extraordinary precautions to protect the confidential information of their employees and customers. Even the federal government has problems. A few months ago more than 25 million American veterans lost their peace of mind when one data analyst at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs took home his laptop containing their personal information. The analyst's house was robbed, the laptop was stolen, and millions of people were put at risk.

### SECURITY MATTERS

If you think some of your employees are overly stressed now, imagine how frazzled they would be if they were forced to spend chunks of their workday trying to figure out how to untangle their credit records, recoup their lost savings, recover their good names, and get off the hook for countless purchases they didn't make. Productivity and morale would plummet. Suddenly it's easy to see how data security could be considered a motivational issue.

### MINDING THE STORE

Unfortunately, no matter how diligent you are, you can't guarantee that all employees will be careful with sensitive information. The government analyst who took home the veterans' data did so without authorization and in violation of agency protocols. The analyst was placed on administrative leave, however, that will be small consolation to any veteran who becomes a victim of identity theft. An ounce of prevention would have been worth a pound of cure. With that in mind, here are two measures to consider.

### SAFEGUARD

In larger organizations, human resource professionals have charge of sensitive employee information. Unless you work in that department, it may be difficult for you to influence how carefully that information is stored. But you can make sure any personnel records in your own files are kept secure. Be sure to lock your files any time you leave the office, and never take private information home. If you need to keep sensitive data on your computer, save it to a memory key or separate hard drive that remains locked in your office when you take the laptop home or on the road.

### EDUCATE

Caution your employees about the dangers of identity theft. Invite a security specialist to address them on how to better protect themselves both at work and at home. Research the issue so that if any of your employees fall prey to identity theft, you can provide referrals to professionals who will help them untangle the mess as quickly as possible – and resume their identities as productive, motivated workers.



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## COMPLIANCE CORNER

### *Test Your Decision TO TERMINATE*

Never fire on the spot! Before terminating, answer the following questions to test your decision to terminate. If you are uncertain how to answer the questions, it is a good idea to consult an attorney before you fire the employee.

- Did the employee have the ability and the proper training to perform the job well? *Yes / No*
- Did the employee know that the expectations and qualifications were to perform his/her job effectively? *Yes / No*
- Has the employee been warned about his/her performance before? Was he/she advised that if there are no signs of improvement, he/she will be terminated? *Yes / No*
- Did the employee violate a written work rule or policy and did s/he receive a copy of the rule? *Yes / No*
- Have any other employees violated this rule? If so, what type of disciplinary action was administered for this type of violation? *Yes / No*
- Is there a solid business reason for the policy or rule that is the basis for the termination? *Yes / No*
- Does your employee handbook, application form or policies create an implied contract for a specific length of employment? *Yes / No*
- Is the employee a member of a protected class? If so, have you treated non-protected classes the same? *Yes / No*
- Has the employee requested an accommodation for a disability? *Yes / No*
- Have alternatives to discharging the employee been considered? *Yes / No*
- Was the incident that led up to the disciplinary action investigated and was the employee's version of the incident documented? *Yes / No*
- Did the employee follow your company complaint procedures? *Yes / No*
- How long has the employee been employed with your company and did you take into account the employee's work history or record? *Yes / No*
- Was the degree of discipline taken appropriate for the seriousness of the offense? *Yes / No*
- Would you be able to justify the reasons for the termination in a court of law? *Yes / No*

### *Rules for Keeping Your WORK DAY SANE*

An overstressed manager leads to an unhappy workforce. Keep your day under control by remembering these tips:

- **Don't let technology rule your life.** All those gadgets on your desk are supposed to make life easier. But they won't know that unless you tell them. Find out how to turn off the signal that proclaims "You've got mail." Learn how to set up e-mail folders that sort your messages as they come in. Forward calls to voicemail when you're trying to meet a deadline.
- **Don't assume you can do it all.** There are only so many hours in a day, and surveys show we waste 20 percent of them on counterproductive activities. Delegate nonessential tasks to others – or eliminate them altogether.
- **Don't meet unless you must.** Nothing carves up a workday like a full slate of meetings. Limit formal get-togethers and make sure meetings start and end on time.
- **Don't nod your head unless you mean it.** Too often we say "yes" without thinking how this commitment will affect all others. Learn to say "no".

### *Plan Your Week In 30 MINUTES*

Experts say that you need only 30 minutes to plan your entire week. How to do it? Follow the OATS formula.



#### **O: Objective.**

What results do you want to see by the end of the week? Write them down and rank them.

**A: Activities.** What do you have to do to achieve your goals? List the necessary activities, and put them in sequence.

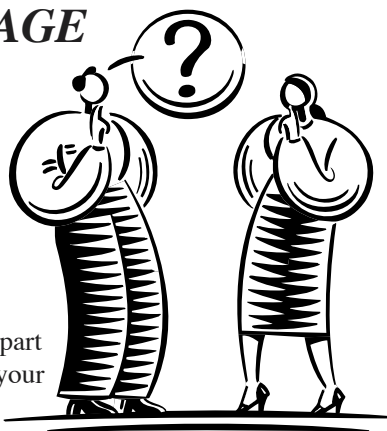
**T: Time.** How much time will each activity require? To plan realistically, allow yourself more time than you think you will actually need. This gives you flexibility if unexpected problems develop.

**S: Schedule.** Look at your calendar and decide when you can do each activity. Most people underestimate the power of a schedule, but you won't get anything accomplished if you don't schedule time to do it.

## HOW TO MANAGE With Questions

The art of management often involves asking questions. Lots of them. Here's a list of ten questions to ask as you move throughout your organization.

If you ask these questions as part of your routine, you'll teach your people that their opinions matter.



1. What made you mad today?
2. What took too long?
3. What caused complaints today?
4. What was misunderstood today?
5. What cost too much?
6. What was wasted?
7. What was too complicated?
8. What was just plain silly?
9. What job involved too many people?
10. What job involved too many actions?

## Hyder & Associates BULLETIN BOARD — Trends —

On December 1, 2006 amended Rules of Civil Procedure went into effect in all federal courts. The rules went into effect because now all discovery includes e-discovery. More than 95% of records are created and stored electronically. Therefore, the rule makers believed that e-discovery required a new set of rules. For further information about the newly amended Rules of Civil Procedures, e-mail Sharon Hyder ([hyder@HyderAndAssociates.com](mailto:hyder@HyderAndAssociates.com)) for a copy of Judge Scheindlin's Keynote Speech at the ARMA 2006 Conference and Expo.

## MANAGERS

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**USE ABC FORMAT FOR FEEDBACK.** "A" is for accurate. Be accurate in reflecting an objective description of what occurred. "B" is for behavioral. State the problem in performance terms. "C" is for consistent. Be sure to include what was done, the impact, and how it will be eliminated (negative) or repeated (positive) in the future.

— Source: KEYGroup, November 2006

## SHARON HYDER, CMC, CRM ANSWERS YOUR MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS



*Do you have any tips on how to properly interview candidates for an open position?*

Whether you are interviewing for an attorney, senior level manager, or administrative assistant, the key is to listen to the candidate. Too often we get so involved with the interview; we're the one "talking" when we should be "listening". Try these tips to keep your attention on the applicant.

**TEAM UP.** Invite a co-interviewer and keep the focus off yourself. For example, call in someone with whom the new hire will work, and ask him or her to probe the applicant's qualifications so you can listen carefully and take notes. Divide up the questions or the interview time.

**BEWARE OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS.** Being impressed by a candidate's looks, manner, or resume can draw you into sharing your own interests, rather than paying attention to the applicant. To evade initial impressions, write out your first several questions and stick to them.

**ASK MULTI-PART QUESTIONS.** Although asking complex questions is risky since it can confuse the applicant, sometimes it's useful. It can help you see how the applicant sorts out details under pressure – and also keeps you listening for an extended time rather than talking. For example, you might ask, "At your last job, what were your favorite and least favorite duties, and why did you feel that way about them?"

**ASK FOR STORIES.** Another way to keep the focus on the applicant is to ask him or her questions that require extended narratives for answers. For example, "Tell me how you went about learning and mastering the responsibilities of your last job."

## FAMOUS QUOTE

**VALUE.** *You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.*

— "Babe" Ruth

## Poor Performing MANAGERS

Managers who do not address problem employees are bringing your company down. An independent survey commissioned by KEYGroup found that two-thirds of managers fail to confront poor performers.

Confronting poor performers is difficult. Here are a few tried and true rules according to Dr. Joanne Sujansky of KEYGroup.

**BE SPECIFIC.** If an employee has been consistently late, specify the number of times (frequency) or amount of time (intensity).

**FOCUS ON THE PERFORMANCE REQUIRED FOR THE JOB.** If you need to correct something like inappropriate casual dress, make sure that you reiterate the guidelines that have been outlined for the workplace – not the personal taste of the individual.

**CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF THE RECEIVER.** Everyone handles feedback differently. Some people want it straight while others are sensitive to any kind of feedback that might be construed as negative. Know your audience. Always be clear and straightforward in your communication.

**FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE OVER WHICH THE RECEIVER HAS CONTROL.** Poor performance isn't always the result of an employee's carelessness. If an employee is not meeting his goals due to being hindered by someone else, don't blame him. Instead, determine the options that he has available to remedy the situation. However, if an employee hasn't reached his goals because he has not conducted the required number of activities, work with him to identify things he can do.

**GIVE TIMELY FEEDBACK.** Make the individual aware of what they did immediately so they will have total recall of what just happened.

**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING.** Avoid asking close-ended questions during the discussion or when summarizing. At the end of a confrontation, you never want to ask, "Do you understand?" The employee could simply say "Yes," and you will not know if your message actually got through to him. Have him lay out actions, steps, or accountabilities that should be implemented while moving forward.

**KEEP A PAPER TRAIL OF YOUR DISCUSSION.** After each meeting with the poor performer, take notes that summarize the discussions.

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501 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Suite 422  
 Glendale, CA 91202  
 (818) 507-0008  
 FAX: (818) 547-9908  
 E-Mail: hyder@HyderAndAssociates.com