**Spark Notes – Top 3 HR Priorities Beyond the Required**

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Archdiocese of Milwaukee – August 2018

We are a step beyond the precipice as we transition from the Industrial Age to the Informational Age. How we operated for the past thirty or so years will not be the most efficient or productive way to function. Low unemployment rate and rapid advances in technology are and will continue to affect our workforce in many ways including the lack of employees. In order to adapt, fresh work goals and a creative approach will be required. Otherwise, our workplaces be faced with challenges because of the lack of staff and the amount of items that need to be accomplished to serve.

As a leader, consider the following three areas as priorities as you bring forth your gifts to serve yourself and the community in which you live:

#1 Be Creative in Your Hiring

Traditional recruitment focuses on placing open positions in newspapers and job boards. In a tight job market where 75 million workers in US will retire in next decade & be replaced by a talent pool of 45 million creates challenges. Expanding ideas to have a workforce may need to entail:

* Expand Recruiting Efforts - Direct outreach to passive candidates, recruit from substitute teacher lists, hiring bonuses, etc.
* Network – Presentations at a high school career day, creating relationships with colleges, set-up a table in student union, offer to be a speaker at a class or a continuing education workshop, etc.
* Look at the Job Differently - Re-work the job to a job share position, hire for potential, develop internships, encourage job tryouts, etc.

Another piece to recruiting is being attentive to the candidates’ experience. Think of the candidate as a consumer. They want up-to-date and accurate information on the potential employer at their fingertips, a streamlined and timely recruitment process, and frequent conversation on how the process is progressing. If this is not done, another potential employer may scoop them up.

#2 Focus on Retention

Build culture that is viewed as “the best place to work.” Being an employer of choice will reduce turnover. To get started, identify how the organization is perceived as an employer. This may mean gathering information via an employee survey, gathering recent exit interviews, calculating employee turnover the past 5 years, etc. After identifying the current situation and pin pointing what is working and not working, build a plan.

A plan that builds on strengths and tries something new to meet a diverse workforce is a step in the right direction. In fact, a 2017 Gallup Poll found 74% of all Americans plan to work past the age of 65. While compensation and benefits are part of what employees may be in search of, engagement, employee involvement in problem solving, recognition, appreciation, additional learning, flexibility are just a few ideas that help an employee meet their personal and professional needs. Employees care about how they do what they do, if they are making a difference, and seek to better balance their personal and professional responsibilities.

In order to have a workplace that employees enjoy walking into every day, an employer may offer opportunities on helping balance physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs. This may include offering seminars on budgeting, having a wellness fair that offers screening and live cooking demos, celebrate people and not just their accomplishments, let employees leave early on a Friday with pay, hire a chef to come in and make breakfast or serve special coffees/teas, put up bird feeders on windows, offer 12 weeks of learning Spanish, set-up a mini golf course for a day, hire a band for the lunch hour, etc.

#3 Shift Your Style of Communication

Amazing Parish touched on Social Styles as a means of identifying a person’s work style:

* People vs Task (the focus when working with others) AND
* Ask vs Tell (making an effort to influence).

 Task

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Analytical**Ask  | **Driver** Tell  |
| **Amiable** | **Expressive** |

 People

Quadrants are formed based on the four approaches. Despite the type of tool used, in this case Social Styles, the tool helps individuals understand their particular patterns of behavior. This is only a starting point for a charismatic leader. The next step is to be able to adapt and modify the preferred style when communicating with other people. This helps the receiver hear, understand, and offers a safe opportunity to start a dialog.

Having the flexibility to adapt how you approach and dialog helps develop working relationships making the day-to-day routines enjoyable and productive.

All three HR Priorities: Be Creative in Your Hiring, Focus on Retention, and Shift Your Style of Communication require contemplation and yes, may add to a full plate in the short term. However, refocusing goals and getting others involved in the activities will strengthen the workplace. This is a requirement in the years ahead and it is not one we can do alone. Making a workplace vibrant is everyone’s job once the bar has been set.