



Dear Friend,

Welcome to *EA Insights*, the monthly newsletter of Executive Advantage, LLC. In each edition, you will find brief articles showcasing best practices in leadership, management, process improvement, professional and personal growth, and other areas critical to your success and that of your organization. Thank you for your readership.

Enjoy your newsletter!

Sincerely,
June Melvin Mickens
Executive Advantage, LLC

Improve Morale - Give Employees Time Off!

Given the current state of the economy, giving your employees time off is probably the furthest thing from your mind. However, **not** giving enough attention to this subject could come back to bite you later . . . and it might do so sooner than you think!

The reason is simple. There's a good chance that the employees you currently have are anxious and apprehensive at the moment. With layoff figures and unemployment numbers in the headlines just about every week, it's only natural that they carry some trepidation with them to the job. The problem is that you need them at the top of their game in order to put their talent and skills to the best possible use.

This is why you should ensure your employees take time off, especially their vacation time. If they are well rested and refreshed, then you'll reap the benefits upon their return:

- ✓ **Company culture** - A more relaxed atmosphere contributes to a better culture within the company. Employees, like everybody else, are intrinsically drawn to people and/or things that help them to reduce the stress in their lives. Your company could be one of those things.
- ✓ **Productivity** - Employees are more productive when they're rested and relaxed, not when they're frazzled and feel worn out.
- ✓ **Loyalty** - A relaxed atmosphere, a better company culture, more productivity...it all leads to more loyalty within the ranks.
- ✓ **Retention** - This is the ultimate payoff. One day, the economy is going to turn around and some employees might be tempted to sample what they believe might be greener pastures. However, they'll remember your investment in their peace of mind and resist temptation.

During tough economic times, improving morale is often difficult to accomplish. However, by focusing your efforts on helping your employees take the time off they need, you'll not only improve morale, you'll also improve productivity.

That's a combination that's tough to beat!

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Implementing a Health and Productivity Management (H&PM) Program

In the first two articles, we looked at the basics of a Health & Productivity Management (H&PM) program, as well as the advantages associated with using one. In this, the third and final article in the series, we're going to explore how a company can implement such a program. The way in which we'll approach this analysis is from the standpoint of size. In other words, we'll examine how both larger companies and smaller companies should implement their programs for the purpose of maximizing their efforts.



In This Issue

[Improve Morale - Give Employees Time Off!](#)

[Implementing a Health and Productivity Management \(H&PM\) Program](#)

[Quotes](#)

[Leadership Lessons from the Ant / Be on the Lookout for Coaching Moments](#)

Quick Links

[EA Services](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

[News](#)

Quotes

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."

~ Ryunosuke Sattoro

"Accept challenges so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory."

~ George Patton

"There is never enough time to do everything, but there is always enough time to do the most important thing."

~ Brian Tracy



Leadership Lessons from the Ant

(Proverbs 6:6-8)

Do you want to make a difference? Then, pay attention to the metaphor of the ant. It's amazing that one of the smallest of God's creatures can become one of His greatest teachers. The lessons the ant teaches us can be summarized this way:

A - Attitude of Initiative
Ants don't need a commander to tell them to get started.

N - Nature of Integrity
Ants work faithfully and need no outside accountability to keep them doing right.

T - Thirst for Industry

Blueprint for larger companies

Bigger companies with thousands of employees face more challenges than smaller companies, in large part because of their size. As you recall, the effectiveness of Health and Productivity Management is tied directly to its emphasis on integration throughout the system. The bigger a company is, the less integration there is, for a couple of reasons.

First, employees are more likely to be scattered throughout the country (or around the world) at various locations. Second, the different departments within a larger company tend to work more independently of each other than they do in a smaller company. As a result, the company is less efficient -- and subsequently, less effective -- in the area of employee health and productivity.

The keys for the implementation of any program are consistent and explicit -- **communication** and set **expectations**, and this is especially true in the case of large companies. With that in mind, below are important steps that must be undertaken if an H&PM program is to succeed.

Secure specific details from senior members of management regarding what they expect the program to achieve. The more detailed, the better.

Identify a team of 10 or more people -- including a leader -- to create and then carry out the program's overall vision and individual objectives. This might include the use of an outside consultant.

Determine which members of the group will be responsible for which tasks. Make sure those roles and tasks are properly communicated.

Decide when and where integration and interventions will be utilized. (Refer to the first article in this series for more information about these aspects of the program.)

Devise a preliminary draft of the program's plan, including the evaluation process, for whatever span of time has been approved for the initiative. Three to five years is the norm.

Use feedback from senior members of management and stakeholders to modify the plan and present it for final approval.

Begin implementation of the H&PM program, making adjustments when necessary.

Blueprint for small to medium-sized companies

As you might imagine, the blueprint for smaller companies is, well, smaller than it is for larger companies.

However, the core directives and procedures remain basically the same, especially in regards to consistent communication and set expectations. These are crucial to ensuring success with any Health and Productivity Management program.

Rather than list how the blueprint for small and medium-sized companies is the same as for larger ones, it will be easier to list how they're **different**:

The plan is shorter and simpler in scope and ambition.

The group of people comprising the implementation team is smaller as well, perhaps consisting of four to six people as opposed to 10 or more for larger companies.

The span of time approved for the initiative is usually shorter, no more than three years in most cases.

If the company is too small to conduct proper integration and interventions, these tasks are outsourced to a separate vendor.

Attention to detail

For a Health and Productivity Management program to be successful, its implementation cannot be haphazard or neglected in any way. In addition to consistent communication and set expectations throughout the process, **attention to detail** is also of paramount importance, especially during the evaluation phase. Remember, an H&PM program is not unlike any other business initiative -- it's designed to save the company both time and money and help it become more productive and profitable. If it's not accomplishing these goals, then it's ultimately not effective.

Something else to remember is that an H&PM program is a little like a fingerprint. No two programs are exactly alike. What works for one company might not work for another. However, if done correctly, the creation and implementation of such a program can hold the key to combating the challenges presented by current economic conditions and the state of healthcare in the years to come.

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Ants work hard and will replace their anthill when it gets ruined.

S - Source of Insight

Ants store provisions in the summer.

If we consider and learn from the ways of the ant, we can grow wise.

Be on the Lookout for Coaching Moments

Coaching isn't appropriate for every situation. Sometimes, staffers want to work on their own, uninterrupted by the boss.

To spot employees ready for coaching, pay attention to when things aren't going well or when they could use an extra hand on a tough project. That's when they'll be eager to work with you.

About Executive Advantage

At Executive Advantage, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with organizations and professionals to manage strategic change, innovation, process improvement and cost reduction, performance, cultural transitions, and goal achievement. We use proven processes, and we tailor our approach to meet the specific needs of each client.

To learn more about Executive Advantage, contact us at inquiries@execadvantagellc.com.