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| **Course Materials: MGT330-0902A-02 : Human Resource Management** | **https://mycampus.aiu-online.com/global_images/icons/print_icon.gifPrint this page** **|** **Close Window Close Window** |

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| **Labor Relations, Employee Relations, and Global HR**  |
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| **Unit 5 - Assignment 1**  |
| **Assignment Type:**  | Group Project  |
| **Deliverable Length:**  | 6-8 Pages  |
| **Points Possible:**  | 150  |
| **Due Date:**  | 5/31/2009 11:59:59 PM  |
| For this project you and your group are to draft answers or solutions for each of the following three scenarios.***Scenario One:****You are a supervisor in a small manufacturing plant. The union contract covering most of your employees is about to expire. How do you prepare for union contract negotiations?* ***Scenario Two:*** *As the supervisor of a small manufacturing firm, you need to construct a plan for reducing both accidents and stress on the plant floor. How would you proceed and why?****Scenario Three:*** *One of your plant managers will be sent to your sister company in Bulgaria for a period of three years. Write an expatriation and repatriation plan for this employee.***Please add your file.**  |

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| **Unit 5 - Assignment 2**  |
| **Assignment Type:**  | Discussion Board  |
| **Deliverable Length:**  | 3 to 4 Paragraphs  |
| **Points Possible:**  | 50  |
| **Due Date:**  | 5/31/2009 11:59:59 PM  |
| You are attending a lunch and learn session on stress reduction in the workplace. In order to prepare yourself for this meeting, write a paragraph explaining how you would reduce stress at work. Write another 1-2 paragraphs indicating why you believe this approach would be successful. **In your own words, please post a response to the Discussion Board and comment on other postings. You will be graded on the quality of your postings.** |

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| **Activity**  |
| **Activity: Globalization** |
| **How Corporate Social Responsibility Evolves Around the World***LEAD STORY-DATELINE: Financial Times, April 2002.*One of the consequences of increasing globalization is the dissemination of corporate practices around the world. In more and more situations, there is a harmonization of practices and ways of doing business from one national and cultural setting to another. Indeed, the homogeneity or sameness created by this trend is one of the reasons that there are objections to globalization from many parties.One area in which international standards are developing is that of corporate social responsibility. With many multi-national corporations, and so much attention paid to corporate behavior, it is not surprising that over time (too long a time, some might say), corporate standards for social responsibility are becoming global. The articles from Financial Times describe two elements of that increase.Question #1:Some global companies want to maintain high standards for workers wherever they may be. How can a company put such global human resource management policies into action? Answer #1:Corporate social policies can play a part in selection, training, evaluation, and compensation decisions. In selection, tests can look for applicants' sense of moral judgment in addition to their abilities in other areas. In training, there are opportunities to teach ethics and corporate social policy as part of a company pursuit of profitable opportunities. Employees can be evaluated and their compensation linked in part to their contribution to a company's achievement of social responsibility objectives. To make these global, decisions have to be made about how to customize these HRM processes to each particular national setting where a company operates. For example, there are many similarities between U.S. and Canadian corporate practice. But in Asia or Africa, it might be more important to be able to monitor for sweatshop activities, a skill that is generally not necessary for firms on either side of the Canada-U.S. border.Continue reading the article.Alison Maitland's story describes the issue from the perspective of one company. McDonald's gets an ample share of criticism for several reasons: it is one of the most prominent examples of global branding, the company appears to have a thin skin and not take kindly to criticism, and because of concerns over the overall nutritional quality of its food. Because it operates globally (in 121 countries), McDonald's faces these other issues all over the world in many different cultural settings. According to Maitland, McDonald's has been trying to confront the issues behind the criticism and to change its practices. The company cites changes in packaging, supply chain management, care of animals, and human resource management practices around the world. However, it also says that its franchise system, including 70 percent of its restaurants, limits what it can do as a company, because so many decisions are made by independent local entrepreneurs who are franchise owners.Question #2:How could you measure the effect on brand identity and competitive advantage of having high corporate social responsibility practices around the world? Answer #2:To begin, you have to measure the numbers of buyers whose interests in purchasing your product or service depends in part on how they view your practices. That is, you measure the size of the market segment that will buy more of your service because they perceive that you are "responsible" and less of your competitors' services because they are perceived as being less responsible with regard to labor practice, environment, health, or other areas. Certainly companies get bad publicity from the perception that they don't have "responsible" practices, e.g., Nike and McDonald's. You would have to make the same kind of assessment in every market where you compete. Finish reading the article.Another impact of globalization is that more and more U.S. and European companies are sourcing their goods and services from developing countries. Cowe's article describes how some retailers and brand-name manufacturers are insisting that all of their suppliers establish and enforce high standards in the areas of health, safety, and environmental issues. For examples, raw materials can be certified as coming from sustainable sources. A group called Social Accountability International has developed an accreditation scheme "SA 8000" which is similar in its concept to certification for ISO9000 and other quality measures. There are some concerns about such audit or accreditation methods. For example, do companies that are being inspected just present a good face to get accreditation? Then, return to whatever lower-cost standards they prefer to use? Also, in countries where companies buy from workers in homes or small workshop settings, it is much harder to inspect every workplace.*SOURCES:Cowe, Roger. "The Market for High Standards," Financial Times, May 10, 2002, pA10.Maitland, Alison. "McDonald's Responds to Anti-Capitalist Grilling," Financial Times, April 15, 2002, pA8.*Question #3:Practicing corporate social responsibility more aggressively will please some of a company's stakeholders—but not all. Who is likely to be especially favorable to such actions, and which ones might be less pleased? Answer #3:Decisions about corporate social policy will always depend on the interests and incentives facing different stakeholders. For example, if you are a stockholder in a company, you may be interested in returns that are more short-term than long-term (or the other way around). If you are a manager or employee, your interests in socially responsible action will be influenced by the incentives you are offered to meet performance standards. If you are a customer, you may want the lowest price but you also want assurances of quality and approval of your vendor. Price, quality, and vendor characteristics are always affecting customer interests. So some customers may want to know that the manufacturers and sellers behave responsibly—but more of them may want lower prices on everything.  |

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| **Presentation**  |
| **Presentation: Unions, Safety, and Employee Problems** |
| When new employment laws are enacted, the HR professional is involved.  If there is an accident at a plant, the HR professional is involved.  If there is a downsizing, the HR professional is involved.  There are things that are not part of the HR professional’s responsibility today, but will be tomorrow.  In the 1970s and 1980s, downsizings were added to the responsibilities of the HR professional. Just as business continues to change, the HR career also evolves.  Now that the HR professional is a strategic partner in the business’s success, they need to be more proactive than reactive.  This is true of all employees; "employee commitment" is a goal of every successful company.  In that way, employees act more like owners than employees.Human resource managers perform a scanning role when assessing labor market characteristics.  Any human resource plan must assess the human resources educational/skill level of the labor market from which it draws, predict future changes in this mix, assess the effect of federal human resource programs, and then plan the recruiting, training, and job design systems that take maximum advantage of the forecasted educational/skill mix.  Changes in the labor market have led to skill shortages as well as areas of over-supply.  When the human resource educational/skill mix differs significantly from the skills required by employers, personnel shortages develop.  This human resource dislocation in part drives inflation, since employers bid up the wage rate for the few qualified workers in the high-demand fields.  Collective bargaining is the process of union representatives meeting with management representatives to reach agreement on employees' wages and benefits, work rules, and the resolution of disputes or violations of the union contract.  The major factors covered in collective bargaining include:* Wages
* Economic benefits
* Institutional factors
* And finally administrative factors

Although the last two issues are important, wages and benefits are usually the most critical during contract negotiations.Employee safety is everyone's concern.  When the human resource departments adopt a participative model for developing or changing safety issues, workers are more likely to implement changes. Managers can encounter a variety of problem employees.  This list has general categories of problem employees:* **Alcohol/drug abuser:** an employee who needs the opportunity to rehabilitate without risking injury to self or others and without doing damage to the organization's operations.
* **Marginal/low performer:** an employee who is just meeting minimum standards of job accomplishment.  It is better for the organization to create a culture of involvement and leadership to inform the employee of the situation and provide guidance to improve it.
* **Tardy/absent employee:** an employee whose work is not getting done or must be done by others.  Alternative work arrangements can be helpful, and company policy on this issue needs to be communicated to all employees.
* **Saboteur/thief:** If an employee is suspected of a criminal act against the organization, many employers suspend the suspected employee with or without pay until a hearing can be held.
* **Caustic/sarcastic/negative attitude:** An employee who is characterized in this way can be the rotten apple that spoils the barrel with a poor attitude that can become contagious.

When a company makes decisions about such issues as the market in which it will compete, how it can ensure continued growth over the next several years, and ways in which it can better utilize its human resources, it is formulating corporate strategy. Companies must understand the current environment as well as predict any changes that might occur to that environment, all the while being sure that they understand their customers' needs and desires. |

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| **Questions and Answers** |
| Question #1**Why do workers organize into unions?**Workers unionize often because there is low morale, fear of job loss, and poor communication. At the base of unionizing, workers seem to believe that it is only through unity that they can get their fair share of the pie and also protect themselves from management whims. Question #2**Why has union membership declined in recent years?**There are several factors contributing to the decline of union membership. The decline in blue-collar jobs and move to more service oriented, high-tech and white-collar jobs eliminated many union jobs. The permanent closing of plants, the relocation of companies to nonunion settings, and mergers and acquisitions further eliminated union jobs. Some of the reasons unions were formed, i.e., EEO, safety, now have laws that provide the sort of protection the union had offered. Question #3**How does OSHA promote the reduction of unsafe conditions?**The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for promulgating legally enforceable standards and enforcing them. The standards are very complete, with five volumes covering general industry standards, maritime standards, construction standards, other regulations and procedures, and a field operations manual. OSHA can conduct inspections and issue citations. They are also allowed to impose penalties, ranging from $5,000 up to $70,000, although in practice the penalties can be far higher. Question #4**What is different between job stress and burnout?**Job stress may come from a variety of factors, including work schedule, pace of work, job security, route to and from work, number and nature of customers or clients, and workplace environment. Burnout on the other hand is the total depletion of physical and mental resources caused by excessive striving to reach an unrealistic work-related goal. Job stress is normal, where burnout usually results in time lost. Question #5**Why is repatriation a problem and what are suggested solutions?**When expatriates return, they fear they have been left out.  Sometimes they are hurriedly put into mediocre assignments.  In addition, the family goes through a reverse culture shock as they try to pick up old friendships, go to new schools, and lose some of the perks of international assignments.  According to expatriates, the best way to keep them is to give them assignments that enable they to use their newly acquired skills.  More progressive multinationals anticipate and avoid these problems, by taking sensible steps:* Have written repatriation agreements.
* Assign a sponsor.
* Provide career counseling.
* Keep communications open.
* Develop reorientation programs.

Question #6**Why do some international staffing assignments fail and what can be done to improve the likelihood of success?**The selection process for international assignments is fundamentally flawed. Expatriate assignments rarely fail because the person cannot accommodate to the technical demands of the job. They fail because of family and personal issues and lack of cultural skills that haven’t been part of the selection process. There are a number of things that can be done to improve success. Providing realistic previews of what to expect, careful screening, improved orientation, and improved benefit packages are all helpful. In addition, ensuring your firm treats its employees fairly, treating them with respect, providing an appeal process, and reducing the length of the assignments contribute to success.  |

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| **Resource Links** |
|  **Labor Project for Working Families**(http://www.working-families.org/)The LPWF is a national advocacy and policy center that was founded in 1992 by the California Bay Area Labor Councils. The LPWF Web site has a plethora of information about bargaining strategies that has been used to help promote and increase family friendly benefits. The information is beneficial not only for union employees, but also non-union workers who would like information and strategies that they may use to help increase family-related benefits.  |
|  **National Employment Law Institute**(http://www.neli.org)This non-profit organization provides seminars and in-house training on legal employment issues.  |
|  **National Labor Relations Board**(http://www.nlrb.gov/)The NLRB is an independent Federal agency created in 1935 to enforce the National Labor Relations Act. The site provides information and links.  |
|  **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**(http://www.osha.gov/)OSHA’s website contains laws, regulations, articles, resources and links concerning occupational safety and health issues.  |
|  **US Office of Personnel Management**(http://www.opm.gov/Employment\_and\_Benefits/WorkLife/OfficialDocuments/handbooksguides/WorkplaceViolence/index.asp)The purpose of this website is to provide managers with assistance in establishing workplace violence initiatives at their organization. The handbook was developed by the U. S. Office of Personnel Management and the Interagency Working Group on Violence in the Workplace. Part One of the handbook focuses on developing effective policies regarding workplace violence. Part two is a series of cases regarding workplace violence. Part three reviews technological language that is used by agencies involved in responding to incidences of workplace violence.  |

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