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### “CREATING A MORE RESILIENT WORKFORCE”

The continuing speed of the information age and globalization of business, a 24/7 service mentality and changing workforce demographics are demanding that organizations operate in radically new ways. It requires flexibility and adaptability of employees to take advantage of emerging business opportunities and to respond to customer needs. Here are some strategies to start applying in order to build a more prepared and resilient workforce within your organization:

**Rebuild internal focus and cohesiveness at the top.** Your organization cannot be at its peak of competitiveness when there is a lack of common focus among the decision – makers. Companies who are aware of this have created the opportunity for executives to be clear about their goals, to learn about each other’s challenges, and to understand the impact that each function has on the others. This creates trusting internal relationships and a kind of teamwork that support each other’s, and ultimately the company’s, success.

**Have the right people in the right roles, playing to their strengths.** People need to be in the right positions with the best suitability for what they are doing. When this occurs, they will be both more productive and more satisfied, a win-win for the company and the employee. Those who are not in a role that allows them to do what they are best at will either stay only for the paycheck and become complacent, or they will become so frustrated that they will seek satisfaction with another employer.

**Address performance issues of those not adequately contributing.** Organizations weaken themselves by keeping people on board who are not working to the required standards. While we need to be kind and respectful to all employees, even the nicest people are not entitled to a paycheck if they are not pulling their required weight. If lesser-contributing employees are re-assigned within the organization, be sure they are a good fit there, and not just a “place-holder.” Otherwise let them go, which will be better for both of you in the long run.

**Cross train and have a succession plan in place.** This will allow for organizational flexibility when needed. Smart leaders will prepare for the personal (disability, LOA) and professional reasons (promotion, lateral move, career change) that would leave the business vulnerable from a position vacancy. While planning for future turnover is critically important, just as important is protecting your exposure from having pockets in the organization where one individual is the sole source of certain technical, business or operational knowledge. Know where these weaknesses reside in your company and document or cross-train to keep that critical knowledge accessible.

**Develop a culture where flexibility and adaptability are the norm.** This will allow people to react swiftly when required to serve customer needs or respond quickly to market conditions and opportunities. Companies who are bogged down with too many outdated or unnecessary internal rules, regulations and procedures will prevent the empowerment that employees need to be agile and responsive. If your working environment and culture need adjusting, as most do, take the time to ask your employees for their ideas. They know exactly where the bureaucracy prevents them from being as effective or productive as they know they can be.

Don’t allow your business to operate in the same way it did ten, five or even two years ago. Start and continue implementing strategies that will strengthen your enterprise, build resiliency and reduce vulnerability in these rapidly changing times.