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Vital Business Solutions Newsletter

Countdown to 2012 Olympics: *Are you ready for possible loss of productivity?*

In June's issue of VBS Newsletter, we discussed the management of workplace issues and identified the Employee Handbook as one of the tools of reference when administering discipline. How do you handle event-triggered issues in the workplace? For example, with the upcoming 2012 Olympics in London, information will be constantly streamed over the Internet, which individuals can access via any technology with Internet access, including tablets, laptops, desktop computers, smart phones and other hand-held devices. During this time, how do you manage online access and ensure productivity remains at the expected level?

If Internet use is already addressed in your Employee Handbook, this might be a good time to write and distribute a memorandum to remind employees of your policies. Not only will the employees' work time be of concern, but accessing live streaming on company computer could cause the servers to slow down, resulting in a wider issue. In addition, some people prefer to watch the games with family and friends, which may result in requests for time off from work or flexible schedule.

If Internet use is not addressed in your Employee Handbook and you think this might be an issue, you might consider the following:

- Refer to how your business handled past Olympics or major sporting events and reinstate what worked for you;
- Create and distribute a stand-alone policy;
- Set goals that employees must meet regardless of how they choose to manage their time;
- If the majority of employees has special interest in particular events, seek their input on how to circulate Olympics results office wide; and
- Grant flexible schedule if possible.

An issue that you might not be able to manage is that many people access the Internet from their personal hand-held devices; therefore, it is difficult to monitor and curtail this manner of Internet use. There is no doubt that some employees will watch the live-streaming games and participate in online discussions on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other forums. Finally, fatigue after staying up late nights to watch the games may cause low productivity.

It is best to select the methods that are consistent with your business culture to deal with employees who choose to watch the Olympics at work instead of working or cause your servers to run slowly due to the live streaming on your company computer. The main thing to keep in mind is to strike a balance and remember that productivity is best measured by the quantity and quality of the work done, which sometimes can be accomplished outside of the nine to five work schedule.

Important Dates to Remember

September 30th, federal contractors will be required to file **VETS-100 Form**.

September 30th for the current year, employers who are federal contractors with 50 or more employees will be required to file **EEO-1 report**.

Effective October 1, 2012, Maryland law will prohibit employers from asking employees and job applicants for their user name and password to access social media personal accounts.

On the Radar

If the **Maryland's Same-Sex Marriage Law** is upheld, employers must be prepared to update benefits policies and plan documents to be in compliance with the new law regarding coverage for dependents. The law will be effective January 1, 2013 unless it is repealed in November.

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Is your Employee Handbook updated for 2013?

We can help you with your Policies & Procedures Manuals!

VBS can update your Employee Handbook and HR forms. An Employee Handbook identifies management's objectives, outlines company rules and regulations, and identifies the company's expectations.

Let us know if you need the following documents:

- Employee Handbook
- Policies & Procedures Manual
- Human Resources Forms
- Job Descriptions
- HR Audit/Assessment

Get everyone on the same page!