



March, 2013

## *Vital Business Solutions Newsletter*

### **Sequestration... HR Concerns**

Sequestration, Fiscal Cliff, and Government Shut Down have become household words and have preoccupied our thoughts over the past few months. For some employers, it's business as usual and for others, they have had to deliver furlough notices and layoffs as a result of losing contracts. Not only are business owners troubled, but employees who think they might be impacted negatively are very concerned. Such concerns can affect employee productivity and morale.

Employee morale may be low not just because of a particular work environment, but because of the general anxiousness that an employee might be experiencing at this time. In some instances, more than one person in a household might be impacted by changes in employment. Another major concern is if an employee's hours are reduced to part-time status, the employee may lose certain benefits.

The effects of sequestration might cause seasoned employees to retire early, leaving a knowledge gap in the company. This may cause an employer to hire quickly and sometimes a quick hire is not the best hire. Another concern for the employer is losing top performers who have to be placed on furlough due to a loss of business.

So you may ask:

- How do employers alleviate their workers' fears while dealing with fear of their own?
- How will employers handle the questions from employees about the changes in their employment status?

Having a plan to handle this possibility is recommended, whether or not changes actually occur. Review your staffing plan for at least the next six months and your expected deliverables to your customers to determine which positions will be needed the most. Next, be open and honest with employees. Develop a communication plan and decide what you will need to communicate, when to communicate the plan, and how you will communicate the plan.

---

### **New I-9 Form - Are You Using It?**

**The U.S. Citizens and Immigration Services (USCIS) recently released the New I-9 Form.**

The law states that effective 03/08/13:

- Employers should begin using the newly revised Form I-9 (Rev. 03/08/13)N for all new hires and reverifications.
- Employers may continue to use previously accepted revisions (Rev.02/02/09)N and (Rev. 08/07/09) Y until May 7, 2013.
- **After May 7, 2013**, employers must only use Form I-9 (Rev. 03/08/13)N.

The Handbook for Employers Guidance for Completing Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) has been updated to correspond with the new form.

Please note that the Spanish version of the I-9 Form may be filled out by employees and employers in Puerto Rico only.

**Downloads:**

Form I-9: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf>

Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-08/pdf/2013-05327.pdf>

Guidance for Completing Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form):

<http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/m-274.pdf>

---

## They Are Screening You Too!

When you hire an employee, you follow the typical recruiting steps; post the job, review incoming resumes, phone screen, interview candidates, conduct background and drug screening, check references, and verify education and credentials.

Candidates are vetting of the employers as well. Now, with social media the investigation has taken on a whole new arm with the many sites available to review employers. One of the popular sites is Glassdoor.com. Former and current employees can review a company on Glassdoor. Individuals can write the pros and cons of working with the company and provide advice to senior management. In addition, individuals can rate the company on the following:

- Culture & Values
- Compensation & Benefits
- Senior Leadership
- Work/Life Balance
- Career Opportunities

The site also provides an average of employees' reviews by gauging their satisfaction level with the company:

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral - OK
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

In addition, employees can list their salary for their current position and jobseekers can rate their interview experience with the company as:

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

They can also provide interview details, interview questions, and negotiation details.

Increasingly, potential candidates are reading these reviews before deciding to accept an interview or a job offer. Top-quality and passive candidates (the ones recruiters normally pursue) are more apt to read a company's online reviews before making a decision. They are usually already in a job and take appropriate care to screen potential employers.

So, how do you make sure your best image is being reviewed?

Since employers have no control over the comments their employees leave on these sites (and most of them are anonymous) how can employers manage their online image? You can take the following steps to monitor and maintain your reputation:

- Develop a plan to manage your online image.
- Search your company's name often. If your company operates in multiple countries, search those domains as well.
- Note the sites that list negative information. If the information provided is incorrect, contact the site owner immediately to have it expunged or counter the comment.
- Take discussions offline, if you can - don't hash things out via the public comments box; ask the disgruntled employee or customer to message you privately.
- Leave a thank you for positive comments, if you can.
- Hire a Social Media Specialist or Public Relations Personnel to develop a social media strategy and to write professional articles and press releases about the company and the positive accomplishments.
- Use social tracking tools to automatically gather and report your business appearance on social media sites. Among the sites that can assist you with managing your online reputation are reputation (Reputation.com) and social media (socialmention.com).
- Frequently search for new sites (they pop up daily) that can help you control your online image.

Finally, it's important to know what is being said about your business in the media world. Your business is being socially investigated by potential employees, existing and potential customers, vendors, contractors, potential buyers, and more. Conducting business and treating employees in a fair and ethical manner will prevent or reduce negative online reviews. Online image management can be time consuming, but with the right plan and appropriate use of resources, it can be done successfully.

**Hennrietta Smith, President**  
**Vital Business Solutions, Inc.**  
202-832-1388  
[www.vitalbusinesssolution.com](http://www.vitalbusinesssolution.com)  
[hsmith@vitalbusinesssolution.com](mailto:hsmith@vitalbusinesssolution.com)

*The information provided in this newsletter is for awareness only and not intended as legal or tax advice. Please consult with your legal counsel and/or tax or payroll professional on legal and tax matters.*

Vital Business Solutions is an one-stop shop human resources and organizational development company that provides simplistic systems to your complex business needs. Our goal is to provide solutions to your human resources and organizational development challenges. [www.vitalbusinesssolution.com](http://www.vitalbusinesssolution.com)