

HR HAPPENINGS...



Brought to you by the Human Resource Development Committee

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- NJ's Minimum Wage Increase takes effect
- 5 HR tips for small business start ups
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On Friday, Sept. 29, the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development announced that the minimum wage will increase 16 cents from \$8.44 per hour to \$8.60 per hour on January 1, 2018. Minimum wage increases are tied to a constitutional amendment that voters approved in 2013. At that time voters approved a \$1 increase and tied further annual increases to the consumer price index (CPI).

To read the Notice of Administrative Changes click [here](#).

“The value of a business is a function of how well the financial capital and the intellectual capital are managed by the human capital. You'd better get the human capital part right.”

— Dave Bookbinder, *The NEW ROI: Return on Individuals: Do you believe that people are your company's most valuable asset?*

5 HR Tips for Small Business Start Ups

- 1) **Hire the best people.** Use behavioral-based interviewing to understand a candidate's background and experience. Look for red flags by asking probing questions. Know ahead of time what you legally can and cannot ask. Resources are available through the Chamber.
- 2) **Have an employee handbook** that outlines your company's policies to make them clear to employees and managers. Not sure where to start? A qualified employment law attorney can help you ensure that you cover all the important points.
- 3) **Know federal, state and local employment laws and important regulations** and how they impact you as a small business. For example, some laws only apply to businesses with greater than 50 employees.



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5 HR Tips for Small Business Start Ups (cont'd)

4) **Keep good records**—whether payroll-related or a confidential personnel file. Having employee documentation like payroll and attendance records, performance feedback and onboarding documentation can save you time and money. A payroll company can help.

5) **Don't go it alone.** Utilize resources that are available to you to help you avoid HR issues. The Sussex County Chamber of Commerce offers the complimentary support of ASK HR—a subcommittee comprised of human resource professionals. Questions can be directed anytime to this group via email at ASKHR@sussexcountychamber.org

Ripped from the Headlines: Sexual Harassment

Based on several high-profile news stories in recent months, sexual harassment has become a topic of national conversation. Now, more than ever, it is imperative for businesses of every size to be proactive in preventing and combatting sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment comes in two basic forms. The first form is known as “**quid pro quo**” harassment. Quid pro quo harassment occurs when a supervisor or manager explicitly or implicitly requests sexual favors in exchange for some positive change in an employee's working conditions. For example, a supervisor who implies that an employee will be promoted if the employee submits to the supervisor's inappropriate touching, has committed quid pro quo sexual harassment.

The second form is known as **hostile work environment harassment**. Hostile work environment harassment occurs when a co-worker, supervisor, or manager engages in conduct of a sexual nature, which interferes with an employee's ability to perform their job. Unlike quid pro quo harassment, hostile work environment harassment does not necessarily involve an exchange of sexual favors for improved working conditions. For example, an employee who makes repeated comments about another employee's body or discusses their sexual preferences with co-workers has engaged in hostile work environment sexual harassment if the conduct is unwelcome and offensive to a person of reasonable moral sensibilities.

Both quid pro quo and hostile work environment sexual harassment are illegal and can expose businesses to liability, negative publicity, poor morale, and other negative consequences. **Prevention begins with an anti-harassment policy and annual training for managers and supervisors.** Employees should be encouraged to come forward with complaints without fear of reprisal or retaliation. If a complaint is received, the employer should act promptly to investigate and, if necessary, to take corrective action. These are all steps that you can take right now to make your business a safe and inclusive workplace.

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“I pruned a tree once, so technically I'm allowed to put 'branch manager' on my resumé.”