

November 2006

# RADFORD UNIVERSITY



## SHRM Newsletter

### Upcoming Events

**Thursday, November 2nd: Spike's Chocolate Factory tour. Hurry and sign up because there are only 4 spots available!! You don't want to miss out on making your own chocolate! Contact Nick Haap at [nhaap@radford.edu](mailto:nhaap@radford.edu) for information and to sign up.**

### DUES, DUES, DUES!!

If you haven't paid your dues yet, please do so. The cost is \$10.00 to be a local member and \$35.00 to be a national member. We need national members! You may give your money to Eric Carroll ([wcarroll@radford.edu](mailto:wcarroll@radford.edu)) or Mike Aamodt ([maamodt@radford.edu](mailto:maamodt@radford.edu)). Please visit [shrm.org](http://shrm.org) for more information.



To the left: I/O Fans with Daisy Herndon.



To the right: Daisy Herndon speaking to I/O Fans about benefits.

### SHRM Minutes

**Guest Speaker:** 10/18/06 12:30 - Daisy Herndon from Montgomery County  
**Guest Speakers:** 10/25/06 11:15 - Alumni Chris Tunstall & Erika Peterson from Lowe's  
**SHRM Event:** 10/27/06 at 4:00 - K92 Radio Station Tour  
**Social Event:** 10/28/06 - Halloween Party 2006 at Jeff's, Nick's, and Chris'  
**SHRM Event:** 11/2/06 at 4:30 - Spike's Chocolate Factory Tour

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It's expected that at some point in your career, you'll work with a few people who annoy you. Whether it's the proud parent who looks to you for daily confirmations about how cute their kid is, or the smelly guy and his funky lunch in the next cube over, we all know people who irritate us.

But the more idiosyncrasies a co-worker has, the more likely we are to morph their smaller irritations into full-blown annoyances, transforming our jobs from productive workplaces to recurring nightmares. If the proud parent also talks endlessly at full volume and the smelly guy is your micro-managing boss, you're much more likely to lose it. Dealing with the problem the right way is crucial, but how do you handle the situation?

#### Adjust your perception

According to the "Office Pet Peeve" survey conducted by temporary staffing firm Randstad USA, condescending tones lead the list of biggest office annoyances at 44 percent. Public reprimand, micromanagement, loud talkers and cell phone ringing completed the top five.

Chances are, some of these actions pair up with annoying co-worker behavior in your office, but Sue Fox, author of "Business Etiquette for Dummies," feels that dealing with the situation means you should be paying enough attention to other co-workers to modify your behavior and accommodate them.

"Appropriate responses to particular personality types are helpful for anyone wanting to be an effective colleague," Fox says.

#### Take it to the source

Stephen Viscusi, author of "On the Job: How to Make It in the Real World of Work," and contributing workplace guru for ABC's "Good Morning America," advises handling most office annoyances head-on, by confronting the person and the situation.

"Annoying co-workers sometimes feel as if they can get away with more because they are in the workplace and they feel the workplace gives them amnesty," Viscusi says. If someone in your office is talking down to you, he suggests stating your grievances in person.

"It's very effective because it dissipates their attitude and shows them what they can't get away with," he says.

The same goes for dealing with loud talkers and employees who can't seem to remember to keep their cell phones on vibrate. If you're guilty of forgetting to leave your signature ring tone on snooze at the office, you're not just annoying your co-workers, you may be sending the wrong message to your boss by your ringtone choice and inviting neighboring cube dwellers to eavesdrop.

"It's like an alarm goes off and tells people to come snoop," Viscusi says. "I have discovered more about people through overhearing their phone conversations. I have overheard about a co-worker whose son is a drug addict, a mom dying of cancer and discovered someone was gay, all from being bored at work and overhearing personal cell phone conversations."

#### Consider your options

But what can you do when the annoying behavior is coming from your boss? If the source of the patronizing tone of voice or some other irritating action is your supervisor, using a head-on approach may not always be your best bet.

"If you tell your boss, 'I think you are talking to me in a condescending way,' they are basically going to have one of two reactions," Viscusi says. "They are either going to say that they didn't realize what they were saying sounded condescending and apologize, or they could deny the action and consider you insubordinate."

Viscusi often hears micromanagement and abusive boss complaints lumped together in a single category when employees make their cases to human resources departments. But when it comes to dealing with micromanagement, public reprimand and other boss-related annoyances, HR can't solve everything.

"There's a common sense reality of handling these situations and then there's an HR way," Viscusi says. "But handling things solely through the HR way doesn't mean that you are going to fare any better with your boss."

Part of that reason is because some employees make multiple complaints for every little action, and other employees fear that their statements won't make a difference or that speaking up could come back to haunt them. To combat that fear, some companies have added independent company ethics phone lines where employees can voice their concerns and complaints, and the HR department can receive anonymous records and solve situations accordingly.

**If all else fails...**

If you've exhausted your options, and are still having a hard time dealing with an annoying co-worker or bully of a boss, you may find the stress draining your productivity and even carrying over to your personal life. If this is the case, it may be time to move on.

"Even if it's your first job or your tenth, you really don't have to put up with anything in the workplace," Vis-cusi says. "There are a million jobs out there."

But if the situation isn't an abusive boss, but rather a chatterbox, egomaniac, office gossip or another office oddball whose personality characteristics also seem to rub you the wrong way, you might also want to consider lightening up before you pack your bags.

"There are lots of personality types in an office. ... Watch for the behaviors that each personality type exhibits and appreciate the diversity," Fox says. "People's quirks are inherently interesting and acknowledging them can help increase office harmony."

**Guest Speaker Daisy Herndon Discusses Benefits - Katherine East**

On Wednesday, October 18th we had the privilege of having Daisy Herndon, the Benefits Coordinator for Montgomery County, come speak about the importance of a good benefits package.

We learned that benefits are one of the most costly items for an organization today. A major concern for organizations is reducing health care premiums by instituting wellness programs and instituting other cost saving programs.

Montgomery County has an innovative wellness plan for this region in that they offer on site medical services, have lunch talks about health issues, and invite services like Weight Watchers to come give information chats. They also offer individual premium lowering incentive programs that not only save the company money, but the employee as well.

**Tips from Daisy:**

1. The importance of a pre-tax savings plan that is transferable from job to job, such as a 401(K). Will save you money in the long run and will help you start saving now.
2. When interviewing for a job in the real world, remember to ask for a summary of the company's benefits and medical plan. Usually companies have a one page summary of what they offer that you should know before you accept the job.

We all very much appreciate Daisy taking the time to speak to our SHRM chapter and her advice can help us all understand employee benefits a little better. An outline provided by Daisy can be found on the Files page on our SHRM Yahoo website.

**HAPPY HALLOWEEN!!!  
BE SAFE AND SPOOKY.**



At Left: Chrissy, Claire, Rustan, and Michelle at the Halloween party.



At Right: J.J and Jeff at the Halloween party.

