

HR Florida Review

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For Florida's Human Resources Professionals

Are You Considering *Going Green?*

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GREEN BUILDINGS

“NOT EASY BEING GREEN” VERSUS SAVING HUMAN RESOURCES “GREENBACKS?”

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Have your employees asked you about “going green?” Talk around the water cooler has transitioned to a discussion of going green – even in the Human Resources circles. Employers around the country are discussing the benefits and pitfalls of going green. So, you might ask, “why go green?”

Green buildings offer a variety of benefits. These benefits including a savings in utilities, such as water and energy. Consider that today’s buildings account for 39 percent of total energy use, 12 percent of water consumption, 68 percent of electricity consumption, and 38 percent of carbon dioxide emissions. These emissions can impact those in human resources, since it can cause a potential human health risk, an employee morale problem, and an increase in employee benefits costs. Going green may mean an enhanced comfort and health for workers and heightened

aesthetics in workspaces. Additional benefits include incentives from local governments, insurance, decreasing health complications and absences for the employees, all while providing a great marketing opportunity for the company. In this regard, it appears that going green could make economic sense.

However, employers should also consider the potential pitfalls of going green. Going green has a financial price and it would be wise for an employer to consult with a professional who is well educated on the reputable green building standards, the green options available, the associated start up and maintenance costs, the foreseeable utility savings, and the benefits available to the particular company.

Incorporating these environmentally friendly measures into the workforce can be extraordinarily easy in some situations. For example, purchasing recycled

paper and using HEPA air filters. Other choices are financially straining. For example, renovating your building to obtain green building certification from a recognized independent entity.

Employers must also be careful when implementing their green improvement. They must do their research to ensure that any contractor performing work is doing so under a reputable and legitimate green building standard. An emerging trend employers should be aware of is a contractor who holds themselves out as a “green builder,” only to perform who that is not recognized by a reputable green building standard. Today’s reputable green building standards, like LEED, which are discussed further below, offer certifications for those professionals who oversee and certify green developments. Additionally, green buildings could become the law for many of Florida builders, property owners, and

