

17<sup>th</sup> April 2007

## The 10 Worst Management Practices

Paul Gibson



What do anti-moonlighting agreements, love contracts, outsourced employee relations, and internet snooping programs all have in common? They have made the list of the Ten Worst Management Practices for the year 2007.

This week we will investigate the source of friction among management and employees by reviewing some of the most outrageous and ridiculous management practices around the world.

Take anti-moonlighting policies for instance. According to this policy, a company forbids their employees from practicing the same business activity as their company. Up to here this sounds reasonable, but a number of companies also require employees to sign agreements that require them to have “exclusive dedication” to their jobs. This means they are not allowed to work at the bar at the weekends, as a shop assistant at the local supermarket, or maybe work or sing in the local parish choir after hours. So if they find out you are making money elsewhere outside the company, they have the right to sack you immediately.

Perhaps the most absurd, but ingenious practices to avoid lawsuits and company liability are the famous “love contracts”. Management requires employees that are romantically involved with each other (who both work for the same company), to sign a document declaring that their relationship is “consensual”. That way, if there is

ever a problem arising between the two of them, the company can not be held responsible for any possible sexual harassment of any kind. What kind of low down criminal-minded boss would have their employees sign away their basic rights to respect?

Listen up business travellers! Do you work for a company that “steals” frequent flier miles? As you know, when you travel from one place to another via airplane, you can accumulate points or miles which can later amount to a significant discount on your next plane ticket. Companies love to “appropriate” these miles on their company account so managers can later use them, instead of the employees who did all the extra-travel for their company.

Other despicable management practices involve how companies treat potential job candidates. In most countries, when you are looking for a job or filling out a job application, you are required to provide your previous salary history. Well, most companies have a strict verification policy to see whether or not you are telling the truth about your previous salary history. Do you really want to work for a company that starts out by casting doubt on your very job application?

We need not mention here the all too frequent practice of “internet snooping”; are employers really that hard up to control their employees that they now need to investigate their internet shopping habits? One thing is to spend all day on the internet, and quite another to take a 10-minute internet break to clear your mind and be more productive. What a bad excuse to reprimand an employee! The internet is today, what personal phone calls were ages ago.

Finally, the absolute worst management practice imaginable is the most common: the constant disdain and indifference during a job interview. Answering telephones, making job candidates wait an extra 10 minutes, etc. I mean really, would you like to work at a company that starts out by training you in being late for an appointment by 10 minutes? Management: practice what you preach!

Next week, don't miss the 10 Best Management Practices for 2007. Yeah, there are also great managers out there! Take heart!