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IN THE WORKPLACE

COMMENT ON
WORKLOAD
MAY BE SEEN
AS WHINING

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MCT NEWS SERVICE

Q. I am the only salesperson in a very small software company. Everyone else seems to have a clear job description that matches their skill set, but I have many responsibilities unrelated to sales. To make matters worse, the owner keeps giving me tasks that I am not qualified to do. For example, he recently asked me to create a company Facebook page, even though I have absolutely no skills in that area. I would like to respectfully tell my boss that I am overwhelmed and cannot handle all these additional activities, plus my regular sales work. But when I said it seems unfair that I am the only one being given extra tasks, he just told me to stop whining. What should I do now?

A. You have apparently made the common mistake of describing a workload problem from your own point of view, emphasizing how tired and stressed you feel. When you added the word “unfair,” your boss stopped listening and labeled you as a whiner. To get his attention, you must stop talking about yourself and start talking about the business.

For example: “I’m concerned that we may be missing some sales opportunities because my time is split so many ways. Handling such a wide variety of tasks reduces the time available for calling on customers and developing new leads. I know you want to increase sales, so I would like to discuss the best way to handle this situation.”

For assignments outside your area of expertise, see how much time your learning curve will take, then suggest a more efficient alternative. With the Facebook page, for example, you might propose assigning the technical aspects to someone with more experience, while remaining involved from a sales perspective.

Finally, you should collaborate with your boss in establishing priorities. List your responsibilities in order of importance, then see if he agrees with your rankings. This exercise should help you determine which activities he views as mandatory and which might be delegated or discontinued.

Q. I recently quit my job with a consulting company because the director consistently made decisions based on favoritism. He gave the best assignments to his pet employees and mentored them about how to build relationships with clients. I eventually realized I could not succeed in this environment, so I left. In retrospect, is there anything I might have done differently?

A. Without more information, it would be difficult to offer specific suggestions. However, one obvious strategy, when confronted with a manager who plays favorites, is to try to become a favorite yourself. This does not mean sucking up, but it does mean “managing up” intelligently.

First, you must identify your boss’s preferences, then tailor your interactions accordingly. For example, if she likes a lot of information, communicate with her frequently. If he enjoys chatting about weekend activities, invest some time in socializing.

LOCAL RETAIL SPACES ARE FILLING UP

Vacancy rate falls to 5%, though region has its laggard areas

ROGER SHOWLEY • U-T

San Diego, like many other markets, was once thought of as “over-stored,” too much retail space per person.

With a surge in Internet shopping and a downturn in consumer buying power during the recession, the future of traditional shopping centers and strip malls looked iffy.

But the CoStar Group has news for the doubters of brick-and-mortar shopping:

The vacancy rate for San Diego’s 12,781 retail buildings containing 134.4 million square feet was only 5 percent in the third quarter of 2012.

That compares with a national rate of 6.9 percent and double-digit rates in places like Las Vegas, 10.7 percent; Phoenix, 11.8 percent; and Reno, 14.3 percent.

“I think we do have one of the lowest vacancy rates of most major cities, especially in the West,” said Joe Yetter, a retail broker at Cassidy Turley. “Maybe San Francisco is lower than us.”

And it is, at 2.7 percent. New York City is even lower at 2.1 percent.

In a separate report by Peter Tindall, research associate at Marcus & Millichap, said luxury retail outlets should benefit from high-income, white-collar job growth.

“Biotech firms, flush with venture capital funds, will expand their research and development programs, supporting a greater number of high-income earners in La Jolla and Carlsbad, where biomedical and life science companies are tightly clustered,” Tindall said in his third-quarter report.

He also said software developers attract “younger, active workers who prefer

SEE RETAIL • C2

San Diego retail: 3rd quarter 2012

Vacancy rate: 5 percent on 133.1 million square feet, compared with 5.2 percent in the second quarter and 5.6 percent in the third quarter of 2011.

Net leased space: 293,082 square feet, up from 197,147 square feet in the second quarter and 328,371 square feet in the third quarter of 2011.

New retail buildings: 15,565 square feet in three buildings, about the same as in the second quarter but far below year-ago deliveries of two buildings with 162,160 square feet.

Under construction: 331,082 square feet in 13 buildings, compared with 257,036 square feet in 11 buildings in the third quarter of 2011.

Rental rate: \$20.94 per square foot per year, down 3 cents from the second quarter and down from \$21.58 in the third quarter of 2011.

“Get out from behind the computer.”

Phil Blair • CEO of Manpower on finding a job



Phil Blair, CEO of Manpower San Diego, says getting a job is all about who you know, or who knows you. NELVIN C. CEPEDA • U-T

INSIDE BUSINESS Q&A with San Diego County’s business leaders

Laying it on the employment line

Manpower San Diego’s longtime CEO stresses networking over résumés

JONATHAN HORN • U-T

When it comes to finding a job, many times it’s all about who you know.

And in San Diego, there may not be a better person to know than Phil Blair when looking for work.

Blair is the CEO of Manpower San Diego, a staffing agency that has 2,000 San Diegans temping in various fields.

Those jobs by the way, can turn into permanent posts if the situation is right. Blair said 42 percent of his temps wind up with permanent jobs.

Blair has headed Manpower San Diego since 1977. He’s recruited for positions across fields, from manufacturing, to finance to administrative. He’s on the verge of publishing his first book, called “Job Won!” It’s going to be 170 pages of human resources advice for the job seeker, straight from the top.

While the book won’t come out until mid-December, the U-T recently caught up with Blair at Manpower headquarters on First

42%

Manpower’s temps that end up with permanent jobs

Avenue to bounce some questions off him on how best to go about a job search in this county with 8.4 percent unemployment.

Manpower San Diego — with a staff of 82 — oversees recruiting in San Diego, southern Riverside County, Spokane, Wash., and New Mexico. It also manages a separate

Las Vegas operation.

The most lucrative temp job Blair ever helped staff? It paid \$750 an hour, plus housing. It was a financial position where the employee was tasked with raising a local company’s stock price.

While that may be out of reach for most of us, Blair did have a common theme in his answers when it comes to finding jobs: It’s all about who you know, or who knows you.

“Network, network and network,” Blair said. “When someone recommends someone for a job, their reputation is on the line, so

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SOME SITES PAY SHOPPERS TO PLUG PRODUCTS ONLINE



Julie Medeiros takes part in a program by the shopping site Beso, which pays users to send clicks to retailers. MICHAEL FALCO • NYT

FTC says compensated posts blur a line between endorsement, sales pitch

STEPHANIE CLIFFORD
NYT NEWS SERVICE

Julie Medeiros thinks her taste in fashion is worth something. Turns out it is: about \$50 a month.

Medeiros is not a style pro; her day job is at a talent agency in Manhattan, N.Y. But in a little-known practice, social media shopping sites are offering payments to shoppers who post product links that drive Web traffic and sales to retailers. In the case of Medeiros, it is the sneakers and lipstick she

added to Pinterest and the night life collection she posted on the shopping site Beso.

Favorable mentions on blogs have been for sale for years. Product reviews can also be bought. Now social media sites are taking citizen marketing to a new extreme, turning anyone’s Twitter message, Facebook post, Pinterest image or email into a possible paid promotion.

The shopping sites are upfront about the moneymaking mechanics and argue that readers no longer expect everything online to be commercial-free. But the Federal Trade Commission says the practice blurs the line between a recommendation and a paid endorsement and needs

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