What Your CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Wishes HR (Human Resources) Would Do!

by Stephen Bruce, PhD, PHR

“If I had a gun with two bullets, and I were in a room with Hitler, Bin Laden, and Toby (the HR manager), I would shoot Toby twice!” Michael Scott (The Office). That’s about how CEOs view HR, says consultant Tim Sackett.

How did we get to this point? Sackett (www.timsackett.com) asks. He says, Check out the graphics below. Don’t try to read them, just glance and ask whether your CEO wants to look at them. (Sackett offered his tips during the recent SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) annual Conference and Expo in Orlando.)
Really pretty charts … are we adding value yet? Sackett asks.

**Keep it Apple Simple**

What does your CEO want? First, keep it simple. Why don’t HR managers do simple? Simple is hard and it doesn’t seem strategic, Sackett says. What to do?

Offer meaningful metrics:

- Metrics that show the alignment of the workforce plan to the major business objectives.
- Metrics that represent a plan of action.
Talk in Business Terms

Don’t say, “We reduced turnover,” but say “We reduced turnover and that allowed us to bring $300,000 to the bottom line.”

Take Off the HR Hat

HR pros that get it take off the HR hat, Sackett says.

What is the biggest issue facing operations, marketing, finance? Find out, and then ask, How can you put HR tools to work to solve that problem?

Tell the Truth

Sackett tells the story of a young manager who got a ride on the company jet to a charity golf tournament. The CEO was part of the group and, later in the day, they had a few too many drinks and the young manager told the CEO off in strong language. The next day, the CEO showed up at the young manager’s office. “I’m about to get fired,” the young exec thought. The CEO said, “Hey, would you check this thing out for me?” All the CEO wanted was someone who would tell him the unvarnished truth.

Become a Social Butterfly!

What does it mean when HR is behind a locked door and the CEO has an open door? Get out, Sackett says.

Hire Sharper HR Pros

“Hire people who scare the crap out of you,” says Sackett. Hire someone so good that he or she will take your job. (In your interview, says Sackett, when your prospective boss asks, “Are you better than I am?” answer, “Under your mentorship and with time, yes.”)

Your Competition … on a Platter

Be aggressive in your recruiting, says Sackett. Ask:

- Who in your industry is aggressively going after talent?
- Who are the difference makers in your competitors?
- Exactly, by name and position, who are you going after from our competition to strengthen us and weaken them?

Business Is Not a Democracy
HR wants to treat everyone the same, but that’s frustrating to management, says Sackett. Your CEO is there because he or she was the best. (By the way, Sackett says, 3 percent instead of 2 percent is the same.)

**Help Your Managers Become Talent Agents!**

Tell recruits, “We’re going to make you so good people will come after you.” Those people usually don’t leave, but if they do, they leave a talented pool behind.

Get a headhunter mindset, Sackett says. “We tried one agency, but they failed, Now we’re going to try another one. NO,” says Sackett. Take it on. “WE can find the person you want.”

**Channel Your Inner Geek!**

You’ve got to be familiar with the systems you use. You don’t have to be a developer, but you do need to know the capabilities of your system, Sackett says.