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Bostonian Group Client Extranet Adds Content and Functionality for Clients

The Bostonian Group Client Extranet has recently added resources specifically designed to help HR and benefits professionals. This past spring we announced the addition of our Legal Ask Box, which allows our clients to ask employment law questions and receive answers to their questions within two business days. Starting in September, The Bostonian Group has partnered with Business & Legal Reports, Inc. to give our clients access to the most practical and comprehensive HR information available.

By accessing the HR Services section of the Client Extranet, Bostonian Group clients will have direct access to the following:

- State-specific HR regulatory analysis that provide easy-to-find answers by topic. This will help you comply with state regulations on all key HR and labor topics.
- Tools that are designed to save time and lighten your workload with prewritten job descriptions, checklists, forms, letters, and reproducible handouts.
- An exhaustive HR FAQ tool that provides fast and precise state-specific answers to your questions.
- Daily updates with additional access to



whitepapers and feature articles that include case studies and best practices all available at your fingertips.

For more information about The Bostonian Group's Client Extranet, how to log on and create an account, or to find out more about the new services available to all Bostonian Group corporate clients, please contact your consultant today.

You can access The Bostonian Group's Client Extranet by visiting:
<http://www.BostonianGroup.com/extranet>

Online Tools Bring Financial Planning Opportunities to Everyone

Financial planning is quickly becoming a more firmly established employee benefit. Sparked by trends in the 1990s—including the shift from defined benefit to defined contribution plans, workers bearing more risk for their retirement savings, and the proliferation of investment options in 401(k) plans—workplace-based financial planning opportunities for employees are growing and evolving. This is true, in part, because employers, as well as

employees, have much to gain from making financial planning opportunities available.

The workplace is a logical "base" for a financial planning program because for most people, other than their homes, the majority of their financial resources are tied to the workplace, notably, the employer-sponsored retirement plan. Today this is, predominantly, the 401(k) plan. But other employment-based

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The Bostonian Group is pleased to share our quarterly newsletter with you. The publication is designed to provide you with helpful, pertinent information pertaining to employee benefits, retirement, and human resources.

We hope that you will find this newsletter informative. Please feel free to send comments or questions to info@bosgroup.com.

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benefits and assets also are key to financial well-being, such as insurance protection (medical, life, disability). An individual also could have a fair amount of his or her wealth in an equity-based compensation plan.

Traditionally, financial planning has been an in-person, one-on-one experience covering the gamut of financial issues—budgeting, debt management, taxes, insurance, retirement savings, saving for other major purchases such as a home or college, and estate planning issues. For many employers, providing access to this type of broad financial planning benefit can seem too large of an undertaking. But today it doesn't have to be. Web-based financial education and planning tools are becoming more abundant and can be found for both broad and targeted aspects of financial planning. Web tools put financial planning, which traditionally was used by only the wealthy, within reach of anyone with access to the Internet.

For example, a study from a partnership of organizations on consumer adoption of online retirement planning tools found that each month, an average of 180,000 people use these tools. Use of online retirement tools leads to a higher level of retirement account participation and action, the study found, with three-quarters of surveyed individuals saying that the use of an online retirement planning tool influenced their investment strategy. Additionally, among those surveyed who were actively planning for retirement, 64% changed their allocation among investments as a

result of using online retirement planning tools, 59% increased their overall savings, and 54% increased the amount they were contributing to their 401(k) plan.

Much of the development in online financial planning has come from the mutual fund vendors and insurance companies that service the 401(k) plan market. These firms typically provide employees of companies that offer their plans a wide range of financial planning tools. For example, online calculators help participants determine how much money they'll need in retirement, whether they are on track with their retirement savings, and how fast they can spend their retirement savings and avoid running out of money. Online questionnaires help individuals assess their investment risk tolerance and how to plan for a major purchase such as a house or college.

Though they may have been the pioneers in online financial planning tools, 401(k) plan vendors are by no means the only place these tools are found. Various associations, government agencies, financial publications, and others offer such resources. One of the most comprehensive can be found at www.choosetosave.org, a program of the Employee Benefit Research Institute's Education and Research Fund. This site lists links to more than 100 online calculators having to do with the various aspects of financial planning. Categories include autos, budgeting, self-owned/business-related, college, credit cards, home purchase/sale, life insurance, mutual funds, paycheck planning, retiree health, retirement, Roth IRAs, savings and stock.

Some employees may already be familiar with these resources, while others may not be. Thus, consider devoting some communications to heighten employees' awareness of the online financial planning opportunities that are available to them. With the abundance of online services available, no employee should be lacking access to financial planning tools.

Host Your Holiday Party at Celebration for Kids Gala Event This December

The Bostonian Group is holding its fifth annual holiday party, and we would like to invite local businesses to join us.

The event is also known as the Celebration for Kids—a fundraising gala which supports the Rodman Ride for Kids Charities, an umbrella charity that raises funds to maximize the impact on community organizations that positively affect children in the greater Boston area. The evening includes a silent auction, dinner with food from more than 40 of Boston's best restaurants, local celebrities, and live music.

To find out more about how your company can get involved and plan their 2007 holiday party at this year's Celebration for Kids, please visit www.celebrationforkids.org or call 800-395-7433.

What: Celebration for Kids

When: Sat., Dec. 1, 2007

Where: Seaport World Trade Center Boston, MA

More Info: www.celebrationforkids.org • 800-395-7433

Promotions and New Hires:

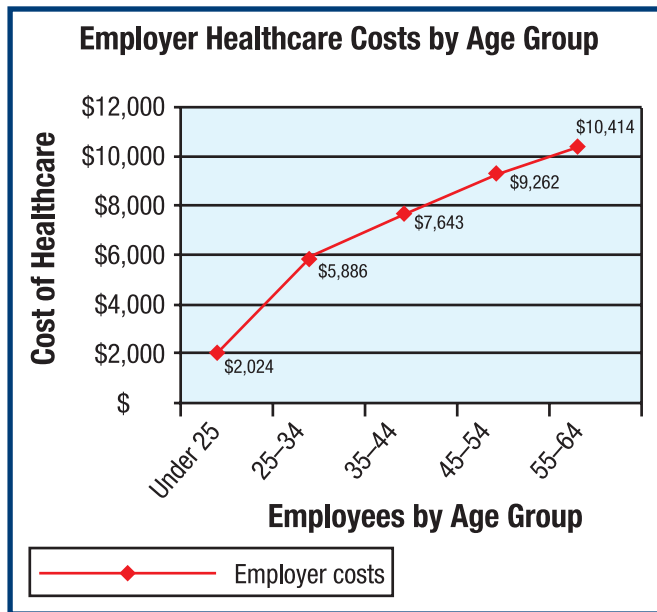
The Bostonian Group is pleased to announce that **Kelli Viera** has been promoted to Managing Consultant within the Employee Benefits practice. Kelli has been with company for eight years, and brings prior experience from Arthur J. Gallagher, a brokerage firm.

There have been additions made to each of the practices as well. **Eduardo Caquias** is the new Consultant for the Employee Benefits Practice. Two Associate Consultants were hired: **Kasey McNaught** joins the Executive Compensation and Benefits practice, and **Sharon Broum** joins the Small Business Solutions practice. **Lisa Magyar** recently joined the Retirement Services practice as a Consultant. Lastly, the Financial Services practice welcomes **Alyson Barboza** as its Financial Advisor, Executive Assistant.

Taming Healthcare Costs for an Aging Workforce

Four out of ten people in today's workforce are older than 45 years of age. By 2010, 20% of the workforce will be over the age of 55.¹

While employers may benefit from a more mature, seasoned workforce, they are also experiencing a significant increase in healthcare costs as the workforce ages and the need for medical care begins to accelerate.



Source: Rappaport, *Social Security Bulletin*, 2004 and SB Cass Associates, 2007

Why Healthcare Costs Rise

Healthcare costs rise as the workforce ages primarily due to lifestyle diseases, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity and chronic lung problems. These problems are referred to as lifestyle diseases because in many cases, they are either caused or aggravated by people's lifestyle choices. For example, obesity is not only a disorder, but it also tends to create additional problems, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

Taming Rising Healthcare Costs for Your Older Population

Unfortunately, many employers believe the only options available to constrain the rise of medical benefit costs are reductions, e.g., reduction in benefits, reduction in employer contributions to benefits, or reduction in workforce to offset costs. However, research into employer benefit strategies and cost impact consistently show that those employers who focus their efforts on improving employee health show the greatest savings.

Towers Perrin's 2007 Health Care Cost Survey identified significant cost variation between companies' cost of healthcare benefits. Companies with the highest benefit costs averaged a \$10,584 premium per employee versus a \$7,080 average premium per employee for those companies with the lowest costs. The companies with the lowest costs per employee take a more holistic approach to benefit strategy, concentrating their efforts on the underlying causes of cost increases, such as the prevalence of lifestyle diseases in the employee/family population. These companies combine strong support, including provision of education, healthcare management tools and resources, tied to employee accountability to generate positive outcomes.

Tactics to Consider

How can your company apply this information? Here are several initiatives to consider:

- Age-indexed physicals, i.e., physical examination that takes place at intervals defined by age and includes age-appropriate examination elements (mammogram for women over 30, colonoscopy for people who have reached age 50, etc.) can detect lifestyle diseases in the making, allowing early intervention to prevent or control disease. Employers can encourage employees and their family members to complete physicals as appropriate by waiving co-pays for the exam, providing an incentive gift certificate for those completing a physical or offering paid time off.
- Encourage employees to maintain a healthy weight through healthy eating and exercise. Offer healthy choices in the cafeteria, provide access to a walking course for lunch breaks, sponsor weight loss competitions or provide education on sound nutritional choices.
- Include case management services as part of the healthcare benefit package. Case managers are usually registered nurses who provide confidential assistance to plan members diagnosed with a chronic condition or those experiencing an acute problem with long-term implications. Case managers can save benefit dollars by encouraging lifestyle changes, helping to negotiate the healthcare system and monitoring care for fraudulent billing or poor medical practice.

Take steps now to be sure that your older employees enjoy excellent health so they can continue to contribute to the health of your business.

¹ "Boomers Turn Gray, Healthcare Experiences Aches and Pains", *Business2Business*, August 2005

Upcoming Events

There are three upcoming events that The Bostonian Group will be involved in:

Wellness and Population Health – September 12, 2007

Where: The Bostonian Group

The Bostonian Group is hosting this seminar to help others better understand introducing wellness and education programs, understanding case management and how high cost cases impact health care spending, and evaluating and measuring data results.

If you are interested, please contact rsvp@bosgroup.com and put “Wellness and Population Health” in the subject line.

Perfect Balance Awards – September 20, 2007

Where: The Colonnade Hotel, Boston

The Bostonian Group is a silver sponsor of The Ad Club’s Perfect Balance Awards. This award was created to recognize companies who successfully implement health wellness programs.

The award ceremony will take place at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 20, 2007 at The Colonnade Hotel, Boston.

If you’d like to learn more, please contact The Ad Club at 617-262-1100 or http://www.adclub.org/2007_PBA/index.html

Performance Management – September 24, 2007

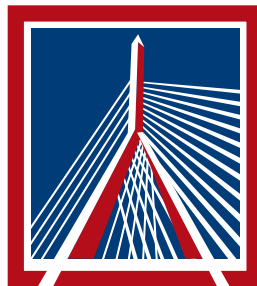
Where: The Westin Hotel, Waltham

Little Mendelson, P.C. has partnered with The Bostonian Group to provide a seminar which stresses the importance of performance management initiatives within your organization.

If you are interested, please contact rsvp@bosgroup.com and put “Performance Management” in the subject line.

To learn more, please view the News/Events page on our website at: www.BostonianGroup.com

Our clients come in many shapes and sizes. • As a result, so do our solutions.



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