

Staying Ahead of The Curve

Flexible Work Strategies with Honest Tea and Sara Lee

Webinar, March 23, 2011



On Wednesday, March 23, 2011, Care.com hosted the webinar, “Staying Ahead of The Curve: Flexible Work Strategies with Honest Tea and Sara Lee.” Jane Seibel, flex-friendly expert consultant was joined by Debra Schwartz, VP of Human Resources at Honest Tea and Kathy Bayert, Senior Manager, Organizational Effectiveness at Sara Lee Corporation. Jane, Debra, and Kathy shared their industry insight into what types of flexible work strategies work, and here are some of the major takeaways:

1 There are two components to workplace flexibility.

In order to make workplace flexibility work, there must be a tactical/practical element as well as a cultural element. It’s not enough just to have a policy on the books. Rather, the organization has to embrace flexibility and incorporate it into the culture.

2 Flexibility starts at the top. Company executives leading by example is the best way to incorporate flexibility into company culture. Having an “Advocate of Flexibility in Chief” be a champion for flexible work practices helps the mentality trickle down and become more accepted and engrained throughout the organization.

3 Flexibility works in results-oriented companies.

Those companies that have the most success instituting flexible work practices are those that hold their employees accountable for goals. Rather than having employees document their use of flex time or punch in/out, these types of organizations simply expect their employees to deliver high quality results, regardless of when, where, or how they choose to do so.

4 Mutual trust and support is key. Both Honest Tea and Sara Lee stress the importance of mutual trust within and among teams in order to facilitate successful flexible work practices. Since neither organization closely monitors use of flex time, the supportive relationships of managers and employees is integral to minimizing abuse of flexible work policies. When employees feel respected and trusted, policy abuse is significantly less likely.

5 Workplace Flexibility doesn’t happen overnight. For most organizations, implementing flexible work policies is a slow-changing process because successful policies require cooperation and support from all divisions of the organization. Be patient, and the change will come.



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