

# The Owens Interlink

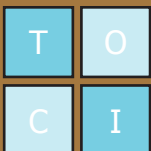
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Summer is almost over!

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## Newest info on recent changes

By Diana Owens

We all know that change can be exciting and frightening at the same time. We are experiencing just that at Owens with the new pending contracts.

However, a recent survey stated that 10% love change, 10% hate it, and the other 80% will go along. Good communication and an understanding of the change process will assist everyone in meeting the new challenges that lie ahead. In order to assist in the change process, we have attached the 5 stages of change:

1. Anticipation - happens before the change occurs. Most know or feel a hint of it.
2. Letting Go: "I can't do anything about it"!
3. Disorientation: not knowing what is going to happen next.
4. Reappraisal: feeling of survival.
5. Recommitment: to what has occurred and starts a new beginning.

Can you identify where you are. Another way to work with

change is to set goals. Below is a way of accomplishing this:

### SMART GOALS:

**S** = *specific*

**M** = *measurable*

**A** = *attainable*

**R** = *realistic*

**T** = *time-based*

Keeping this formula in the forefront of setting goals will help to assure they are met. Many times, goals which are not met are because they are too ambiguous with no clear means for accomplishing. This formula works!!

If you need assistance in making all these new changes or in setting new goals, contact HR. Remember, growth does not happen without change.



## Staff recognition

Wanda,

*I wanted to send you a thank you for your continued hard work and commitment to the job.*

*You have demonstrated a great deal of flexibility with your schedule for quite a period of time by working 6 days a week to accommodate the needs of the families you serve.*

*Once again I was able to turn to you for assistance with coverage. I appreciate all that you do and the assistance you provide. Give your self a pat on the back and know that your dedication does not go unnoticed.*

## Training updates

Owens is in the process of not only new training elements, but updating our staff to assure they are current on issues like nonviolent crisis interventions (NCI), safety issues such as first aid and CPR and of course defensive driving.

## In-home safety services

Under the direction of Jennifer Owens in Omaha and Albert Lucio in Lincoln, staff have been quiet busy assisting in maintaining children in their homes. Good job not only to the supervisors, but to the multiple

*You are setting a great example for your co workers and I can only hope that they all chip in, in the future the way you have done so consistently.*

*Thank you once again,*

*April Vendetti-Bell, Supervisor*

Wanda Studnicka is a long time employee in the Lincoln office. She has continually demonstrated commitment to the company but more importantly - to her clients. GOOD JOB WANDA!! And thanks for the recognition April.



It has been said we have a great team of trainers who make learning not only fun but are able to get the information across and have it stick.

**Also, remember management training begins Sept 17th in Omaha.**



staff who have jumped in to help with the round-the clock shifts that take place. Please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed.



## From our HR department

Do you have employees who are easily distracted, restless, disorganized and forgetful? Maybe that's just who they are – or maybe it's Adult Attention Deficit. (ADHS) It's pretty common – about 8 million American adults suffer from it.

It's an "invisible" disability, but one that courts have recently said employers shouldn't be so fast to discount it. A disability is a disability – whether you can see it or not. A recent court case said an employer had to accommodate an employees ADHS behavior. Lessons learned:

- Never single out an employee for a psychiatric evaluation that others do not have to undergo.
- Don't play doctor and second guess a doctor's diagnosis of ADHD. Just be sure to have a note signed by an official doctor of the condition for the employees file.
- Always thank an employee when they give you a doctor's note about their disability. Then engage in the interactive process with the employee and consider reasonable accommodations.



## Can you still tell jokes at work?

What about jokes? Can jokes still be told in the office? Yes, but there are a number of topics that are out of bounds.

On the first level are discriminatory jokes, jokes about racial issues, gender stereotypes, sexual preference, and so on. These jokes should be inconsistent with an organization's values and policies.

On the second level are mean-spirited jokes, such as "ugly" jokes. These may not rise to the level of harassment, but they are bad judgment to tell them.

Finally, there are jokes that are OK.

Remind employees that if they forward an inappropriate e-mail joke, that's the equivalent of telling it. Should you receive such a joke forwarded from a colleague, you should respond, "This is unacceptable, please call me to discuss."

### Blonde Jokes

Blonde jokes are inappropriate because they are about women, not hair color, and they tend to demean women. Usually they are not severe or pervasive enough to be illegal. Nevertheless, down the road they could be used as evidence of bias.

**Jokes cont'd. on pg. 4**

## Jokes cont'd.

### Six Critical Messages for Supervisors

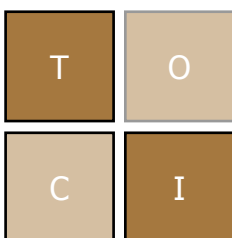
1. Refrain from engaging in harassment and other inappropriate conduct (even if not unlawful).
2. Report all complaints of harassment and other inappropriate conduct to Human Resources, even if the employee:
  - Requests that nothing be done (Tell supervisors they are required to report this as a matter of policy.)
  - Asks for absolute confidentiality (Tell supervisors they can't guarantee that but can tell employees they will keep it as confidential as possible.)
  - Does not use legal buzz words (The employee doesn't have to say "harassment"; he or she might say "uncomfortable.")
3. Respond proactively to harassment and other inappropriate conduct, even if there is no complaint.
  - Remember that silence equals tacit support.
  - Consult with HR to discuss remedial action.
  - Remedy harassment and other inappropriate conduct.
  - Focus on inappropriateness, not illegality.
4. Refrain from unlawful retaliation. This is broadly defined, and might include:
  - Tangible adverse employment actions
  - Other actions affecting material terms and conditions of employment
  - Actions independent of employment
6. Respect. Treat your employees respectfully and you'll likely avoid problems. This may be the most important of all.

### A Final Tip

Avoid legal labels..... You don't want to have to prove a violation of the law in order to justify your actions.

That's a lot for supervisors to remember, and that's not all they need to know, by any means. How can you be sure that employment actions are being handled the way you want them to be?

The "simple solution" – an HR audit and practical management training. These are ways to identify problems early and correct them before they turn into expensive lawsuits. Contact us today.



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