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Special points of interest:

- Employee Compensation
- Open Office
- Pdf995 Suite
- New tools for the Remote Advisor
- New resources added to the archive

Inside this issue:

- Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan **1**
- Open Office.org 2.0 **1**
- Pdf995 Suite: A Really Inexpensive Alternative **2 - 3**
- Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan (cont'd) **4 - 5**
- Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan (cont'd) **6**
- Tools for the Remote Advisor: **7**
- Resources **8**

The Efficient Practice

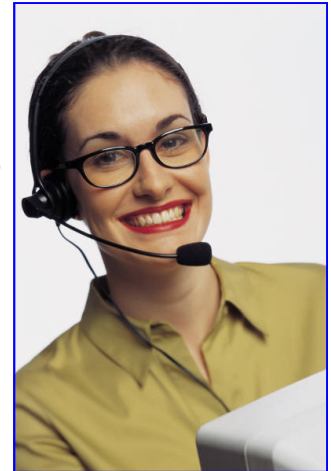
Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan

Clearly, one of the largest expenses undertaken by any business are the wages (salaries) and benefits paid to its employees. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the employer to ensure that they are receiving work commensurate with the talent and effort of the employees being compensated. To determine this, the employer must be willing to set up systems, training, procedures and managerial oversight to be certain that what is being paid for is actually being delivered. But, assuming that the employees are providing measurable value to a firm, the question becomes one of how to pay those employees adequately.

Let's begin by looking at the hourly wage type employee.

Typically, such an employee is expected to fulfill certain duties within specified time frames. (i.e. the 8 hour work day) In

this case, an employee has little incentive to produce work more efficiently or faster, simply because there is no financial gain associated with it. Still, there are those rare employees who are self-motivated to produce more, thus the amount of pay is secondary to the work involved. The so-called motivated self-starter has a drive to achieve excellence and this type of employee, though rare, should be sought out as they are sure to be a valuable addition to your staff. For the rest, supervision (*Continued on Page 4*)

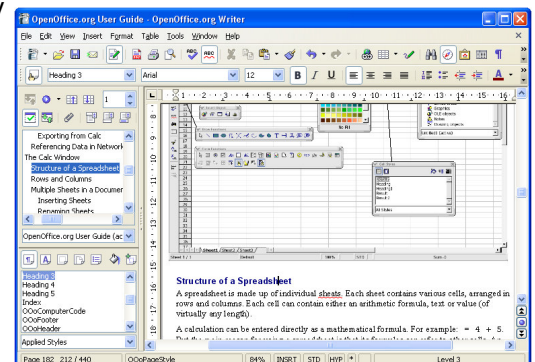


Open Office.org 2: A Clear and Free Alternative to MS Office

Tired of paying for expensive MS Office applications. One of the most expensive is the Office suite of programs. Yet, Sun Microsystems has developed an open-source alternative that just might fit the bill if you are watching your pennies. OpenOffice.org 2 is the leading open-source office software suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. It is available in many languages and works on all common computers. It stores all your

data in an international open standard format and can also read and write files from other common office software packages. It can be downloaded and used completely free of charge for any purpose. This suite of programs looks and feels like Microsoft office, with perhaps less functions, but core functions are there and easy to use.

The screen shot shown is the word document program (writer). It also has Calc, Impress, Draw and Base programs. Check them out at www.openoffice.org.



PDF995 Suite: A Really Inexpensive Alternative To Adobe Acrobat

Let's face it, efficiency may not be all about being cheap, but it is mostly about saving resources (money, for instance) whenever and wherever possible. Adobe Acrobat Professional is a great software program. It does everything you could possibly want or ask of a portable document format software program. But, the cost is \$449.00 (MSRP). This leads one to select a cheaper alternative and there is one. There are distinct differences, but one alternative stands out as a possible challenger.

The good news is that the software is free. PDF995 Suite is a group of software applications that emulate what Acrobat does (for the most part). The suite is three products: PdfEdit995, Signature995 and Pdf995. As with most products of this sort, there is a price to pay for free. In this case, product sponsor pages will pop up unless you purchase a suite key (\$19.95). Purchasing the key not only gets rid of the annoying ads, it also entitles you to email support by their software engineers with a 12-hour response time. The suite also offers group pricing on keys of 25 or more users. The software is configured to work on Vista, Win 95, XP and others.

The good news is that the software is free



The Pdf995 Suite offers the following features, all at no cost:

Automatic insertion of embedded links	Option to attach PDFs to email after creation
Hierarchical Bookmarks	Automatic text summarization of PDF documents
Support for Digital Signatures	Easy integration with document management and Workflow systems
Support for Triple DES encryption	n-Up printing
Append Delete and Reorder PDF Pages	Automatic page numbering
Batch Print from Microsoft Office	Simple Programmers Interface
Asian and Cyrillic fonts	Option to automatically display PDFs after creation
Integration with Microsoft Word toolbar	Custom resizing of PDF output
PDF Stationery	Configurable Font embedding
Combining multiple PDF's into a single PDF	Support for Citrix/Terminal Server
Burst/Split PDFs	Support for Windows 2003 Server
Sticky Note Annotations	Easy PS to PDF processing
Three auto-name options to bypass Save As dialog	Specify PDF document properties
Imposition of Draft/Confidential stamps	Control PDF opening mode
Support for large format architectural printing	RGB and CMYK colorspaces
Convert PDF to JPEG, TIFF, BMP, PCX formats	Page Rotation
Convert PDF to HTML and Word DOC conversion	Can be configured to add functionality to Acrobat Distiller
Convert PDF to text	Free: Creates PDFs without annoying watermarks
Automatic Table of Contents generation	Free: Fully functional, not a trial and does not expire
Support for Fast User Switching and multiple user sessions	Over 25 million satisfied customers
Standard PDF Encryption (restricted printing, modifying, copying text and images)	Millions of Enterprise users worldwide
Support for Optimized PDF and Compressed PDF	
Support for custom page sizes	
Support for shared network printing	
Dynamic Page and 'Bates' stamping	

PDFEdit995 is a document creation software. Combined with PDF995, it offers the following features:

1. Create links.
2. Bookmark pages.
3. Automatically attach a PDF to an email message for sending. (This requires that a default MAPI compliant email client such as Microsoft Outlook is specified.)
4. Combine multiple (2 or more) documents into a single PDF document. This can be used to create PDF documents from multiple applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel and even other PDF documents.
5. Web View. Optimize PDF documents if you plan to post them on web servers that support bit streaming. This may increase PDF file size. [Compress Existing PDF](#) - This tool will apply compression to reduce file size of a PDF. The new PDF may not be viewable in older PDF viewers.
6. Rotate page orientation by 90 degrees, resulting in a "landscape" orientation. This is particularly useful when printing PowerPoint presentations and Excel charts.
7. Create stationery: create letterhead, an embossing, or backgrounds for PDF documents.
8. Include pdf995 and pdfEdit buttons in the Microsoft Word toolbar. Facilitates automatic transfer of links and Table of Contents to PDF.
9. Autaname provides 3 options-**a.** Name and specify location of the PDF document using the "Save As" dialog (default).**b.** Automatically name the document based on the originating document and save it in the pdf995\output folder.**c.** Save all PDF documents to the same filename. When this is selected the user is prompted to specify a PDF filename. This can be helpful when pdf995 is incorporated into automated workflow systems.
10. Embed fonts.
11. Stamp. This feature places a stamp on every page of the last document printed with pdf995. The stamp may not be visible on documents that are rotated, contain backgrounds or have non-standard formats. Font, outline mode, text size, orientation, and text location may be specified. Windows 2000 and later support foreground stamping and auto-stamping of all PDF files created with Pdf995. This feature may be used with OmniFormat and pdfEdit995 Batch mode.
12. And, much, much more...

Comparing these features with Adobe Acrobat, There are a few noticeable differences. Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro offers online collaboration features. Gain the input you need through interactive document reviews that enable participants to see and build on other's comments. You can build dynamic forms, distribute and track them as well as the responses and easily export data for analysis and reporting (such as to an excel format).

Create and reliably share PDF documents: Easily convert any document that prints to PDF to preserve formatting and ensure document integrity.

Easily convert files to PDF: Convert documents to PDF with one-button ease from Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Internet Explorer, Project, Visio, Access, and Publisher, as well as Autodesk® AutoCAD® and Lotus Notes*.

Scan to PDF with OCR: Scan paper documents to PDF and automatically recognize text with optical character recognition (OCR) technology to create compact, searchable PDF documents.

Convert e-mail to PDF: Archive e-mail or e-mail folders from Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes as PDF files to facilitate easy search and retrieval*.

Capture web pages as PDF Enhanced: Convert complete web pages, or just the portions you want*, including or excluding rich and interactive media. PDF versions of web pages are easy to print, archive, mark up, and share.

Insert video in PDF files: Insert FLV or H.264 video in PDF files for direct playback in Acrobat and Adobe Reader.

Work with Acrobat.com: Use Acrobat.com services with Acrobat to store and share large documents, collect form data, and review documents with virtually anyone, anywhere.

Still, if you are looking for the basics, Pdf995 Suite may just work for you. Check it out at www.pdf995.com.

...paying out bonuses encourages employees to adopt the right attitudes and motivations toward the work environment.



Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan (continued from page 1)

and creative compensation plans will need to be in place to ensure that the firm is getting the biggest bang for the buck.

There is a school of thought that paying out bonuses for work already expected of the employee is self-defeating. The thought here is that employees should produce high quality work in a timely manner based solely on what they are paid in wages. That to pay bonuses misses the point of adequate compensation. It might be stated, under this line of thinking, that 'I (the employer) will pay you for bad work, but if you work a little harder than that, I will pay you more'.

There is another school of thought that suggests paying out bonuses encourages employees to adopt the right attitudes and motivations toward the work environment. And, that if such bonuses are available and an employee still fails to measure up, then it becomes obvious to the employer and a rehiring situation emerges.

There are, obviously, a number of ways to bonus employees, but one method is chosen more often than not. This method is called a productivity bonus. It can be in the form of individual accomplishment, team effort or both. But, this is a bonus, generally paid on a quarterly basis, that may be tied to firm profitability, firm acquisition of new business, project completion-based or goal attainment. As it is a variable amount, employees quickly understand the value of hard work, extra effort and timely completion of assigned tasks.

Let's take a look at a specific example:

In this example, we have a firm earning around \$2 million in gross revenue. For ease of calculation, we are using annual figures. However, these bonus plans are generally calculated on a quarterly basis. There are four employees (paraplanners) earning around \$18/hour, based on a 2000 hour work year. If the firm used a bonus set aside of 4% (some would call this high), we see the following figures emerge:

Firm Gross Revenue	Bonus Set-aside	Annual Amount
\$ 2,000,000.00	4%	\$ 80,000.00
Team Portion	2%	\$ 40,000.00
Individual Portion	2%	\$ 40,000.00
Individual Portion Allotment	Percent	Amount
Employee 1	20%	\$ 8,000.00
Employee 2	0%	\$ -
Employee 3	25%	\$ 10,000.00
Employee 4	10%	\$ 4,000.00
Total	55%	\$ 22,000.00
Unused Portion	45%	\$ 18,000.00
Total	100%	\$ 40,000.00



...the intent is to motivate employees to do their best work and to compensate them well for that good work

The figures show that not all of the bonus set-aside was actually paid. This is because of varying levels of accomplishment by the four employees. The unused portion could be recaptured as profit by the firm, or it could be reallocated for future bonus payments. As this shows, the bonus program produced bonus payments for three of the four employees and the fourth employee, presumably one that did not achieve individual goals, was paid nothing. If we take this out to a fuller look at overall compensation, including team bonuses, let us assume that the team did reach its goals, despite varying levels of individual achievement. The following might result:

Annual Comp	Employee 1	Employee 2	Employee 3	Employee 4
<i>Wages (\$18/hr)</i>	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 36,000.00
<i>401k contrib</i>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
<i>Health Ins</i>	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 2,700.00
<i>Indiv Bonus</i>	\$ 8,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
<i>Team Bonus</i>	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Total Gross Comp	\$57,700.00	\$49,700.00	\$59,700.00	\$53,700.00

In this example, we can begin to see the differences in compensation between the highly efficient staff member and the others. This sort of compensation difference is not uncommon and can lead the employer to identify additional training opportunities or to change the employment status of an underperforming employee.

This may sound unnecessarily harsh, but the intent is to motivate employees to do their best work and to compensate them well for that good work. The fact remains that (in this example) there is a \$10,000 difference in overall compensation paid to the highest paid employee versus the lowest paid one, even though they receive identical hourly wages. This speaks volumes to the employee on the value of good work. And, if properly encouraged, those employees who raise their game will get compensated for their effort. Most important of all, the firm benefits from a more efficient and productive workplace, which can and probably will lead to greater profits.

To build such a plan we would need to begin by identifying the various elements of the plan.

Base Salary... The annualized regular cash compensation for an employee, excluding bonus awards, company contributions to employee benefit plans, and other compensation not designated as salary.

Company Financial Factor... An adjustment (percentage) applied to the bonus target to reflect the company's actual financial performance compared with an annual Plan Goal.

(continued on Page 6).

One of the key factors in leveraging employee productivity can be found in motivational incentives.

Objectives should be set to improve performance and operational efficiency

Employee Compensation: Setting Up An Efficient Plan (continued from page 5)

As an example, a company might assign minimum and maximum factors. A minimum of .50 might be assigned to an 80% attainment of the company's plan goal, whereas if the plan goal is exceeded by 120%, the maximum factor might be 1.20. In this way, the strategic plans of the company can be directly tied to an overall set-aside of profits for bonus purposes.

Individual Factor... An adjustment (percentage) applied to the bonus target to reflect the employee's individual performance compared with a set of defined performance expectations. These performance expectations are determined in advance by the employee's manager **and must include specific goals related to, and in support of, the Company's quality objectives.** The Individual Factor could equal 1.0 when the employee's overall performance and accomplishment of the defined objectives **including quality objectives** are evaluated at the level of "Fully Satisfactory". The Individual Factor of 0.0 should be used for the employee whose performance is below "Minimum Acceptable" on the performance evaluation.

Objectives should be set to improve performance and operational efficiency, support strategic/functional business/development plans, address client needs and achieve the Company's quality commitments. Objectives should have the following attributes: 1) be measurable; 2) clearly/specifically defined; 3) controllable by the individual; 4) realistic with adequate performance stretch; And 5) possess an apparent level of challenge/risk. Where appropriate, objectives should be weighted to reflect importance and/or degree of difficulty.

Team Factor... An adjustment (percentage) applied to the bonus target to reflect management's rating of the employee's contribution as a team member within his/her department and across departmental lines. Project Teams will conduct a peer review of team members to determine team factors. The Team Factor can range from .8 to 1.2 and will be a factor in award determination.

Using this in a calculation, it might look like the following:

Base Salary	x	Bonus Financial Target %	x	Individual Factor(FF)	x	Team Factor	x	Team Factor	=	Bonus
\$28,000	x	4%	x	0.90	x	1.25	x	1.20	=	\$1,512.00

Example: A participant earning a base salary of \$28,000 per year, bonus target of 4% of base, FF of 90% of goal, individual performance of Commendable, team factor of 1.2.

Ultimately, this sort of program is designed to make the bonus system objective, measurable and relatively easy to understand and implement.

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dead
batteries
again...

Tools for The Remote Advisor: Targus Bluetooth® Laser Mouse

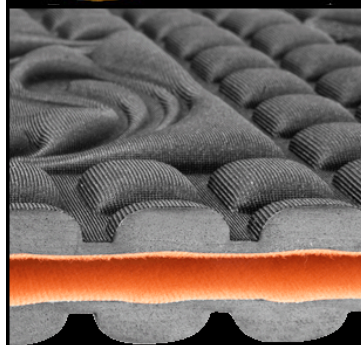
The Targus Rechargeable Bluetooth® Laser Notebook Mouse is designed to work with Bluetooth enabled PC and Mac computers and no receiver is required. With advanced Bluetooth technology, this mouse works up to 33 ft away which makes it an effective clicker for PowerPoint presentations. The high performance laser sensor has the ability to switch from 800 to 1,600 dpi on-the-fly for heightened sensitivity during gaming or other activities. Never worry about dead batteries again – this mouse charges while in use using the supplied USB charging cable. A perfect option for travelers, the Bluetooth Laser Mouse is lightweight and includes a carrying pouch for added convenience. The mouse retails for \$69.99. For details, visit www.targus.com.



Tools for The Remote Advisor: Everki Laptop Protection



Are you looking for ultimate protection and toughness in a light and thin laptop case? Everki may just have what you are looking for. They use a proprietary cushioning system that is both durable and thin. One of the problems with current laptop cases are that they are frequently bulky and hard to wrestle around. Everki notebook sleeve (called 'The Brace') is the ultimate in protection with a zippered fast load opening, cushioned foam side walls, micro-fiber lining and stylish accents. 'The Brace' retails for \$29.99 and fits 13.3" laptops. Everki offers a wide selection of other cases in a variety of sizes and styles to suit your needs and/or tastes. Everki cases are offered for sale at a store near you. Look for them at CompUSA, Altex, Fry's Electronics (www.frys.com), eBags (www.ebags.com), Provantage (www.provantage.com), TigerDirect



(www.tigerdirect.com) and many others. For a closer look at the entire line of cases, visit www.everki.com.



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