

## HR FAQ

**Q: When will my employees receive their W-2?**

A: All W-2s will be mailed by January 31, 2006 to employees' home address. During December, employees may also go to [www.nextep.com](http://www.nextep.com) to sign up to receive their W-2 by email. Employees need to check their pay stubs to make sure we have the correct name, social security number, and address, and report changes to Nextep by December 31, 2005.

**Q: When can my employees enroll for the 2006 Eflex cafeteria plan?**

A: Open enrollment for Eflex is during December. This is a great benefit, allowing employees and business owners to take tax-free money out of their checks to pay for medical and child care expenses. For questions or to implement the cafeteria plan in your company, contact Nextep's HR department at 888-811-5150.

## REMINDERS

Open enrollment for Nextep's supplemental benefits has been pushed back to December. Employees can enroll during this month for a January 1, 2006 start date.

Nextep will close for the holidays at 2:00 on Wednesday, December 23 and reopen on December 27. Please be sure to submit payroll hours earlier. Call 888-811-5150 or email [info@nextep.com](mailto:info@nextep.com) to discuss this with your payroll manager.

# GET THE MOST OUT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Great customer service is essential in running a successful company. To provide stellar service, keep these tips in mind:

- **Develop a written customer service plan.** Keep it simple and be sure to include ways that employee sure empowered to help dissatisfied customers, such as giving discounts.
- **Take each complaint seriously,** even if it seems trivial. If it was important enough to the customer to complain, then it is important enough for your attention.
- **Walk a mile in their shoes.** Consider how the customer feels about the situation.
- **Admit fault when needed.** Be open and honest with the customer and make amends right away.
- **Appreciate your customer.** They are the reason you are in business.

Nextep wants to hear from you. What customer service tactics have you used to make your company successful? Please submit your responses to [hr1@nextep.com](mailto:hr1@nextep.com) by December 15, 2005. The winning response will be published in the next HR Newsletter and will win a \$50 gift certificate.

## THE LATE DEBATE

Dealing with chronically late employees costs your company in productivity and morale. In fact, tardiness costs US Businesses more than \$3 billion

each year in lost productivity. An employee who is late 10 minutes each day has, by the end of the year, taken the equivalent of a week's paid vacation, so it is important to pay attention to those employees.

Here are some tips to help tame tardiness:

- **Establish a corporate culture that encourages punctuality.**
- **Work with HR to create a written punctuality policy with clearly defined penalties.**
- **Discourage late-starting meetings.**
- **Remind employees of each meeting and close door as soon as meeting starts. Don't backtrack to fill late employees in on what they missed.**
- **Establish a system of rewards for employees with perfect attendance and punctuality.** Rewards not only encourage employees, but also serve as a reminder that punctuality is an important part of company culture.
- **Deal with lateness on an individual level.**
- **Set clear, measurable goals for the future and clarify the consequences for being late. Always document your conversations and incidents.**

Many times, reasons for lateness are increasing work and family responsibilities, decreasing employee morale, and difficulty with time management. Work with your employee to find a solution that works for you both.

*Source: HR Magazine Nov 2005, "Running Late" by Diana DeLonzor*

### HOLIDAY GIFTS SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS GIVE TO CLIENTS AND EMPLOYEES

CARDS OR CALENDARS	49%	BRANDED OR MONOGRAMMED ITEMS	23%	FLOWERS/PLANTS	10%	BAKED GOODS/CANDY OR NUTS	2%
RETAIL/RESTAURANT GIFT CERTIFICATES	26%	FRUIT OR FOOD BASKET	18%	WINE/LIQUOR	10%		
		CHARITABLE DONATION	18%	CLOTHING/PERSONAL	2%		

SOURCE: OPEN FROM AMERICAN EXPRESS SURVEY, 2005

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