

HR Connection

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How SMART are your objectives?

Many companies set objectives, whether for measuring corporate performance, team performance or individual performance. However, tracking these objectives and determining whether they are met can be daunting, and often results are open to interpretation.

generous a salary increase will be, or in deciding whether a bonus has been truly merited. Even worse, often there is no follow-up or accountability and they are simply never attained or taken seriously.

Unclear objectives can lead to disagreements, especially if they are tied into the company's compensation practices; whether by determining how

The best way to ensure that goals set will be goals reached is to ensure that they are "SMART":

	S pecific	What do I want to accomplish? What is the skill / behaviour needing improvement? What is the project and its scope?
	M easurable	How will I know when this objective is accomplished? Is it possible to quantify it? If so, is the information available for me to do so?
	A ction-oriented	What action(s) must be taken to reach this objective? In what order should they be done?
	R ealistic	Can this objective be accomplished? Is it feasible? What resource(s) do I need?
	T ime	When will my objective be met? Is there a deadline? What is the timeframe of the various steps required to meet the ultimate deadline?

Here are some additional tips to ensure that objectives are met:

- Get the employee involved in defining his/her own objectives.
- Don't set too many goals, or reaching them all may become overwhelming. Go for quality and not quantity.
- Ensure that processes are in place to follow-up on objectives – not only once the deadline has passed, but throughout the various stages and timelines that have been determined.
- Ensure that proper recognition is given to employees who meet their objectives, whether monetary or non-monetary. For objectives set for a longer timeframe, recognize the employee as the various stages are successfully completed.
- If you see an employee struggling, don't hesitate to reach out to them, help them focus and provide the support or coaching they may require.

Voluntary Retirement Saving Plans (VRSP): What employers should know

As part of Quebec's 2012 Provincial Budget, the government announced new measures to help employee's better save and plan for retirement. One of these measures was the introduction of Voluntary Retirement Saving Plans (VRSPs), a low-cost pension plan, which has officially been introduced as the Voluntary Retirement Savings Plans Act in December 2013. Here are some facts companies should know:

- The implementation of a VRSP is mandatory for companies with 5 employees or more, who are aged 18 and over with one year of uninterrupted service. Companies with less than 5 employees can subscribe on a voluntary basis.
- Companies who already have in place other group retirement savings plans such as a Group RRSP or pension plan are exempt and do not have to implement a VRSP.
- The new rule is in effect as of July 1, 2014, although the government has made the compliance period more flexible by proposing an

application sequence based on the number of employees in the company:

- Companies with 20 or more affected employees: obligation by December 31, 2016.
- Companies with 10 to 19 affected employees: obligation by December 31, 2017.
- Companies with 5 to 9 affected employees: date to be determined by the government, but the obligation will not be prior to January 1, 2018.
- No employer contribution is required. The employer is simply obliged to implement the plan, inform the employees and administer it in conjunction with their plan provider. If the employer does decide to contribute, this contribution will generally be locked-in.

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Ask an HR Expert



An employee has been missing work under the guise of a doctor's appointment several times in the past two weeks and I suspect she is going for job interviews. It may just be a bit of paranoia, however this is a key employee and we do not want to lose her. What would be a good course of action?"



In the end, it might just be paranoia, but it sounds like your gut is telling you that something is off. Do you have any specific reason to believe that the employee may be unhappy? For example, has there been a change to her job? Has she requested something that was denied or never followed-up on? Has she simply looked unhappy or disgruntled? If so, here are a few openings to start a conversation.

"You recently mentioned that you were frustrated by xyz. I want you to know that we're addressing it by taking the following actions."

Or, "We want you to know that we're very happy with your work (give an example of something specific that she's done well) and that you are a

valuable resource to our company. There have been a lot of changes in the company recently and we were wondering how things were going on your end. Are you happy with your job? Is there anything we can do to ensure that we keep you with us going forward?"

Or, "You've seemed distracted lately. We wanted to know if there is anything on your mind that you would like to discuss".

Or, if the absences have been excessive: "I've noticed you've been absent lately more than usual. Often it's a sign that something is not going well at work so I just wanted to check in with you and see if everything is OK." I would steer away from accusing her of leaving work to go to job interviews;

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■ Voluntary Retirement Saving Plans (VRSP): What employers should know (continued)

- At implementation, all employees must be automatically enrolled; however they can opt out within 60 days.
- Employees can determine their own contribution rate as well as their own investment options. Should they fail to determine their contribution rate within the first 60 days of being enrolled the default rate is 2% of their earnings, which will increase over time. Employees can change the contribution rate or withdraw at any time.
- VRSPs will be administered by licensed insurers, trust companies and investment fund managers.

■ Ask an HR Expert (continued)

if she has indeed been lying she will just be uncomfortable and probably won't admit it. If she really has been going to the doctor, it may just make her feel like her every move is being watched and judged.

Remember that despite your best efforts she may tell you everything's fine when it's not. Just remind her that you are available should ever there be anything she would like to discuss. She may have been caught off guard but could come back to you a few days later. Unfortunately, once

someone has decided to actively job hunt it is often difficult to get them to change their minds, especially if they receive an interesting job offer. That said, by opening the door she may give the company another chance, or the opportunity to counter-offer if money is one of the factors for her departure.

Lastly, you have to consider the possibility that she really is sick, which she may tell you during your meeting, or which she may decide to keep private.

In every HR Connection, one of our HR experts will answer a frequently asked question from our readers. If you have a question, please don't hesitate to email hr@flmontreal.com, and we may select it for our next issue!

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Please note that the information provided in this bulletin consists of general guidelines and that there are many exceptions and special cases that could apply.



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