

MEDIA CONTACT:
Sal Vittolino
(610) 649-9292 X 102
sal@buchananpr.com

Failure To Deal With Poor Performers May Decrease 'Engagement' of Other Employees, Says Survey

PURCHASE, NY – June 21, 2006 – A company's failure to deal effectively with its few workers who are consistently poor performers may decrease the extent to which other employees are engaged in their jobs and their companies, according to a survey by **Sirota Survey Intelligence** and the authors of "*The Enthusiastic Employee*."

Only 2 out of 5 employees (slightly more so for management) who feel their companies are doing much too little to correct poor employee performance are favorably engaged at work, according to the survey of 34,330 employees. This compares with a favorable engagement level of 73% among those who feel their company is taking the necessary steps to correct poor employee performance.

Fully 33% of management and 43% of non-management employees think their companies are *not* doing enough to deal with poor performers, say the authors of "*The Enthusiastic Employee*". Results are pervasive across union and non-union, as well as public and private sector, organizations.

"A very small percentage of employees at a typical workplace – usually around only 5 percent – are 'allergic to work,' and do as little work as they possibly can," said **David Sirota**, lead author of *The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit By Giving Workers What They Want* (Wharton School Publishing, 2005).

"The main reason they get away with this is the lack of management's will and persistence in stepping up to the problem. Management needs either to help employees understand they must pull their own weight and coach them to improve, or let them go. This is an unpleasant task that many managers choose to avoid," said Sirota.

A significant proportion of both management and non-management employees feel there is too little emphasis on dealing with poor performance, with a higher proportion among non-managers feeling this way. "One possible reason for this difference between the views of managers and non-managers is that some managers are actually addressing the problem, but these efforts would not – and should not – be visible to other non-managers," said **Douglas Klein, President of Sirota Survey Intelligence**.

"Many non-managers feel that failure to effectively deal with poor performers is unfair to the great majority of employees who consistently work hard at their jobs," continued Klein. "This finding belies a commonly held myth that many in non-management want to take it easy."

How Adequately Does Your Company Handle Poor Performance?

Category	Management	Non-Management
Much too much attention	4%	4%
Too much attention	6%	7%
Right amount of attention	58%	47%
Too little attention	24%	27%
Much too little attention	9%	16%

Percentage Favorably Engaged In Their Jobs According to Views on Handling of Poor Performance

Category	Management	Non-Management
Much too much/too much attention	72%	58%
Right amount of attention	79%	73%
Too little attention	67%	57%
Much too little attention	46%	41%

“Managers and non-managers alike who feel there is much too little attention paid to correcting poor performance by far exhibit the lowest levels of employee engagement in their organizations, and are at risk of becoming disengaged from their jobs,” said Klein.

Added Sirota: “Companies should distinguish between employees who don’t want to work and those who do, but whose performance is poor. The latter may require additional training and coaching. In addition, don’t assume that employees are interested only in receiving praise for what they do well, and resent hearing about areas in need of improvement.”

Comments about areas that need improvement should be specific and factual, rather than evaluative, and directed at the situation, rather than the person. “Feedback needs to be limited to those aspects of employee behavior that relate to performance. When giving performance feedback, always encourage two-way communication,” Sirota continued.

About Sirota Survey Intelligence

Founded in 1972, Sirota Survey Intelligence (www.sirota.com) specializes in attitude research. Headquartered in Purchase, NY, Sirota has conducted thousands of attitude surveys around the world that have helped organizations build strong, productive relationships with their employees, customers, communities, opinion leaders, investors, suppliers, and other publics. The major results of their surveys have been summarized in *The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit by Giving Workers What They Want* (Wharton School Publishing www.enthusiasticemployee.com).

Compiled since 1972 and continuously updated, Sirota’s multi-national, multi-industry database comprises data from millions of employees collected through the firm’s employee survey research (predominantly among the Fortune 500). It is possible that the results

from the companies in Sirota's database are more favorable than a national probability sample.