



Greater Madison Area Society for Human Resource Management Professional Award Application

If the space provided in any section is inadequate, you may continue on additional sheets of paper using the same format. DO NOT repeat information already reported on the application form. Your name should be included on all attachments.

Applicant Data				
Full Name Karen A. Bender	Telephone 608-575-1860	E-Mail kbender@merricks.com bender4@centurytel.net		
Street N4086 County Highway J	City Poynette	State WI	Zip 53955	
SHRM Involvement, Awards and Honors				
List all SHRM related activities in which you have participated at the college, local, state, and national level. Note all special awards, honors, and offices held. If you have participated in a research project, please indicate that experience as well.				
Activity	# of Years Participated	Special Awards / Honors	Office Held	
Membership in GMASHRM	15+ years	none	none	
Membership in National SHRM	15+ years	none	none	
Community Involvement, Awards and Honors				
List all community activities (outside of SHRM) in which you have participated without pay. Note all special awards, honors, and office held. If you have participated in a research project, please indicate that experience as well.				
Activity	# of Years Participated	Special Awards / Honors	Office Held	
Teach session at ITT Tech	early 2011 forward	N/A	N/A	
Taught Resumé Writing Class at Madison Area Coalition	spring 2010	N/A	N/A	
Taught Resumé Writing Class at Job Service, Baraboo	spring 2010	N/A	N/A	
United Way Day of Caring	various	N/A	N/A	
Habitat for Humanity	on-going	N/A	N/A	
Post Secondary School Data				
Post Secondary School Name Mankato State University	City / State Mankato, MN	GPA 3.8	Major Bus Admin	Expected Graduation Date N/A - graduated
List all school activities in which you have participated during your college experience.				
Activity	# of Years Participated	Special Awards / Honors	Office Held	

The Greater Madison Area SHRM and its Awards Committee reserve the right to alter or change this program.

GMA SHRM Professional Award Application

Applicant Checklist

The applicant is responsible for submitting all materials to GMA SHRM on time. Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. This application becomes complete and valid only when GMA SHRM receives all of the following materials:

- Scholarship Application
- Purpose Statement
- Resume

Please submit all materials to:

Greater Madison Area SHRM, Inc.
ATTN: Professional Awards Committee
2830 Agriculture Dr.
Madison, WI 53718

Certification and Acknowledgement

GMA SHRM has the sole responsibility for selecting recipients based on criteria as set forth in the scholarship guidelines. This application becomes the property of GMA SHRM. GMA SHRM recommends you keep a copy in your files.

I acknowledge the decisions of GMA SHRM are final. I certify that I meet the basic eligibility requirements of the program as described in the brochure and the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. If requested, I agree to provide proof of information I have given on this form. Falsification of information may result in forfeiture of any scholarship granted and/or repayment for any related reimbursements.

Karen A Bender

4-14-11

Signature

Date

GMASHRM Professional Award Application
Purpose Statement
Karen Bender

When I started in the HR field over 20 years ago, it was not uncommon for companies to move people into HR because “we just needed someone to do it”. There was no training and there were very few regulations. However, since that time, companies have come to realize the value that an HR Professional can bring to an organization, how they contribute to the culture and the bottom line. Technological advances, the regulatory climate, best practices and duties of people who have chosen this profession have changed greatly and companies recognize there are several skill sets needed to be effective in the HR role.

The majority of the work that I am currently performing is completely different from when I began. Staying current with all the moving pieces can be daunting! Classes, webinars, and seminars are the best way to begin to stay current, which I have tried to do.

Initiative to increase my knowledge and keep my skills up-to-date has been demonstrated in several ways. Here are just a few examples:


- Attended all corporate training provided by former employer
- Obtained my SPHR and continue to fulfill re-certification requirements
- Completed the requirements to receive CEBS certification
- Became certified to teach “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”
- Became certified to administer Predictive Index
- Assisted other locations when they had issues (ie: interviewing, preparation of AAP’s, training, safety inspections, etc.)

Further, I continue to work on improving my training skills by instructing at the UW-SBDC four times per year to entrepreneurs on the basics of hiring their first employees. A number of times, I have volunteered to help with resumé writing and interviewing skills at different locations and received very positive feedback.

I have taken full advantage of local GMASHRM and other seminars. I have attended several National SHRM conferences. My former employers were very supportive of this and have paid the expenses associated with this. However, in my current position, my employer is not in a position to financially support further training or education. For the past several months, I have paid several professional expenses out of my own pocket. While the sessions were valuable and worthwhile, this truly limits my options.

The Professional Award would allow me to attend conference(s) and/or take classes that would build on the skills I already possess and help me to stay current with the changing landscape of HR. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Respectfully Submitted,


Karen Bender

Karen Bender, SPHR, CEBS

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Poynette, WI 53955

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SUMMARY

Human Resources Professional with extensive managerial experience in union and non-union environments in health insurance and food manufacturing. Proven ability to develop and implement strategies, programs and policies to support business objectives. Especially skilled at building effective working relationships with all levels of employees. Successfully managed all aspects of HR. Key skills include:

- Employee Relations
- Regulatory Compliance
- Coaching/Counseling
- Performance Management
- Policy & Procedure Development
- Compensation/Benefits Administration
- Training & Development Programs
- Recruiting
- Safety & Environmental Programs

EXPERIENCE

MERRICK'S INC, Middleton, WI

2010 – to present

Manufacturer of baby animal nutrition products; approximately 135 employees at 4 locations in 3 states.
Contract position evaluating future HR needs while executing all HR responsibilities, auditing benefits, developing policies and procedures, and streamlining processes. Negotiated 15% decrease to 2011 health insurance rates.

BAKER TILLY (formerly Virchow Krause), Madison, WI

2010

Large accounting and professional services firm with 1400 employees.
LTE position as Compensation and Benefits Analyst focusing on benefits audits, developing Affirmative Action Programs for various locations, and special projects as directed.

UNITY HEALTH INSURANCE, Sauk City, WI

2006 – 2009

Health Insurance provider/call center for over 90,000 members in southern Wisconsin.

Responsible for Human Resource activities in small local health insurance company, consisting of 175 non-unionized employees. Managed Facilities Department of two.

- Assisted with creating and/or reviewed newly created job descriptions for accuracy and relevance. Evaluated over 40 jobs to determine proper, competitive salary range. Wrote detailed Compensation Philosophy for review by member of Board of Directors and received positive feedback.
- Established policies to foster consistent and fair treatment of employees. Provided extensive guidance, coaching and support to managers and supervisors in all areas of performance issues.
- Developed comprehensive New Hire Orientation Manual including information on Benefits, HR, Payroll, Security, Wellness, and IT. Reduced questions/confusion of new hires and accelerated integration in order to get New Hires productive more quickly.
- Modified and delivered New Supervisor/Manager Orientation program to increase understanding of policies and procedures such as attendance, discipline, recruiting, job descriptions, etc.
- Created and presented new training programs tailored to respond to business needs:
 - Holding Employees Accountable: Writing SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) Goals – delivered to employees, supervisors and managers to increase understanding of expectations and improve quality of performance goals.
 - Performance Management Process – reviewed timelines, forms, merit process and expectations with new supervisors/managers.
 - How to Write a Self-Evaluation – aided employees in new self-evaluation process.
 - Selecting for Success: Behavior Based Interviewing – increased understanding of process in order to select best candidates and ensured legal, consistent and smooth flowing interview process.
 - Writing Effective Performance Evaluations – to aid supervisors/managers in completing fair and accurate reviews.

- Worked with legal counsel on numerous employee relations and compliance issues
- Member of Leadership Team
- Published bi-monthly employee newsletter and wrote almost daily blogs to increase communication; specifically in areas of wellness, benefit or policy changes, employee interest items, activities, and general business announcements.
- Served as Project Manager for 401(k) conversion project and Safety Manual Project
- Chairperson of Wellness Committee and activities. Organized and documented activities that allowed us to receive two national and one state award for programs.

NESTLE (formerly Del Monte, Nabisco)**2006 and prior***World's largest food manufacturing company.***Nestlé Purina, Jefferson, WI**

Manage Human Resources responsibilities in a 175 employee unionized pet food manufacturing facility.

- Handled significant number of labor issues – grievances, terminations, and arbitration preparation.
- Created and implemented Realistic Job Preview to reduce turn-over of new hires.
- Working with Production Supervisors, created and implemented Hourly Lead Review Program

Nestlé Food Company, Stoughton, WI

Manage Human Resources responsibilities in a 110 employee (down from 205) unionized food manufacturing facility.

- Using consensus building, analysis and dispute resolution skills, handled labor issues to avoid grievances when feasible. Handled well over 300 grievances of varying nature. When resolution was not in the company's best interest, assisted management staff and outside counsel with arbitration. Established good rapport with Union Committee.
- Conducted training in many different areas to meet business needs – safety, benefits, orientation, leadership, development, and regulatory issues. Created training materials as needed.
- Significantly improved plant safety record as Chairperson of Committee. Reduced lost time accidents (52 to 0) and recordable injury rate (over 15 to less than 3). Programs included: enhancing Safety Committee, improving company credibility and commitment, rewards and incentives, and discipline when warranted. Extensive training developed and conducted.
- Chief Spokesperson for three union contracts. Leveraged communication and mediation skills to ratify at or below budget with no resulting labor issues. Negotiated major policies – Attendance, Substance Abuse, and health insurance changes. Member/advisor in three other negotiations.
- Volunteered to coordinate Environmental Committee and related activities to ensure compliance with new and changing laws. Used initiative and inquisitiveness to learn new rules and ensure we met our obligations. Collaborated with Engineer, distributed work load among committee, oversaw permitting process, completed DNR and EPA reports, and used organizational skills to coordinate the complex and varied arenas involved. Facility was one of three (out of 40) to achieve ISO 14001 certification.
- Acted as technical resource and leveraged skills to assist numerous other sites in a variety of areas – AAP, EEOC audits, training, safety, etc.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Mankato State College, Mankato, MN – Bachelors in Business Admin
- Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS)
- Society of Human Resources Management Senior Professional HR Certification - UW Madison

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (partial list)

- Certified in Predictive Index – process to assess work behaviors for placement, promotion, etc.
- SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)
- Coaching
- Behavior Based Interviewing
- Performance Evaluations
- Leadership Effectiveness Training
- Harassment Investigations
- Family Medical Leave Act