



## PEO Diary

### **Keeping Arizona Businesses 'In-the-Know' on the New Legal Arizona Worker's Act, While Putting CBR on the Map as an Expert on Human Resources' Topics**

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By Aaron Witsoe



When the new Legal Arizona Worker's Act was signed into law on July 2, 2007, Creative Business Resources immediately started thinking proactively.

The Legal Arizona Worker's Act imposes penalties on employers who either knowingly or intentionally hire undocumented immigrants. The first offense can result in a suspension of a business license for up to 10 days. Employers who violate the law more than once risk losing their business licenses.

With the law going into effect January 1, 2008 Arizona business owners have less than six months to educate themselves on what this new law entails as well as ensure their businesses are in compliance.

As an Arizona-based human resources outsourcing firm, we heard the cry for help and felt it was our responsibility as a local PEO to educate and update both clients and the Arizona business community at large on this new law. We saw this as an opportunity to show our expertise on the topic, provide concerned business owners with valuable and helpful information and increase awareness of what PEOs do.

The entire team at CBR immediately started brainstorming the most effective way to decipher the facts and deliver the information to clients and the public. After discussing the options, we decided that a compliance tip sheet would be an effective way of breaking down the facts.

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The next step was to determine what tips and information to include in the tip sheet. After reviewing the law carefully and listening to the concerns of clients and the business community, we were able to come up with three themes:

- *Business owners need to have a clear understanding of what differentiates knowingly from intentionally.*
- *Employers should know what penalties exist for businesses who knowingly or intentionally hire undocumented immigrants.*
- *Stay educated on programs and procedures.*

Also included with the tip sheet were simple explanations of what differentiates knowingly from intentionally, a list of the penalties, as well as the names of current programs and procedures businesses should be aware of.

Equally important to the tips themselves was the delivery of the tips to our clients and Arizona businesses. In order to make them easily accessible to both clients and the public, we decided to post the tips on the company Web site, include them in the monthly online newsletter, which reaches all CBR clients and subscribers, as well as make them a part of the educational Web site we launched to keep businesses up-to-date on the new law. The Web site, found at [www.azimmigrationcompliance.com](http://www.azimmigrationcompliance.com) helps keep visitors current on new developments with articles, resources, compliance tips and a blog.

Another way we reached the business community was to forward the tips to a handful of relevant media outlets. These megaphones for the community were able to then discuss the topic more in depth with their audiences.



Almost immediately after the tip sheet was delivered to clients, the business community and the press, we saw a significant increase in Web site traffic and phone inquiries. Arizona businesses were eager to learn more about the tips as well as CBR and its services. Business owners also wanted to know where they could get additional information, voice concerns and ask questions. It was these inquiries that led us to developing the Web site.

The bottom line is that Arizona businesses can't afford to look the other direction when it comes to this new law. It's crucial that business owners fully understand what this law entails and what the repercussions are if it's violated. The compliance tip sheet as well as the educational Web site were created for us to educate our clients and other local businesses, while keeping CBR in the forefront of the public and as a local expert on human resources' topics.

This article was written by Aaron Witsoe, president of Creative Business Resources, Phoenix, Arizona, serving businesses in Arizona and the greater Southwest.

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