

in medical clinics, and plant gardens. In 2012, employees devoted 50,000 hours to volunteering! The Mars Ambassadors is a select program in which employees spend six weeks working with Mars partners in developing areas of the world. In late 2012, seven Mars Drinks Associates traveled from all over the globe and met in Kenya. Their objective was to learn about the coffee farming process and about how Mars Drinks supports and improves the farming business through a partnership with Sustainable Management Services (SMS). During their week-long trip, that objective was met, and the experience became much more than a simple learning opportunity. As one Drinks Associate from France noted, "I realized that selling or buying coffee in Europe can have great repercussions in third world countries." Sustainability is not just a marketing operation but is a way of living and needs to be sponsored by everyone.

QUESTIONS

1. What HR practices do you believe are critical for Mars Incorporated to maintain the culture and product quality and growth it's known for?
2. Could Mars be successful without its current HR practices? Explain.
3. Do you think that Mars's culture and HR practices can also help the bottom line at companies in other industries such as health care, manufacturing, or research and development? Explain why or why not.
4. Mars is a privately held company and a family-owned business. What advantages (or disadvantages) can this provide for developing effective HR practices compared to a public company "owned" by its shareholders?

SOURCE: Based on D. Kaplan, "Inside Mars," *Fortune*, February 4, 2013, p. 82; www.mars.com, website for Mars Incorporated, accessed March 15, 2013.

HR IN SMALL BUSINESS

Managing HR at a Services Firm

Susan K. Dubin describes herself as someone who enjoys helping others and making her company a positive place to work. Those attitudes have provided a strong basis for her successful career in human resource management. In two different companies, Dubin took on responsibilities for payroll, training, and employee relations. As she built her experience, she established a strong working relationship with Danone Simpson, an insurance agent.

Dubin was impressed with what she saw as Simpson's "commitment to client services." So when Simpson prepared to open her own insurance services business, Dubin was interested in signing on. For several years now, Dubin has been HR director for Montage Insurance Solutions (formerly Danone Simpson Insurance Services), which operates from offices in Woodland Hills, California. She also answers questions from clients who call the agency's HR hotline.

Dubin sees herself as contributing to the fast growing company's success. For example, she looks for the best deals in benefits programs in order to have room in her budget for the little things that contribute to an employee-friendly workplace: monthly luncheons, raffle prizes, and break rooms. That's a priority, Dubin says, because employees who are "happy at work" are "more productive, so everybody wins." Simpson sees that balance between nurturing and practicality in Dubin. According to Simpson, Dubin is supportive but also firm in enforcing standards:

"She doesn't put up with any nonsense . . . but does it in a wonderful way."

Perhaps the Careers page of the company's website puts it best. Besides promoting the agency as an "honest and hardworking team," it says simply, "Please be advised that our organization cares about its employees."

QUESTIONS

1. Based on the description in this case, how well would you say Susan Dubin appreciates the scope of human resource management? What, if any, additional skills of an HR professional would you encourage her to develop?
2. Look up descriptions of HR jobs by searching under "human resources" in the latest edition of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (available online at www.bls.gov/OCO/). What position in the handbook best matches Dubin's job, as described in this case?
3. How would you expect Dubin's job in a small services company to be different from a similar position in a large manufacturing company?

SOURCES: Montage Insurance Solutions corporate website, <http://www.montageinsurance.com>, accessed May 26, 2015; Mark R. Madler, "Valley's Top Human Resources Professionals: Susan K. Dubin," *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*, April 13, 2009, Business & Company Resource Center, <http://galenet.galegroup.com>.