

BUSINESS

Bayer to pay \$374,000 to address race, sex bias claims

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Bayer Corp. will pay \$374,000 in back pay and higher salaries to settle claims its pharmaceutical division discriminated against women and minorities at a plant in Clayton, the U.S. Department of Labor announced Friday.

The agreement reached with the department followed a review conducted by a department agency that check companies involved in federal contracts. More than 200 minorities and women will receive benefits as part of the settlement.

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance

Programs alleges the Bayer Pharmaceutical Division failed to hire qualified minority applicants because of their race at the plant between January 1996 and September 1997.

The OFCCP compliance reviews also found that women hired at the Clayton plant received different placement opportunities as men, the Labor Department said in a release.

As part of the settlement, 154 rejected minority applicants will share \$211,000 in back pay and benefits, while 46 affected women will share \$147,000 in back pay and benefits, said Matt Losak, an office spokesman in Washington.

Bayer also has agreed to compensate 11 female workers for \$16,000 in salary adjustments.

An additional 38 future female and minority applicants will be offered jobs on a first-come basis, Losak said.

The Clayton plant operates 775 employees and is one of the world's largest facilities for processing human blood plasma. The division sells the hematology products to Veterans Affairs hospitals.

"This settlement represents the company's positive action to resolve problems in the hiring and placement procedures at its North

Carolina facility," OFCCP director Shirley Wilcher said. "The company's conciliation efforts results in timely relief for the beneficiaries of the agreement without our having to resort to litigation."

Bayer, based in West Haven, Conn., said the agreement does not constitute an admission of federal regulation violations by Bayer.

"Bayer has agreed to the following actions in order to resolve these issues and to move forward with the OFCCP in our mutual goal of providing placement opportunities," the company said in a statement Friday.

'Dry testing' excellent way to test market goods, services

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Q. Dear Regina: I am creating a new product line directed at the African-American community which will be initially marketed on the Internet. We want to do a "dry test" of the product to see if there is consumer interest before we actually go to the expense of marketing the item. What do you advise?

A: Business on the Internet is booming. Advertisers and marketers are pitching everything from computers to conch shells. "Dry testing," or the practice of placing an ad for a product to see if there is sufficient interest before actually going to the expense of manufacturing the item, is acceptable.

However, the Federal Trade Commission has issued an advisory opinion that such

ads must clearly disclose to consumers the fact that the merchandise is only planned and may not ever be shipped.

A skilled copywriter can coin the appropriate prose. I would also recommend that you develop prototypes of the item and have product photographs taken for a catalog.

You can augment your efforts by giving an e-mail address for your catalog. Be prepared to fill at least a limited quantity of orders before you advertise.

Press releases and other forms of advertising will further amplify your efforts. For the Federal Trade Commission's guides on advertising and marketing on the Internet call (202) FTC-HELP.

Q. Dear Regina:

Along with several colleagues and fellow



By Regina Lynch-Hudson

business leaders, I have spearheaded a nonprofit organization since 1995. It began as an off-shoot of an organization within our church. We provide activities which keep our teenagers off the street. But we've been unable to get major outside corporate funding or sponsorships. Any suggestions?

A: Presumably your organization helps a target market within a church of a particular denomination. In the corporate sector, most of

the contributions can be termed very broadly as business-compatible causes.

Companies generally put much thought into their benevolence to prevent them from giving a contribution to a nonprofit that is openly

antagonistic to the corporate sector. Businesses often make contributions to "safe" nonprofits that do not lean toward a particular religious persuasion. Thus, many gospel festivals and events are sponsored because they have no particular religious affiliation.

About half the 501 (C) exemptions awarded by the IRS go to religious groups. There are approximately 300,000 religious institutions, which qualify as candidates for sponsorships or what I call "corporate social investing."

However, most corporations rule out supporting these groups unless they provide non-sectarian services. There is a gamut of shelters for the homeless and for battered families and causes which do not lend favoritism to any distinct religious persuasion.

If you want widespread funding, you will need to revamp your business plan and embrace a broader audience of children than just the teen-agers within your church. *Questions? Call Regina Lynch-Hudson at (770) 717-7020.*

Study: Racial, gender equality can improve Wis. economy

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Offering employment for women and minorities in the Milwaukee area at the same rate as white males could have an annual impact of \$300 million within four years, a study says.

The report, commissioned by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, recommends a community effort to encourage schooling and job preparation for minorities.

Businesses risk paying more to fill their employee rosters if they confine themselves to a white-male labor market, it says.

The economic impact estimate by the Public Policy Forum, which conducted the study, represents the effects of wages that women and minorities would earn if hired at the same rate as white males.

The formula would have meant nearly \$200 million in 1996 for the four-county Milwaukee area, the Public Policy Forum said.

"There were plenty of job openings at the time," said Jeff Browne, the group's research director.

Last year, the area had 31,874 job openings and 29,060 unemployed people, 70 percent of them women or minorities, the report says.

Businesses should increase their effort to hire minorities in anticipation of a labor pool that becomes increasingly mixed racially, the association of commerce said.

"Whether corporations have the will to make fundamental changes, especially in the midst of profit and growth, is a question of the next century," Devon Turner, a vice

president for the association, said.

The study demonstrates the importance of a good school system, association President Tim Sheehy said.

"We have an all-hands-on-deck economy and we're not fully preparing everybody to row," Sheehy said. "The failure to educate large numbers of minority students will mean Milwaukee won't be able to take full advantage of its potential work force."

Association officials requested the survey in response to questions of whether there will be enough talent to replace skilled workers who are now approaching retirement age.

Tom Hefty, a chairman of the association's Workforce Development Institute, said the study shows government could help connect companies with women and minorities.

Rose Royce



December 3, 1998

Doors open 8:00 p.m.

The Pop Culture Comic

"Joe Tremmel"

featuring Galaxy Glen and

D.J. Strobelight

\$22.50 tickets on sale at Ticketmaster and at door.

The Hop Night Club

1650 E. Tropicana

Contact at 585-3918