

H&R Block Helps Staples Associates More Effectively Access Corporate and Government Benefit Programs

January 25, 2007 4:44 PM ET

Innovative Program is Being Piloted to Staples Associates at 19
Facilities in 8 States

KANSAS CITY, Mo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 25, 2007--H&R Block (NYSE:HRB), the world's largest tax services provider, and Staples (NYSE:SPLS), the world's largest office products company, are piloting a first-of-its-kind program that will help Staples associates working in 19 facilities in eight states receive fast, easy access to discounted tax preparation services, as well as information and application assistance on available Staples and government benefit programs for which they may be eligible.

Beginning Feb. 1, Staples associates in the pilot program will be able to register online for the service, and then visit a local participating H&R Block office in their area. In addition to helping associates prepare and file taxes at a discounted price, specially trained H&R Block tax professionals will also provide pre-screening and application assistance for a variety of corporate benefits from Staples, including 401(k), Employee Stock Purchase Plan, Health Plans, Flexible Spending Accounts, and the Staples Scholarship Program. The H&R tax professionals will also help the Staples associates determine if they qualify for select government benefits including available child-care, energy assistance, and the advanced Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

"As a great place to work, Staples is committed to providing our associates with excellent health and financial benefits," said Nancy Lazgin, director of global benefits, Staples, Inc. "We're launching this pilot program to see if it will make it easier for associates to maximize their benefits and take care of their financial future, while helping to uncover additional benefit opportunities outside the company. We're pleased to be working with H&R Block on this innovative program."

The pilot program will utilize new technology that extends the set of services available at participating H&R Block offices. Select tax professionals in each participating H&R Block office have been trained to provide pre-screening and application assistance for the specific benefits included in the program. Applications are then transmitted electronically to Staples, or sent to the appropriate local agency for processing and fulfillment.

"Many of our tax clients don't fully utilize available services because the enrollment process can be daunting," said Bernie Wilson, vice president of outreach and business development at H&R Block. "H&R Block is working to develop the capabilities to ensure our clients are able to actively claim available benefits they have earned. Staples shares that commitment for its associates and understands that supporting them is simply the right thing to do."

As part of Staples' benefits program, now all Staples associates across the country are eligible to receive discounted tax preparation services throughout the country at H&R Block offices through the H&R Block's Employer Solutions program, which provides employees of large companies a comprehensive suite of office-based, online and software tax solutions at special prices. In 2006, the Employer Solutions program reached over 9 million employees in 120 of the top U.S. companies.

About Staples

Staples, Inc. invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and today is the world's largest office products company. With 69,000 talented associates, the company is committed to making it easy to buy a wide range of office products, including supplies, technology, furniture, and business services. With 2005 sales of \$16.1 billion, Staples serves consumers and businesses ranging from home-based businesses to Fortune 500 companies in 22 countries throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia. Headquartered outside of Boston, Staples operates more than 1,800 office superstores and also serves its customers through mail order catalog, e-commerce and contract businesses. For more information and quick access to South Florida stores, visit www.staples.com.

About H&R Block

H&R Block seeks to serve as its clients' tax and financial partner. Over the last several years the Company has developed and introduced numerous innovations to help working families choose healthier financial alternatives, get more of the benefits to which they are entitled and help create the ability for individuals and their families to become more financially secure and independent. H&R Block is the world's largest tax services provider. Having prepared more than 400 million tax returns since 1955, the company pioneered e-filing and consistently helps approximately 25 percent of those families who claim the Earned Income Tax Credit each year. In 2005, that represented over \$10 billion, an average of about \$1,800 per family. H&R Block Digital Tax Solutions develops and publishes consumer financial and personal productivity software and online programs for the leader in tax preparation and services. For more information, visit www.hrblock.com.

CONTACT: H&R Block

Denise Sposato, 816-854-4547

dsposato@hrblock.com

SOURCE: H&R Block