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## HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Here we are in a month named after the Roman god Janus, an appropriate personification of the start of the New Year. This particular Roman god had two faces so that he could look ahead toward the future and back at the past at the same time. As we say “good-bye” to an old year and look forward to a new one, we all try to be a little like Janus. Here is wishing each of you a successful New Year – taking stock of past accomplishments and looking forward to what the future can hold for you and your organization!!

## NEW LAWS FOR THE NEW YEAR

January 1st is a common start date for new laws, and 2015 is no different. Here’s a sample of a few we think you will want to know about. As a reminder: PLEASE check your state-specific resources for other laws that your organization must follow, especially if the business operates in multiple states.

**New Federal OSHA Reporting Requirements.** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued new record keeping and reporting requirements for work-related injuries, which take effect on January 1, 2015. The new rule will require all employers to notify OSHA within eight hours of the death of an employee when the death is a result of a workplace incident, and to report any work-related hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye within 24 hours. In the past, OSHA only required an employer to report work-related deaths and hospitalizations of three or more employees. Single hospitalizations, amputations, or loss of an eye did not need to be reported. PLEASE NOTE: This is 8 hours and 24 hours from when you learn about fatalities or injuries, not from when the injury occurred. *Employers located in states that operate their own safety and health programs should check with their state plan for the implementation date of the new requirements.*

**Affordable Care Act Implementation. Employer mandate:** After a one-year delay in implementation, the ACA “Pay-or-play” requirements go into effect on January 1 for employers with 100 or more full-time employees (average 30 hours per week). Employers who do not offer health insurance that meets the minimum requirements may be subject to an assessment (read more from the [Small Business Administration](#) and the [Internal Revenue Service](#)). According to the SBA, “Employers with at least 50 but fewer than 100 full-time or full-time equivalent employees will generally have an additional year, until 2016, before these rules apply.”

**Value-based payments for doctors:** The Affordable Care Act requires that Medicare include cost and quality data in calculating payments for physicians. This will start in 2015 with a “[Value-based Payment Modifier](#)” for physicians in group practices of 100 or more (with practices of 10 or more following in 2016 and all Medicare physicians in 2017).

**NOT Taking Effect: Minimum Wage for home health workers.** New regulations requiring minimum wage and overtime for most home health workers were struck down by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ten days before they were to take effect. According to Bloomberg BNA, “The Labor Department originally proposed the rule in December 2011, a move that generated more than 26,000 public comments from industry groups, labor organizations, and other stakeholders.”

### State-Specific Legislation:

In **California**, 930 new laws will go into effect in 2015, many starting on January 1st. The *San Francisco Chronicle* highlights:

- A new provision allowing driver licenses for undocumented immigrants
- “Revenge porn” protections extended to “selfies”
- “Kill switch” requirements for cell phones sold in California after July 1
- Tougher penalties for sexual assault and longer statutes of limitation on reporting of childhood abuse
- Paid sick leave for retail, fast food, and other service-industry employees

In **Illinois**, [over 200 new laws](#) will take effect in 2015, including “Ban the Box” prohibiting questions about criminal history on an initial job application. Similar restrictions are in place in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Philadelphia, San Francisco, **Seattle**, Baltimore, Newark, and Buffalo.

From the [Albany Business Journal](#), new laws in New York include:

- Tax credits for hiring veterans or persons with developmental disabilities

**Privacy Laws.** Delaware and California have enacted new privacy laws that may have far reaching effects. According to the [National Law Review](#), these include:

- Enhanced security and breach notification requirements
- Prohibition on the sale of social security numbers
- Restrictions on marketing certain products to minors, including alcoholic beverages, tobacco, tanning beds, firearms, tattoos, obscene material, and lottery tickets
- A new minor “Eraser Law” allowing minors to request deletion of publicly posted content
- Updates to the California Invasion of Privacy law
- New Delaware requirements for destruction of personally identifiable data when records are no longer retained

## NEW YEAR CHECKLIST

Goal Setting, Planning, and Prevention are keys to effective human resource management. Here are some reminders to help your employment process run smoothly this next year:

- Assign one key HR policy per month for review and update - this makes the task of updating policies less burdensome. This works for Job Descriptions too. Divide the total number of JD's by 12 and tackle 1/12 of them per month.
- Verify and update employee emergency contact information.
- Review your application for employment form for relevance and compliance.
- Verify your employment posters are current and in locations where employees can see them and where candidates can see them, too.
- Are you a targeted employer or do you have more than 1 employee? Make sure you have a safety committee! And make sure that your Workers' Compensation postings are being worked on so that they can go up promptly on February 1st as required. (Post OSHA 300 Form, Feb. 1 thru Apr. 30)
- Depending on your time keeping process and attendance tracking, prepare new attendance forms/files for 2015.
- Review personnel files - move old files to storage and destroy files as appropriate under your records retention policy.
- Assess benefits offerings to ensure you're getting the most/best for dollars invested.
- If you have an EAP (Employee Assistance Plan), invite them in for a brown bag training program.
- Also, think about your Workers' Comp carrier: can they come in and do a complimentary educational program for you or conduct an Ergonomic Assessment?
- Assess pay practices to make sure you're not paying too much/too little.
- Schedule your annual harassment training for employees and supervisors, especially for those hard to recruit positions.
- If you're a federal contractor, schedule an annual Affirmative Action Program update.

Of course, you can contact HRA with questions or for assistance with any of these tasks.

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Editor: Deborah Jeffries, PHR, CPC. Advantage is published monthly and is designed to provide information on regulations, HR practices and management ideas and concerns. The intended audience is managers, supervisors, business owners, human resource and employee relations professionals. If you have questions about the content, an opinion about the information, questions about your subscription, or if you need additional Advantage binders, please give us a call at (503) 885-9815 or e-mail [djeffries@hranswers.com](mailto:djeffries@hranswers.com).

## 2015 RETIREMENT PLANNING KEY NUMBERS

*CORRECTION: Last month we had a similar article included in our text, however, the two-year span and the dollars were incorrect. Thanks to our eagle-eye readers, they caught our error! IF you are an avid reader of our publication, you know this is a regular end-of-year article and our Editor simply inserted the wrong version. Please accept her and our apologies. And as always, we thank The Commerce Company for providing us and you this valuable information.*

The Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration have announced the retirement plan benefit limits for 2015. Many of the pension plan limitations will change for 2015 because the increase in the cost-of-living index met the statutory thresholds that trigger their adjustment. However, other limitations will remain unchanged because the increase in the index did not meet those thresholds.

<b>Salary Deferral Limits</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, 457(b) plans, and SAR-SEPs</b>	Lesser of \$17,500 or 100% of compensation, plus \$5,500 “catch up” if age 50 or older	Lesser of \$18,000 or 100% of compensation, plus \$6,000 “catch up” if age 50 or older
<b>SIMPLE 401(k) plans and SIMPLE IRA plans</b>	Lesser of \$12,000 or 100% of compensation, plus \$2,500 “catch up” if age 50 or older	Lesser of \$12,500 or 100% of compensation, plus \$3,000 “catch up” if age 50 or older
<b>IRA Contribution Limits</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Traditional and Roth IRAs</b>	Lesser of \$5,500 or 100% of earned income, plus \$1,000 “catch up” if age 50 or older	Lesser of \$5,500 or 100% of earned income, plus \$1,000 “catch up” if age 50 or older

<b>Defined Contribution (qualified, 403(b), and SEP) Plan Limits</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Annual total addition limit per participant	Lesser of \$52,000 or 100% (25% for SEP) of participant's compensation	Lesser of \$53,000 or 100% (25% for SEP) of participant's compensation

<b>Retirement plan compensation limits</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Annual compensation that can be considered in calculations	\$260,000	\$265,000
<b>Compensation threshold used to determine a highly compensated employee</b>	\$115,000 earned in 2013	\$120,000 earned in 2014
<b>Compensation threshold used to determine a key employee in a top-heavy plan</b>	\$1 for more-than-5% owners \$170,000 for officers \$150,000 for more-than-1% owners	\$1 for more-than-5% owners

<b>Income phase-out* range for deductibility of Traditional IRA contributions</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>If covered by an employer plan and filing as:</b>		
Single/Head of household	\$60,000 - \$70,000	\$61,000 - \$71,000
Married filing jointly	\$96,000 - \$116,000	\$98,000 - \$118,000
Married filing separately	\$0 - \$10,000	\$0 - \$10,000
<b>If not covered by an employer plan, but filing joint return with a spouse who is covered by a plan</b>	\$181,000 - \$191,000	\$183,000 - \$193,000

<b>Income phase-out range for ability to fund a Roth IRA</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Single/Head of household</b>	\$114,000 - \$129,000	\$116,000 - \$131,000
<b>Married filing jointly</b>	\$181,000 - \$191,000	\$183,000 - \$193,000
<b>Married filing separately</b>	\$0 - \$10,000	\$0 - \$10,000

\* A phase-out is the gradual reduction of a tax credit as a taxpayer approaches the income limit to qualify for that credit. If your income is below the bottom of the phase-out range, you may qualify for the full credit. If it is above the top of the range, you may not qualify for any of the credit. Incomes within the phase-out range may qualify for a partial credit, with the percentage of credit received generally decreased as income increases.

Content prepared by The Commerce Company. Source: irs.gov. The Commerce Company provides corporate retirement and investment planning for small to mid-sized businesses throughout the Northwest. Contact us at [www.thecommco.com](http://www.thecommco.com) or 503-203-8585.

## BUSINESS OUTLOOK REPORT AVAILABLE

Are you interested in knowing what over 1,400 employers said about the business prospects for 2015? If so, we have a resource for you at appealing rates. Because of our new strategic alliance with United Employers, we are able to offer Advantage Plan clients a chance to purchase the 2015 National Business Trends Survey for only \$75 instead of the Association price of \$150. For our project clients, the Report is available for the Association price of \$150 which is a terrific bargain for information usually costing many hundreds more. This report of over 500 pages details information about the level of business optimism, the strong training and hiring trends, and the fact that 75% of surveyed executives expect that sales and revenues will be higher in 2015. This is a report filled with good news!

The report information covers such topics as:

- Business outlook
- Business investment
- Staffing levels
- Hiring plans
- Job creation barriers
- Pay strategies
- Challenges being faced

This information should assist organizations in making plans for next year and in comparing themselves with other organizations. The data is broken out by regions and by individual states so accurate comparisons are more possible. Some tidbits from the report are:

- 38% of reporting executives say that they are increasing their training budgets for 2015
- 50% of those reporting said that they will use training dollars to improve and build skills of internal employees so that they can advance and perform more productively



- 46% of those reporting said that they will increase their efforts to retain key employees in hard-to-fill positions
- 52% said that they plan on hiring more staff
- The most difficult positions to fill are those in the Professional category which was cited by 44% of the respondents
- 78% of respondents plan on increasing wages and salaries in 2015

For more information, call us at 503-885-9815 and we can arrange for this deeply discounted price to be available to you.

## HR BY THE NUMBERS

Employers are roughly three times as likely to be sued for violating the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as they are for harassment or discrimination. And monetary penalties at risk in wage and hour cases can be far greater, as errors often involve multiple workers. You could be on the hook for back wages and penalty damages on a very large scale!

\* \* \* \*

A survey released last year shows, that by far, talkative co-workers cause the biggest distractions and disruptions at work. The unnecessary chatter came in first at 45%. Receiving too many email messages came in a distant second at 18%. Odors trailed at 9%, telephone calls at 8% followed by ambient noise at 6%. Office design was in sixth place at 5%, followed by technology at 4%. And believe it or not, "Nothing at all" came in at 5%.

*Survey numbers from Lee Hecht Harrison.*

\* \* \* \*

A third of job hunters are using mobile devices to search for jobs, while 22% are using them to research companies. Of those who were surveyed, 20% say they use mobile devices for online networking, while 15% are actually applying for new jobs on their mobile devices. Job hunters aren't the only ones who are using mobile devices, however. Recruiters are using them as well. A third of recruiters now use phones and tablets to search for candidates, and more than half have said they planned to increase their investment in mobile this year.

*Data according to Jobvite/Lee Hecht Harrison.*

\* \* \* \*

There are expected to be 4.4 million people employed worldwide in positions directly involved with big data analysis by next year. Many say this simply will not be enough. By next year, 70% of U.S. businesses will either have a data strategy in place or will be planning one for the near future, according to one survey. The number of colleges offering courses related to big data analysis continues to grow rapidly, but there will continue to be a shortage of workers trained in the necessary skills for the foreseeable future.

*Smart Data Collective.*



Results are based on interviews with more than 2,100 CFO's in over 20 of the largest U.S. metropolitan areas.

*Source: Accountemps.*

## Q & A:

**Q:** I would like to know what the common practice is regarding salary/wage information in Affirmative Action Plans. We do not give out actual data but provide a range. I still see apprehension from my management for this. This is why I am looking into what other companies follow.

**A:** You do not have to include actual compensation data (dollar amount or range) in the standard yearly plan. You do want to include the results of the compensation analyses you conduct and (hopefully) determined that there were no pay disparities that cannot be attributed to normal pay-determining factors according to your compensation policy.

If you receive an audit, Item 19 of the new itemized listing that accompanies the scheduling letter requests you submit exact compensation data for each employee, including bonuses, overtime, and the like. We recommend converting all employees' salary data to hourly (to help account for any differences in exempt or non-exempt; part-time, full-time, per diem workers) and including job code, job group, EEO category, hire date, last promotion date, etc. and anything else that will proactively help the compliance officer understand how pay rates are determined.

## THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

A lot of change and innovation projects start in January. Trying to do things differently or to do different things within an organization is hard. Being an innovator is not an easy job. It is a long road, especially when you're innovating within a large organization. At the start of innovation, you need to inspire and to convince a lot of people that it's an attractive move for the organization and has a high chance of success.

Nothing works better changing a mindset than a great quote. When you're starting a new project, you might use one of these marvelous quotes to spark creativity, start a culture for innovation, or to prioritize innovation in 2015.

If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got. *-Albert Einstein*

Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. *-Will Rogers*

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. *-George Bernard Shaw*

Minds are like parachutes; they work best when open. *-T. Dewar*

You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore. *-Andre Gide*

If at first the idea is not absurd, then there will be no hope for it. *-Albert Einstein*

Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all. *-Dale Carnegie*

Managers say yes to innovation when doing nothing is a bigger risk. *-Gijs van Wulfen*

Ideas are useless unless used. *-T. Levitt*

It is not how many ideas you have; it's how many you make happen. *-Advertisement of Accenture*

Innovation is the ability to convert ideas into invoices. *-L. Duncan*

Everything is possible. The impossible just takes longer. *-Dan Brown*

If you are inspired, **PLEASE SHARE THESE QUOTES** to inspire others, helping them to spark innovation in their organizations too. Wishing you a great and innovative 2015!

## SAFETY FIRST

Smart employees and their managers do not depend on luck to ensure safety in the workplace. An ongoing team effort on everyone's part is essential! Ask these questions on a regular basis to check the organization effectiveness on your safety guidelines and programs.

- Does everyone in the organization understand his/her responsibilities in your health and safety efforts?
- Do employees feel a sense of responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their co-workers?
- Do employees and supervisors actively support safety measures?
- Can employees give an example of how managers support safety efforts?
- Do employees and managers alike follow safety procedures without exception?
- Are safety updates/conversations a part of your all staff meeting agendas?
- Can employees get answers to their safety concerns promptly?
- Can employees get damaged safety equipment repaired or replaced quickly?
- Are facilities and equipment upgraded as often as necessary to provide a safe work environment?
- Are there posters or placards addressing safety and reinforcing safety expectations?
- Does the organization conduct Safety/Hazard Assessments on a quarterly basis?
- Are staffing levels sufficient to allow employees enough break time and assistance in workplace duties like heavy lifting?
- If there is a safety concern do all employees have the ability to "Stop Work" so a safety concern can be addressed?
- Do Managers and Supervisors understand what "fit for duty" means in your workplace?
- Are the minutes and actions of your Safety Committee posted for everyone to see?

\* \* \* \*

According to OSHA, it is now the season to remember all the employees who brave adverse weather conditions to work or drive outdoors in the winter. They have compiled a wealth of material that addresses many of the difficult or hazardous situations those employees are likely to encounter. To learn more about keeping safe your employees who work outside or who must drive during these months, click on the link below for some detailed info from OSHA designed assist you in ensuring that your employees are well informed and safe during this difficult season. [https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter\\_weather/hazards\\_precautions.html](https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/hazards_precautions.html)

## "EVERYDAY RECOGNITION"

People who say "they get a paycheck, and that is recognition enough" simply are not seeing the bigger picture. Recognition is an extremely important piece of high performing teams and individuals. Regardless of age, gender, position, etc., people like to know they are doing a good job and that what they are doing matters....so we need to recognize them for their efforts and energy.

Each month we will provide tips to help make recognition an everyday activity for those in leadership positions.

There are two questions that good recognition answers:

- 1) "Am I important?"
- 2) "Is my contribution valued?"

Vague praise really doesn't answer either question. You need to be specific and job related.

Know what your people have accomplished and how it affects your team, and tell them with enough detail that there is no doubt that they are contributing in a significant way. Then do it right away! Recognition loses its impact the further away it is from the actual accomplishment. Wait too long and it seems like an afterthought. If you want to reinforce positive performance behaviors, give the recognition as close to the event as is possible. Task for this month: Did someone on your team do something outstanding today? Go tell them now.

## CLIENT ACCOLADES

**The Partners Group**, a friend of HRA, was recently honored with the "Best Practices Agency" award from the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America and Reagan Consulting for the 14th year in a row! **What an impressive feat!** Only 217 agencies qualified for the award out of the 1,100 U.S. agencies that were nominated.

The *Portland Business Journal* recently featured an article on HR Answers' client **The Portland Opera** on its bold move to a compact summer festival of arts format from its current nine month season. This change will give the Opera more flexibility to schedule educational programs and other events throughout the year. **Good luck, Portland Opera!**



HR Answers would like to congratulate our friend of the firm **Schwabe, Williamson Wyatt, attorney Carmen Calzacorta**, for being receiving the James B. Castle Leadership Award from the Oregon State Bar. Carmen is being recognized for excellence in business law. **Kudos, Carmen!** We are so pleased to consider you our friend!

HRA would also like to congratulate our clients **FEI and OHSU** for creating a “Living Lab for Cell Biology” by adding an FEI CorrSight microscope to the OHSU-FEI electron microscopy suite that will aid researchers in drug screening applications and provide researchers with a better understanding of complex diseases such as HIV and cancer. **Keep up the GREAT work!**

HRA client **Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA)** recently commissioned an assessment of our region’s commercial building stock, providing useful data to energy conservation managers a guide for where their buildings fall in the energy conservation spectrum. Thanks to NEEA, Bonneville Power Administration (who has also been a client of HRA), and Navigant Consulting, Inc. for providing this crucial information!

HRA client **Greenbrier Companies** is in the news again. This time they made the headlines for a deal expected to close during the second quarter of this year to acquire a 19.5% ownership in Amsted-Maxion Horolandia, which holds a 70% share in railcar manufacturing in South America. **What an impressive feat, Greenbrier!**

## POWERFUL WORDS THAT KEEP YOU MOTIVATED AT WORK

I am not sure if you can classify these as powerful words that keep you motivated at work. Perhaps they are more akin to attitude, but if you remember the words, they may actually help you keep motivated at work.

### 1. Discuss, don’t Complain

How often do you catch yourself complaining about others at work or finding fault about others?

You may think you have a legitimate reason, but all the complaining will not do you any good. In fact, all it does is keep you de-motivated and others, too. When you do that, keep reminding yourself of how bad your work environment is. Perhaps this can be one of your goals for 2015. In fact, here’s a challenge for each of our readers: “Can you go 21 days without complaining?” Goal: to be more positive....to build people up instead of tearing them down. If you (or someone you know) is up for the challenge, let us know. We have “Complaint Free Bracelets” (purple rubber bracelets that say “Complaint Free World” on them. They are available for purchase for \$1 plus \$.50 shipping. Perhaps one for you and a few others for co-workers or neighbors?) Contact Deborah at [djeffries@hranswers.com](mailto:djeffries@hranswers.com) or (503) 885-9815 if you are interested.



Here are the powerful words to remember “discuss, don’t complain.” What’s the difference? When you discuss, you try to understand the root cause, and you try to find a solution. When you complain, you only focus on the problem and find ‘pleasure’ in dwelling on the fault of others.

### 2. Listen to Comprehend

Another powerful set of words to remember in order to keep motivated at work is “listen to comprehend.” How often do you find yourself listening to your colleague only to rebut what they say? You start a sentence “Yeah, but...” When you have actions like that, how can you find a good work environment to keep motivated?

Next time a colleague talks, truly listen to comprehend what they are saying. Covey said best with “Seek first to understand!”

### 3. Speak with Understanding

Have you analyzed your speech at work? Perhaps you should. How often do you hurt people with the words you say? When you use unkind words and often repeat gossip, you inevitably create an unhealthy environment for yourself and your colleagues. Another idea to keep in mind in order to keep motivated at work is to speak with understanding.

Acknowledge people’s good qualities and praise them, and focus on appreciation and gratitude. When we focus on others’ good qualities, it also makes us feel happier too.

Do an experiment, speak well of others for a few weeks - a month if you can. Every day, find someone to say something sincerely nice to. Even someone you don’t like so much. Then see how your life changes and how you feel more motivated at work.

#### **4. Help, Don't Hide**

Whenever there is an opportunity to make yourself available for service to others, do it. The more you help others and not hide away from them when help is needed, the happier you are at work. What you are doing is building your relationship and enlarging your network. These support systems will later come to your aid, too, when you are in need of help.

There are, of course, more powerful words that can help you keep motivated at work. But start with these. They may seem like a few small phrases, but they are not always easy to do. It takes months and months of practice for it to become a new habit, but if you are able to do it for a stretch of time, you will see the difference in your motivation at work (and others will notice, too).

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Open up your Daytimers, Outlook, Palm Pilots, and all those Smart Phones. The following is a look at upcoming events, special days and other diverse and fun activities you will want to be aware of and get scheduled. **To register for our workshops, please call any of our offices, or send an e-mail to Bryse Bishoff at [bbishoff@hranswers.com](mailto:bbishoff@hranswers.com), or fax it to (503) 885-8614.**

### **JANUARY**

Birth Defects, Financial Wellness, Get Organized, International Creativity, National Hot Tea, and Thyroid Awareness Month

- Jan. 19 Popcorn Day
- Jan. 19-25 Clean Out Your Inbox Week
- Jan. 21 National Hugging Day
- Jan. 22 Celebration of Life Day
- Jan. 23 National Pie Day
- Jan. 24 National Compliment Day  
National Peanut Butter Day
- Jan. 28 Fun at Work Day
- Jan. 28 HR Lunch Bunch – Salem (Chemeketa Small Biz Center)**  
**Topic: Performance Management**  
**12-1pm**
- Jan. 30-31 Complete Mediation Training – Presented by Chris Sheesley from In-Accord
- Feb. 6-7 Learn more: [inaccordnw.com/calendar-of-events](http://inaccordnw.com/calendar-of-events)

### **Looking Ahead:**

### **FEBRUARY**

- Feb. 4 HR Lunch Bunch – Tualatin (HRA)**  
**Topic: Romance in the Workplace**  
**12-1pm**
- Feb. 5 HRA Workshop – Eugene**  
**Are Performance Appraisals Really Dead?**  
**8:30am-11am**
- Feb. 11 HRA/UEA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Employment Law for Supervisors**  
**8:30am-12:30pm**
- Feb. 13 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**HIPAA**  
**8:30am-10:30am**

- Feb. 17 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Compensation Series – Class 1**  
**8:30-10:30am**
- Feb. 19 Chinese New Year (Year of the Sheep)
- Feb. 24 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Managing Change**  
**8:30-10:30am**
- Feb. 25 HR Lunch Bunch – Salem**  
**(Chemeketa Sm. Biz Center)**  
**Topic: Drugs in the Workplace**  
**12-1pm**

### **MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY**

- March 3 HR Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Meeting Effectiveness**  
**8:30-10:30am**
- March 4 HR Lunch Bunch – Tualatin**  
**12-1pm**
- March 10 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Compensation Series – Class 2**  
**8:30-10:30am**
- March 11 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Getting Organized**  
**8:30am-12:30pm**
- March 31 HRA Workshop – Tualatin**  
**Compensation Series – Class 3**  
**8:30-10:30am**
- April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 HRA Workshop - Tualatin**  
**Beginning Supervision for Success**  
**8:30 am-12:30 pm**
- May 7**

Information and advice offered through Advantage should not be construed as legal opinion. The material contained herein will not apply to all circumstances or to all organizations. Use it as a resource and reference. Should you feel legal advice is required, please consult with your corporate counsel.



## ON MY SOAPBOX

The beginning of any new year invites reflection and review. It is automatic to think about the past year and wonder where the time has gone and what was accomplished. It is so reassuring when we can tick off several items on our bucket list or important projects completed. But a new year is also a time for thinking about what is ahead of us. We (some of us) make resolutions (mine is to be far more polite when someone tries to cut me off in traffic or needs to enter the flow of cars – I have not been nearly as gracious as I could be and I have decided to change that). Some of us set goals professionally and personally. Some of us do research on what is over the horizon and try to determine what impact that may have for us.

So for those of you who want to have a peek at the future, here are some recent prognostications from Shaping Tomorrow ([www.shapingtomorrow.com](http://www.shapingtomorrow.com)), one of my favorite environmental scanning information providers:

1. Employment rates across emerging and developing economies will return to “pre-crisis” levels in 2015
2. 1.3 billion people will work remotely using mobile technology in 2015.
3. Demand for data scientists will snowball in the coming year
4. Analysts predict the information security sector will grow into a U.S. \$125 billion industry in 2015
5. 60% of new jobs being created will require skills that only 20% of the population actually has
6. The future of work will unfold in the Cloud

The one that jumps out at me is the fifth bullet regarding the skills shortage that is forecast to exist. That one is downright scary!! The HR ramifications regarding this could be immense! Where will we find qualified applicants? Do we need to create greater synergies with our educational institutions so that skills that employers need are what is being offered? Yes, absolutely we need to do that! Do we need to ensure that each of our employees is continually assessed to ensure that their skill levels are what we need, and offer training and education to keep them up to date? Yes, absolutely we need to do this. But neither of these will be sufficient unless we proactively identify what will be needed and construct a plan to ensure that what we need will be available either in the marketplace or in our own organizations.

I believe that organizations need to think strategically about the creation of mentors and coaches in our own workforce. Who are the most skilled and are they teaching others, or are they hoarding the knowledge that they have? Has the organization instituted an element of the pay program that compensates employees for sharing with others the information or short-cuts that they have learned? Has the organization proclaimed that knowledge and skills matter and then backed it up with dollars, actions, and intentional decisions to ensure that the statements made have life and commitment?

If our profession and the organizations we work in do not take concrete actions and do not take this situation seriously, we will find ourselves coming in last on the talent race. This isn't something that should be left to chance; something that can be done tomorrow. A new year is a great time to look over the horizon, see what impact this trend is going to have on where we each work, and make a promise to address the needs that will exist. It is time to set your organization up for future success. Einstein said it best and his words appear in our Thoughts to Think About column... “If you always do what you have done, you will always get what you have got.” What you have got may be just fine for now, but the world is changing at an awesome pace, and what you have now, won't hold you forever. It is time to take action!!

- Judy Clark, President



“Whatever the Question”

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