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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

As we say “good-bye” to an old year and look forward to a new one, this issue of Advantage has some observations, suggestions, reminders and ideas for kick-starting your HR Department off in the right direction. 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!! Good Luck!!!

2016 BRINGS SOME CHANGES

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries has made mandatory changes to two postings and has released a new mandatory notice.

Beginning January 1, 2016 Oregon employers must provide employees with a notice of the state’s sick time law provisions. The Requirements of Oregon’s Sick Time Law posting satisfies that requirement. The state has also made a mandatory change to its Family Leave Act posting. The posting now indicates that employees are entitled to group health insurance benefits during family leave as if they continued working. The state law took effect January 1, 2016.

The state has also made a mandatory change to minimum wage posting; it has added information about rules that apply to domestic service employment which took effect January 1, 2016.

Plus, several other states have mandatory posting requirements that are now in effect. For those employers with offices in other location, please note these changes so that you remain compliant: include:

- **California** – Notice to Employees—Injuries Caused by Work (workers’ compensation), effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Colorado** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Florida** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Kentucky** –Safety and Health on the Job, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Massachusetts** -- Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Michigan** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Missouri** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **New York** –Minimum Wage, effective Dec. 31, 2015
- **Ohio** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **Rhode Island** – Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016
- **South Dakota** -- Minimum Wage, effective Jan. 1, 2016

NEW YEAR CHECKLIST

Goal Setting, Planning, and Prevention are keys to effective human resource management. Here are some reminders to help your employment processes 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 JDs 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 (i.e. ban-the-box. Oregon remember to delete the question about felony convictions).
- Verify your employment posters are current and in locations where employees can see them and where prospective employees can see them too.

Portland Office
7650 SW Beveland Street
Suite 130
Tigard, OR 97223
(503) 885-9815

Willamette Valley Office
7287 Park Terrace Dr. NE Ste. 101
Keizer, OR 97303
(503) 463-7269

- 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 2016.
- Review personnel files - move old files to storage and destroy files as appropriate under your records retention policy. Perhaps this is the year you move to scanning all documents and getting rid of the paper.
- Assess benefits offerings to make sure 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.
- Make sure you are up to speed and have made the changes for ACA and that you have the, if needed, information about reporting to IRS and employees.
- 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 (especially you have not done this in the last 2 years).
- Schedule your annual harassment training for employees and supervisors.
- If you're a federal contractor or a sub-contractor, schedule annual Affirmative Action Program update.

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

BUSINESS REMINDERS

2016 Welcomes Oregon Sick Leave. WOW, we sure have been receiving a lot of phone calls around the Oregon Sick Leave and glad we have been able to be of assistance to so many.

All Oregon employers are subject to the statewide sick leave ordinance that took effect on January 1, 2016. Fortunately, for Portland employers the statewide ordinance is very similar to the Portland ordinance that has been in effect since 2014. All employers need to be aware that employees must accrue at least 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked and they have the right to access the time on their 91st day of employment regardless of the total number of hours they have worked. Employers with ten (six in Portland) or more employees must provide sick time, while smaller employers must provide unpaid time. Employers can provide a general paid time off (PTO) policy and still comply with the ordinance (as long as all the other criteria, including reasons for use, accrual rate, for example are met).

You can visit the BOLI technical assistance site for more details on the ordinance and to download model employee notices. <http://www.oregon.gov/boli/TA/pages/index.aspx>. And of course, give us a call with additional questions, or if you want to have your policy written.

* * *

On December 28, 2015, the IRS announced the agency would be extending ACA reporting deadlines. Employers now have until **March 31, 2016** (originally February 1) to provide employees with the 2015 Form 1095-B and Form 1095-C. Deadlines for filing the IRS Form 1094-B, Form 1095-B, Form 1094-C and Form 1095-C have been extended to **May 31, 2016** (originally February 29) for **non-electronic filing** and to June 30, 2016 (originally March 31) for electronic filing. Non-compliance with these extended due dates will be subject to penalties under the ACA section 6722 or 6721. We encourage you to speak with your benefits broker and tax consultant for further information.

* * *

It is a new year! **How are your employment labor law posters doing?** Do you need new ones (probably!)? Are they current? Where are they posted in your organization? Our readers are very smart, so we know that you know the law requires you to have employment and labor laws posted within your organization and that notices must be updated or replaced each time there is a change in the law. You also are aware that failing to do so can place your organization at risk for fines, but what you may not know is that fines can range between \$100 and \$7,000 per incident.

Also, did you know there is a difference between "Mandatory to Post" and "Mandatory to Communicate"? "Mandatory to Post" means that every employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor management committee must post notices in an accessible format for applicants, employees, and members, describing the applicable posting provisions. The law requires you to display your post-

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.

ers at a location that all employees routinely visit, such as the lunch room, break room, or jobsite. Separate floors and multiple locations require additional posters. And don't forget job applicants – the posters need to be where they can easily see them as well.

“Mandatory to Communicate” means that the employer has an obligation to communicate to their employees the organization's policies regarding the Right to Know regulations that cover OSHA and labor law codes and regulations. Examples of this would include the employer's responsibility to take “all reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring” and the OSHA standard on how to handle chemicals.

So the best move is to have all the mandatory state, federal, and OSHA requirements together and in an all-in-one type poster. There are several organizations out there that can help you, but we suggest you go to our partner, **Poster Compliance Center**. **Click on the link from our website so they know we sent you:** <http://www.postercompliance.com/serviceplus/hranswers/>. **When prompted, be sure to use the code hranswer so you can benefit from special discounted pricing.**

Start 2016 off on the right foot! Make sure you are in compliance with your labor law postings, and let us know if you need assistance with compliance in other areas, too. We are happy to help!

HEALTHY BITE

The new year often brings up goals for a healthier life style. Most of us know what we “are supposed to do” but for some reason we make poor choices or allow things to get in our way of having health habits and taking step toward overall wellness. Here are several friendly reminders of what you can do each day to bring overall wellness back in to your daily life.

Keep a positive attitude

Control your stress

Stay active

Stop Smoking – now

Challenge your mind

Forgive and forget

Slow down on sugar

Brush and Floss often

Get 7-8 hours of sleep

Breath deep

Walk briskly

Give people more

Manage anger wisely

Drink extra water each day

Sit up straight

Don't drink and drive

Walk 10,000 steps a day

Budget time and money

Talk slowly think quickly

Give people more than they expect

Think positively

Get a massage

Love your fruits and veggies

Create a gratitude journal – make a daily note

ARE YOU ACCOUNTABLE?

Accountability is apparently a big problem. According to a survey by AMA Enterprise, a division of the American Management Association, a fifth of business leaders believe that 30 to 50% of employees aren't held accountable for their performance. As HR Professionals we know it is not just about performance, but also about interactions with others, ownership of the work, commitments to self and others, etc.

The steps for ensuring accountability are not new, but for some they may have not been shared. Consider:

- Set and communicate clear expectations.
- Align individual and team goals with departmental and organizational strategies and vision.
- Provide time, training, tools, and resources.
- Empower people to succeed.
- Provide recognition and feedback.
- Take action when individuals and teams do not meet expectations.

And yet, the challenge continues. Many would suggest that this is a worker problem. We continue to hear about declining work ethic and lack of loyalty. The employees who merely rent their jobs rather than owning them. And in turn, many struggle for a solution is to get tougher and dole out corrective action. But what if they are wrong? What if the lack of accountability is really a leadership problem?

The difference between leaders who inspire ownership and those from whom employees merely trade time for money has less to do with strategies and techniques than it does with the mindset with which they approach their responsibilities. The best leaders are guided by the following beliefs:

- Employees want to do a good job and succeed.
- Discipline should be taught and sustained rather than used to mandate compliance.
- Relationships (not position) are the ultimate tool for influencing the performance of others.

Think of a teacher, mentor, or coach who meant a great deal to you and answer the following questions:

- Did that person expect more of you or less of you?
- Did he or she treat you as if you wanted to succeed or simply do as little as possible to get by?
- Did she or he actively help you acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources you needed to succeed?
- Were you more likely or less likely to do everything in your power to meet his or her expectations?
- If you didn't meet those expectations, were you more likely or less likely to respond positively and accept accountability for your performance and results?
- Does that person still influence you today?

One last question: Was your response to them and performance based on the authority of their position or on your relationship?

Leaders who struggle with other's accountability view their job as mandating compliance. Those who get accountability right know that most people want to do great work. They view their job as creating an environment where commitment and self-discipline are volunteered.

Here are several things you can do right now to build a culture of volunteered "self" accountability:

- **Adjust your mindset.** There may be a few people on your team who don't want to do a good job, but that number is very small—probably 2 to 5%. Stop thinking of the other 95 to 98% as part of the problem.
- **Make sure you are doing your part.** Be honest with yourself on areas where you are not fulfilling your responsibility and make a plan to improve. If you aren't sure, ask a direct report you trust for feedback.
- **Focus relentlessly on relationships.** The difference between mandated compliance and volunteered commitment can often be traced to the quality of the relationship between the leader and follower. People will do what they are told to do because it is their job. They will run through walls to succeed for a leader they trust and admire.
- **Ask "Why do they follow?"** Is the answer: "Because I have to? Because I want to? Because of what they have done for the organization? Because of what they have done for and with me?"

Employees show up on their first day at work wanting to take ownership and succeed. Somewhere along the way, some will decide to do as little as possible. How many employees take that path may very well depend on you.

HR Answers will be conducting a workshop on Building Credibility and Self Accountability on March 31st from 8:30-11:30am. Check out our website for more details.

STEPS TO CONDUCT A PERSONAL PERFORMANCE INVENTORY

Employers have made a considerable investment in each employee. Beyond salary, thousands of dollars are spent on benefits including insurance, vacation, tuition reimbursement, training, retirement matching, as well as lifestyle benefits such as daycare and commuter stipends. In fact, the BLS reports that benefits now account for 30% of the total compensation package. And for many of you it is more! But is your employer's investment paying off? Are they getting a strong return on their investment in you? This is a great conversation to have as individual contributors, but this is a great conversation for Supervisors to have with their employees (perhaps part of their performance review conversation or check-in meeting, etc.).

Regardless of the function performed, there are several key performance areas where you should hold yourself accountable:

1. **Quality:** Am I committed to doing my best work every day? No matter how routine the work, do I show it the attention it deserves?

2. **Innovation:** Do I look for new ways to perform a task? Do I regularly share new ideas that could improve performance, quality or customer service?
3. **Productivity:** How does my productivity rate among my peers? Am I meeting departmental goals? If not, what's hindering my performance and how do I overcome the challenge?
4. **Teamwork:** Do I listen to and respect the opinions of other team members? Do I help colleagues get the job done—even though it might not be in my job description?
5. **Attitude:** Do I show enthusiasm for new assignments and display an eagerness to learn? Am I consistently projecting a positive attitude to internal and external customers?
6. **Professionalism:** Do I dress and act like I'm a serious contender for a promotion? Do I avoid gossip and petty office disputes that can tarnish my reputation?
7. **Adaptability:** Do I accept—or better yet embrace—changes in processes, products, personnel, management, ownership? Have I developed the resilience required to tolerate ambiguity and change?

Considering the investment employers have made in you, it's your responsibility to take the steps necessary to consistently demonstrate your value and worth. Taking an inventory of your performance serves as a reminder of what's important and helps you stay focused on achieving personal and organizational goals.

BEFORE YOU PROMOTE AN EMPLOYEE . . .

Promoting a staff member when they are not ready can lead to many challenges for a Supervisor, for HR, for your organization, and, more importantly, for the employee. Ask yourself these questions before making a promotion decision. Is the employee:

- **Performing** present duties well enough to justify a promotion?
- **Experienced** enough to do at least part of the new job?
- **Willing** to hand over current responsibilities to a new person?
- **Enthusiastic** about taking on a new role?
- **Familiar** with the new position's responsibilities and priorities?
- **Proficient** in the interpersonal and communication skills necessary to work with others in a new role?
- **Adequately trained**, or willing to be?
- **Prepared** to bow out gracefully if the promotion doesn't work out as planned?

The more questions to which you can answer "Yes," the better the chances for the promotion to succeed. Thoroughly investigate and resolve any "No" answers, however, before making any promotion decision.

DO YOU HAVE A SAFETY COMMITTEE? USE THE 3 I'S AS YOUR GUIDE

A Safety Committee is a group of people usually consisting of both management and employee representatives who work to identify and reduce or eliminate safety hazards and promote safety and health awareness. Some companies call it a Safety Committee; others go by the term Safety Team, or perhaps it bears a special name, such as safety and health working group. You could even find a fun name is more "jazzy," if you like.

Safety Committees can play a major role in the safety structure of an organization. An active and effective committee can significantly improve safety by instituting programs and providing support that helps to reduce accidents, injuries, and illnesses at the company. Some of the most common benefits of Safety Committees include the fact that a Safety Committee can:

- Provide a forum for problem solving;
- Provide employees, supervisors, and managers with a resource to turn to when they are faced with safety problems;
- Get people working together;
- Involve more people in overall company safety and health management;
- Provide people with a broader base of safety knowledge; and
- Prevent “safety burnout” because safety won’t fall on the shoulders of just one or two people.

Incident investigations, site inspections, and employee involvement are keys to the success of a safety committee. Take a look:

Investigations. No matter how conscientious the safety effort at a company, incidents may happen occasionally due to all sorts of factors. Incidents can include injuries, illnesses, property damage, or near misses. A Safety Committee typically does a thorough and proper incident investigation and follow-up. The emphasis for the investigation should not be fault finding.

Inspections. A committee may also conduct workplace inspections regularly. The inspection team will document the date of the inspection, the location and identity of hazards or potential hazards, and any recommendations they may have for correcting those hazards.

Involvement. Employees should be involved. If they are not members of the committee, they may attend safety training, report safety hazards, and submit safety suggestions to the safety committee.

Federal OSHA does not require Safety Committees; however, the agency is working on an injury and illness prevention program (I2P2) rulemaking that, when finalized, may have such a provision. It’s worth noting that some state-plan states already require or strongly encourage the formation of a Safety Committee. For Oregon Safety Committee information, check out OAR 437-001-0765. For Washington Safety Committee information, check out Chapter 296-800 of the Washington Administrative Code.

THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

“It is not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?”

- Henry David Thoreau

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet strange, I am ungrateful for these teachers.

- Kahlil Gibran

In life, you can’t get it all done...and that’s okay.

- Jones Loflin

Leaders who don’t listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say.

- Andy Stanley

What are you doing that’s hindering you from where you want to go?

- Chris Longstreet

To succeed in life you need 3 things: A wishbone, a backbone, and a funny bone.

- Reba McEntire

The better you feel about yourself, the less you feel the need to show off.

- Robert Hand

“Liberty will not descend to a people, a people must raise themselves to liberty; it is a blessing that must be earned before it can be enjoyed.”

- Benjamin Franklin

HRA HAPPENINGS

We are very excited to let you all know that we have a new staff member. Please join us in welcoming Laurie Grenya to our consulting team. She is a Senior Consultant with a Compensation and Labor Relations background. She comes to us from the State of Oregon where she had been employed for the last 17 years. We are lucky to have her and our clients will benefit greatly!

BE CAREFUL!!

The weather has gotten off to a great start for 2016. You have probably heard of some friends, co-workers and maybe even family who have gotten stranded. We all make mistakes and these things happen, but here is what you can do to be prepared according to the Search and Rescue Experts.

1. Know the area you are traveling into, do not rely on in-car, internet based or off the shelf GPS units only.
2. Carry a detailed map and check US Forest Service and BLM web sites for winter road closures.
3. Carry chains, a shovel and enough supplies to keep you warm, hydrated and fed for at least 3 days.
4. Tell someone where you are going and the route you are taking.
5. Have a friend ready to call for help if you don't return at a predetermined time.
6. If you are stranded, stay with your vehicle.

CLIENT ACCOLADE

Portland dining has a secret, and it involves a James Beard-awarded chef Philippe Boulot and a vibrant dining history behind the hallowed doors of the Multnomah Athletic Club. Since 1891, the MAC has been the gathering place for Portland's well-heeled sports enthusiasts to see and be seen. It's the largest private athletic club in size in the world, and today, it boasts a membership of around 20,000 of Portland's residents. Boulot officially joined the MAC in 2012, the Club's three eateries were undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation. Normandy-born Boulot had trained under the culinary demigod Jöel Robuchon, and he shifted the MAC's cuisine to focus on locally sourced ingredients, prepared by a team of both enthusiastic newbie's and seasoned professionals. So KUDO's to the MAC for the fabulous historical write-up in the Oregonian.

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 Anna Loughlin at aloughlin@hranswers.com, or fax it to (503) 352-5582.**

JANUARY

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

- Jan. 24 National Peanut Butter Day
National Compliment Day
- Jan. 27 HR Lunch Bunch – Salem (CCBI)
Workplace Violence
12:00noon-1:00pm
- Jan. 28 Chinese New Year – The Year of the Monkey
- Jan. 31 Fun at Work Day

Coming Up:

- Feb. 3 HR Lunch Bunch – Portland/Tigard (HRA)
Violence in the Workplace
12:00noon – 1:00pm
- Feb. 17 HRA Workshop – Tigard
Building Your Creativity!
8:30am-11am**
- Feb. 24 HR Lunch Bunch – Salem (CCBI)
Stay Interviews
12:00noon – 1:00pm
- March 2 Join us at the Oregon Legislative and Employment Law Conference
Sponsored by the Oregon State Council of SHRM and Sotel Rives
At the Sentinel Hotel (614 SW 11th Avenue, Portland OR.
7:30am - 4:30pm.
Registration can be completed at: www.eventbrite.com
Recertification credits available for HRCI and SHRM.
- March 30 HR Lunch Bunch – Salem (CCBI)
Recruiting Ideas
12:00noon – 1:00pm
- March 31 HRA Workshop – Tigard
Building Credibility and Self Accountability
8:30am-11:30am**
- Apr 6– HR Answers Workshop – HRA Tigard office
May 11 Beginning Supervision Series
8:30am-12:30pm**

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

There was a recent study that discussed New Years' Resolutions. I was surprised at one of the results. The study found that 94% of all resolutions are to do something, and only 4.5% were about stopping something. (I have no idea what happened to the other .5%.) It made me think about what resolutions I had over the past several years; and sure enough, most of mine were about starting something; except for last year when I promised that I would be a more gracious driver and STOP my reactions of agitation and anger when someone drives in an inappropriate fashion.

The article caused me to wonder why we don't think of stopping things as much as starting things. I have mulled this over and come to one conclusion; no guarantee that I (am anywhere near the real answer). My conclusion is that we are likely to aspire to be better at something or develop some new habit or skill. This would likely lead to a thought about learning, improving, or becoming adept at a particular thing. We may not be as aware of things that we are doing that agitate others or upset them. So stopping something may not be as easy to think about or identify.

Just think about the typical resolutions:

- Lose weight
- Be more focused
- Eat more healthy foods
- Get fit – exercise more
- Save money
- Spend more time with family
- Be more active in my community
- Travel
- Cross out items on my “bucket list”
- Read more books (this one topped the list in 2013)

None of these are about stopping anything. The only item that continues to show up on top ten lists that is about stopping something is smoking. But this one is also the on the list of the most frequently broken resolutions.

I have no idea what all of you chose as this year's resolution, or if you even have any. I know that I have begun to think about this opportunity to assess my life, my habits, and my behavior differently in the last few years. I am pleased to note that I had a resolution about three years ago about my weight, and so I did something about that. Not yet where I want to be, but ever so much better than I was. And last year's resolution really did stay with me all year and I did become a much more gracious driver. This year I have committed to something major in my relationships with others. Maybe in the future, I can tell you what I committed to and whether it was achieved. And guess what, it is something to do, not something I am stopping. I thought about things that would be appropriate for stopping, but ended up with something that was for more appropriate for me to start. Here's wishing you time for the internal conversation with yourself and resulting clarity about what you wish to commit to either stopping or starting. Best wishes for 2016!!

- Judy Clark, President



ANSWERS, Inc.
“Whatever the Question”

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.HRANSWERS.COM