



# advantage



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Editor: Deborah Jeffries, SHRM-CP, SPHR: **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 resources professionals and labor relations professionals. If you have questions about the content, an opinion about the information, or questions about your subscription, please call us at 503-885-8915 or email us at [info@hranswers.com](mailto:info@hranswers.com)



## HR ANSWERS TURNS 35!!

Even amongst the chaos this is a special time of the year for HRA as we celebrate 35 years in business. No bells, whistles – no joyous crowds yelling in the background. But we assure you, all of that is happening within us.

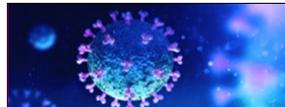
It is amazing that we have reached this milestone. And we do mean “we.” There is no way any of this happens without a team. It is only possible because of the efforts of the many staff members who contributed their talent, their knowledge, their willingness, their creativity, and their dedication to the pursuit of excellent HR over these many years. It is only possible because of the trust invested in us by the more than 4,500 clients we have been privileged to serve. Many of which have been with us since the beginning. Your words of encouragement, coming back to us for project work and your continual word of mouth referrals have been a BIG help to us over the years....and please do not ever stop... we value our relationship with you!!

We express our personal gratitude to each of you who have inspired us, supported us, and encouraged us, and who said HRA made a difference in your personal or professional endeavors. On behalf of all of us, we are truly grateful and hugely appreciative of each and every one of you. We continually hear “We are in this together”. Well we certainly are, and we look forward to continuing to be a resource and helping employers tackle anything that comes their way. **THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!**

## HR LINK: COVID-19 RESOURCES

We have posted a host of COVID-19 resources for employers on our website. These are intended to be mostly HR-related tools to save you time as well as keep you updated on things that change or develop. We encourage you to look at the variety of resources online: a slide deck from a webinar, steps to assist if you need to reduce staff, sample language/materials and more. In addition, we are sending out timely alerts and conducting periodic chats via webinar. And of course, you can always call with your questions. Our consultants are available to assist! We really do want to help you walk through and tackle the tough stuff and COVID-19 is a very sticky situation!

[CLICK HERE FOR COVID-19 INFORMATION](#)



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## TAKE THESE STEPS BEFORE YOU RETIRE (PART 2)

In March we shared part one of this article with observation that you were not ready to retire if.... this month we continue. You may be ready for life without the alarm clock or the daily work routine but before you turn in your retirement notice, you may want to take these steps to avoid common mistakes people make right before they retire:

- **Determine Your Taxes in Retirement** - Your Social Security check may be taxable, depending on your overall income. Most pensions are taxable. Withdrawals from 401(k)s and traditional IRAs will also be taxed. You may have grown accustomed to the net-of taxes paycheck you receive from your employer. Take the time to estimate your tax rate in retirement and make sure you adjust your tax rate on your withdrawals from 401(k) s and traditional IRAs. Consider seeking help from a licensed tax professional.
- **Know Your Social Security Benefit** - While you might not be relying on Social Security to meet most of your expenses, you shouldn't ignore it, either. If you haven't yet estimated how the Social Security Administration offers a handy tool to help you make that calculation: <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/quickcalc/>.
- **Find Out How Much Health Care Will Cost** - Without a job, you may not have access to employer-provided health insurance at favorable group rates. If you are 65 or older, you can enroll in Medicare, but it is not entirely free. Make sure you know the cost of any private insurance or Medicare supplemental insurance you may need. Make sure the cost is incorporated into your monthly budget.
- **Plan for Future Major Expenses** - You don't want to wait until you've retired to address major, foreseeable expenses such as replacing your roof, repaving your driveway, purchasing a vacation home, or buying a new car. These larger expenses can add up, especially when funds are withdrawn from taxable accounts and taxes need to be paid on every dollar.
- **Rebalance Your Portfolio** - It is a smart step to rebalance your portfolio annually to focus on income generation and asset protection. The accepted wisdom about how retirees should manage their portfolios consists of diversifying, preserving capital, earning income, and avoiding risk.
- **Be Mindful About Inflation** - Inflation will affect your day-to-day expenses and the value of your life savings. An inflation rate of 3%, which is close to historical norms, would mean your expenses will double in less than 25 years—well within a typical retirement period.

Transitioning to retirement is not as easy as we may want it to be. Avoiding common mistakes and being proactive in your planning may help reduce some of the stress associated with retiring. After all, retirement should be a new and exciting chapter in your life!

Please remember to consider working with a licensed financial advisor or financial planner, prior to finalizing any decisions about your retirement. You can also contact your Employee Assistance Plan for resources.

*For more information contact Tom Davenport, AIF<sup>®</sup>, CRPS with Priesz Financial (503) 224-1600 ext. 111 or [tom@preisz.com](mailto:tom@preisz.com)*

## HEARINGS SUSPENDED

On April 10, 2020, the United States Department of Labor, Chief Administrative Law Judge issued a Supplemental Administrative Order and Notice regarding the suspension of in-person hearings and procedural deadlines in hearings before the Office of Administrative Law Judges. See [Supplemental Administrative Order and Notice](#), 2020-MIS-00006 (Apr. 10, 2020): Subject to the assigned ALJ's discretion, the Order extends the suspension of all in-person hearings through at least **July 24, 2020**; notifies the public that OALJ will start hearing cases telephonically, by video, or other remote means after May 15; and notifies the public that OALJ will restart issuance of decisions beginning on April 16, serving the parties by email. The Order contains additional information regarding resetting deadlines, filing documents with OALJ, and mediations.

## Q&A: NO FREE PASSES

**Q:** I have an employee who is being snarky, using foul language and making inappropriate comments to other staff members in person and via email. I think they are simply stressed out because of COVID, working from home, and reduced hours which has resulted in reduced dollars. It is a mess and understandable. I am inclined to just let it go.

**A:** In times of stress the true colors of people's behavior show. It is certainly understandable that employees might have challenges coping, on a variety of fronts, right now. But that is no excuse for poor behavior and inappropriate communication between individuals in the workplace. From a supervisory standpoint it is okay to continue to reinforce your behavioral expectations of staff members. Now is not the time to be lenient and let something "pass" just because. Continuing "as is" offers employees certainty and stability. Unfortunately, silence equals acceptance and then new habits form from these individuals. Of course, we would always recommend a balance between accountability and support for the employee (especially if there are leaves of absence taking place). Good supervision must always be in play. This is a terrific time to connect and reassess the expectations you have set. Because of the changes COVID-19 has made for employer's, supervisors should visit with employees and make sure things are still working the way you both want or if it's time to make adjustments to your prior agreements. Working from home does change some of the dynamics but does not necessarily change the need for productivity and effective communication with all.

## PROMOTING EMPLOYEES

*By Amanda Wernli, SHRM-CP, PHR Professional Consultant*

For some employers, like those in industries with high turnover such as food service or retail, the promotional process may occur without much reflection or trepidation - it must, for business to continue as usual on a daily basis. For other employers, especially when a promotion will occur in a corporate environment and may involve managing large organizational assets, large numbers of personnel, and/or an independent organizational function, the advancement of a current employee is often a methodical process that involves decision making by many across a period of time. Maybe an organization also has affirmative action obligations which require that thought go into how the promotional pipeline is developed and how certain employees end up in particular job groups.

In any case, and whether your organization typically employs one approach to promoting employees or multiple, there are things leadership and supervisory staff can consider periodically to ensure that processes and procedures are in place that will best serve your organization and result in non-discriminatory promotions.

To begin, what are some of the options for making promotional decisions that are job-based and appropriate, which can be used individually or in combination?

- a) Performance review process. This data can obviously inform who is a high performer, but it should also elicit information about which staff are interested in advancement or development opportunities. Performance review data can, by itself, be a particularly important tool in supporting promotional decisions, but care should be taken to ensure that rater biases and other typical measurement errors do not reduce the usefulness and reliability of this information.
- b) Stretch Assignments/Development Opportunities. These serve as an excellent opportunity to observe how an employee handles ambiguity, problem-solving, new situations, and setbacks... or even failures. It also provides an employee with an opportunity to determine if more varied, challenging, responsible, and unpredictable work is suitable. Employers in states with pay equity regulations should keep in mind, however, that if assignments of these kind substantially change the overall type of work performed and such work is otherwise compensated differently in the organization, a temporary pay adjustment may be necessary.
- c) Accomplishments/Innovation/Contributions to Process Improvements. Is there an employee that has outstanding ideas that impact the business bottom line? Has this person made meaningful process improvements or influenced others to do the same? Is there an employee that has achieved targets that most others never reach? Selecting an employee based on this criterion is obvious and defensible.
- d) Assessment Centers. A formalized process to identify individuals with potential and assess competency levels that provides employees with situational tasks and work samples to complete. The assessments must be standardized and validated and take time and expense to develop. However, they are known to result in less adverse impact for most protected groups than other selection tools, such as cognitive ability or general intelligence tests. In many instances, they are the only practical options for large organizations.
- e) Selection Tests. These tools may range from personality assessments, content tests for a job class, or cognitive ability tests, among others. The recommendation is often to administer these as part of a multi-part or multi-stage selection process, as they can result in adverse impact when used as the exclusive basis for employment-related decisions. Many organizations opt to purchase pre-developed assessments instead of incurring the time and expense of customizing their own.
- f) Diversified Input from Management. Is there only one individual involved in assessing an employee's promotion potential? Consider structuring decisions so they involve input from multiple individuals, if possible. The more perspectives, the less of a chance there is that bias or individual differences might hold someone... and your organization back.

Secondly, what things are of particular importance for an employer to set aside when considering employees' promotional potential? This is straightforward, but it is so easy to get off track here - especially when experience might suggest something to the contrary. Protected characteristics, such as ethnicity or use of

protected leave are the obvious answers, but essentially anything that is not job-related should be out of sight and out of mind. Here are some examples:

- a) Tom is a high performer that has been with ABC Company for several years. It is known that he has the content knowledge and ability to take on a role that will be available soon, but his family commitments are also known to be demanding. The new job requires travel frequently. It is easy to assume he wouldn't be able to take on the travel, but he could also have the means to rearrange his personal obligations. His personal situation is no reason to discount his qualifications and interest, without him expressing overtly that he wishes to be removed or excluded from consideration. Here is where we ask the employee and they decide. The Manager sets the expectations for the position and the employee decides if they are in alignment with the expectations.
- b) In another scenario, Karen, who has been with XYZ Corp. for some time, has outstanding performance and a positive approach to her work. She also seems to have a unique rapport with coworkers. However, she's not very far into her career. There is a job vacancy that involves supervising other staff and management of a department. Another employee with comparable seniority has satisfactory performance but doesn't display as much enthusiasm for work. However, this individual is experienced at managing others. The suggestion here is to be sure to evaluate both candidates equally. Look at what each brings to the position as well as what each would need in support for the new position.

If you haven't reflected much on what promotion in your organization looks like based on the numbers, consider examining it from that perspective for the first time. It might provide interesting insights that are only apparent when looking at aggregate numerical information across time - and there may or may not be anything that best practice would suggest requires your attention.

Keep in mind that considering the recent COVID-19 situation, temporary adjustments to your promotion methods and philosophy, whatever they may be are likely necessary. For one, it may be best to hold off on any nonessential promotions and spread any additional management or supervisory responsibilities across existing management staff. An alternative may be to provide an available employee with management and supervisory duties on a temporary basis, as needed, but then to return the individual to normal duties and take a longer period of time to assess this individual's overall fitness for promotion, including performance during the temporary assignment. In other organizations, if essential management staff have been lost and will not return, and unless it's entirely contradictory to the businesses promotion philosophy (e.g., Costco, we are advancement occurs primarily from within), it may actually serve the organization better to look outward for talent as the talent pool becomes richer with individuals who may fit the organization well, have a strong skill sets, and are only recently displaced due to the economic circumstances.

The takeaway from this article is that promotional processes should be intentional and defensible; explore new options and pick a method(s) that aligns with best practice, apply it validly (how it was meant to be used) and consistently, and don't be afraid to think outside of the box about individual employees. Last but not least, disregard protected characteristics or actions in particular, but also avoid considering any extraneous information that doesn't relate to job requirements like behavior and performance at work.

And don't forget...if you simply need sample performance evaluation forms; if you'd value input on your current promotional process; or if you'd like any help creating or changing your development and promotion criteria, don't hesitate to ask - we've got the answers. We also will be hosting a free webinar on Wednesday, June 3 at from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. Click [here](#) to register.

## CONFERENCE CALL ETIQUETTE

### HRA is 35 List

In honor of our 35 years in business, we will be doing “lists” comprised of 35 tips or pieces of advice each month. This month we will explore how we are communicating right now using technology.

There is no doubt conference and video calls are on the rise with the changes in where we are working. How you handle these could impact your clients’ and colleagues’ impressions of you (not to mention your productivity).

Did you know half of your communication skill is non-verbal? The interest we show with eye contact, the sympathy we display with head nods and smiles, the emphasis we add with our hands—we don’t have them on conference calls and with video calls they can be obscure.

Just as there are unwritten rules for email and meetings, we’re sharing guidelines for business phone calls and conference calls that everyone should follow. Here’s to more productive (and less annoying) calls and video chats.

#### Before the conference call starts

##### Arrangement:

1. **Inform all the participants about the details of the meeting** – If you are the leader of the call, make sure to inform all the participants about who will be attending the meeting. It is a good idea to send out an invite with the time, date, participant names, and the estimated duration of the call. This way people will know who they will be talking to and what they need to prepare.
2. **Prepare your agenda** – Your time is not endless – you need to have a detailed agenda to guide you through the meeting and discuss everything on topic. Names next to topic items helps people be accountable and involved in the call.
3. **Set time limits** – It is easy to get off the topic. Set strict time limits and remember that you have a specific amount of time to handle everything you need to discuss.
4. **Prioritize your updates.** In larger meetings, prioritize what you will and won’t talk about. If you’re not sure what to keep and what to eliminate, a good rule of thumb is that you should talk about topics that move things forward and involve at least three members of your participants.
5. **Agree who is calling whom in advance** – Make sure everyone has the right number to call and avoid time delays and confusions. Generally, if you are asking something of someone else, you should offer to call them. If you are helping someone else, ask that person to call you to avoid having to chase anyone down.
6. **Dress appropriately.** Okay maybe not a big deal for conference calls but definitely for video calls. We can see you and sometimes more than you think we can. YES, pants matter!

##### Technical issues:

7. **If you are the host, call in early.** Most systems won’t allow participants to join if the host has not started the meeting.

8. **Check your device** – Your conferencing device (laptop, phone, or whatever device you're using to make a call) should be charged. Imagine what will happen if it suddenly turns off in the middle of the conversation!
9. **Choose the right location** – Make sure to choose a quiet area for the call. Be thoughtful about background noise, people, and pets. Make sure you are taking the call from a location with a good signal. Using landlines whenever possible helps avoid signal issues. Be upfront about call disruptions. Make sure to alert conference call participants of any factors that may disrupt your call.

### During the conference call

#### Etiquette:

10. **Don't be late** – Let's agree together that a conference call is also a meeting. You try to be on time in real life meetings, right? Treat conference calls similarly and be on time. If you know ahead of time that you're going to be late for a call, let the other person know.
11. **Introduce yourself** – When starting a conference call never forget to introduce yourself. It is very important that people know and get accustomed to your voice, so they understand who is talking. If there are people who you've never met, make sure that everyone introduces themselves by the name, so the speakers will have a better understanding of who are the attendees.
12. **Let other people talk** – While talking, pause regularly between your speaking segments. This will give an opportunity for participants to clarify or ask something.
13. **Speak loudly and clearly** -When you speak, slow down the rhythm of your speech, take pauses, and most importantly, speak loudly when you talk into the speakerphone. If you have a soft voice, sit as close to the phone (microphone) as you can.
14. **Identify yourself whenever you speak** – Nothing is more frustrating on a conference call than when you don't know who's speaking. If someone doesn't identify themselves, don't interrupt them. Wait until they are finished speaking and then politely ask them to say their name.
15. **Inform people about leaving the conference** – If you are leaving during the conversation, you should let other people know since it will be awkward and rude if somebody talks to you and then finds out you weren't on the call all that time.
16. **Account for dead air** - Silence is fine during an in-person meeting, but on a conference call, the quietness can lead to confusion. By narrating a small sequence of events, you can actively tell the other participants that you're still engaged in the call. And if that's not possible, politely say: "Let me think on it for a second."
17. **Use Your Mute Button** - That's the "mute" button—*not* the "hold" button. Music for your office may come on, and suddenly, the entire call is listening to the local radio station or your marketing messages. Use the mute button strategically. If you are muted for 90% of the call, you might not be fully paying attention.
18. **Have good body language** - If you really want to get your point across, stand while you talk. Most people sound more energetic and enthusiastic when they're standing. The lack of visuals on a conference call means that your voice must communicate what your body normally would.
19. **If the person you are calling does not pick up**, do not leave a message the first time. Try again a couple of minutes later, and if they don't pick up, leave a message, and email, letting them know you called and stating how much more time you'll be available. Don't call again after that unless it's urgent.

20. **Give the overview** of who you are and why you are calling within the first 120 seconds of the call, then set out your agenda or goal. The other people on the call should know what you want from them right away.
21. **In the first few minutes of each call**, confirm how long everyone has to talk, so you can manage the conversation accordingly.
22. **If you have more than three** people on the line, the organizer should do a quick roll call to make sure everyone is there and introduce them briefly if possible.
23. **Unless the call is about you sharing your expertise**, you should not be speaking for more than 70% of the time. If lots of people are on the line, that number drops to 25%.
24. **If you are the call organizer**, it is your job to call on people to participate if they are not speaking up and someone else is monopolizing the conversation.
25. **Don't be the person who's checking email** and needs to ask for a question to be repeated. If you find yourself checking email during most of your calls, they are either too long, there are too many people involved, you don't need to be on them, or perhaps you need some tips on how to focus your attention.
26. **Other people.** If there is the potential for others to be part of a conversation or walk in on a conversation please be thoughtful about your language and topics of conversation...as well as make sure others in your workspace (including pets) know you're on a call and don't walk in on the conversation in a compromised manner.

#### Productivity:

27. **Always stay on topic** – Take a look at your agenda if you feel like the meeting is going the other way around. You have specific things to discuss, so don't spend time on things that can be discussed out of the official call. When someone joins late it's not a good idea to waste time and fill them in on what happened. Instead, the late joiners can check the meeting notes or catch up with you after the call.
28. **Multi-tasking is a no-no!** If you were invited to the meeting your attendance is expected. If you are unable to participate at the time, work with the coordinator to reschedule.
29. **Save specialized conversations for an offline conversation.** If you know you need to discuss a specialized topic with one of the participants, come prepared with a brief overview on the matter, and then parlay the issue back to a later date.
30. **Tell your participants that the conference is wrapping up** – Don't just suddenly say "bye" and go out of the call. Five minutes before the end of the call, warn everyone that it's wrapping up, and ask if there are any questions. Do not let it run over, if possible—it's disrespectful of other people's time. The fact that the conversation is ending will give attendees the opportunity to say their final words or ask the last question(s).

#### Technical Issues

31. Mute yourself when you aren't speaking – That will ensure that no noise will disrupt the meeting. Also, don't forget to unmute yourself.

#### **After the conference call**

#### Productivity:

32. **Write down all the decisions made during the conference call** – Not only will this help you understand what you've achieved during the conference call but also will help you remember what your action list is. This also makes sure that everyone is on the same page before signing off.

33. **Share the results** – Send the next steps and the results of the conference call to the participants so they also know their tasks and duties.
34. **Connect with the new acquaintances** – If you get acquainted with new people during the conference call, make sure to connect with them via social media or email. This will ease future communication with them.
35. **Leave with a Goodbye** - Always sign off from a conference call with a formal goodbye. It's a phone call after all, and you would do the same thing if you were talking to a person one-on-one.

## BE WELL

It is important during this time to take care of yourself. This includes mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. That means paying attention to what are you taking in (news, media, others' feelings, etc.) and how you are caring for yourself, others, etc. Here are a few kind things you can do for yourself. These are meant to make you smile and give you fuel, so you'll have more energy to handle whatever comes your way.

- Breathe from your core – deep breaths
- Be mindful of what you watch and listen to
- Make and eat a delicious meal
- Clean out your email
- Hydrate with water
- Finish tasks around your home
- Make your bed
- Get out of your sweats
- Clean your car
- Breathe fresh air
- Organize your photos
- Exercise outside
- Look at the stars
- Let the sun hit your face
- Pick up the phone and call or FaceTime someone
- Start a creative project
- Read something positive
- Write a gratitude list

**Let us know what works for you and feel free to share other ideas as well.**

## THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." ~Unknown*

*"Some people dream of worthy accomplishments while others stay awake and do them." ~Unknown*

*"Quality only happens when we care enough to do our very best." ~Unknown*

*"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it...autograph your work with excellence." ~Unknown*

## HR BY THE NUMBERS

For the first time we are going to share the numbers that were. These numbers and data points were true only two to three months ago but we're thinking that perhaps things have changed.

- For the first time in a decade, women outnumber men on the U.S. payrolls, holding at 50.4% of the total non-farm payroll jobs according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. These numbers were released in December of last year. The increase is due to growth and of jobs in certain industries such as healthcare.
- Fifty percent of professionals say their work commute is stressful. Reported by workers, 48.37 minutes is the average round-trip daily commute time. (Really that's only 24 minutes a trip - that's nothing for those of us in BIG cities). AND of course, now... it's a breeze.
- Businesses are split on whether to share salary ranges with employees and candidates. In a LinkedIn 2019 Global Talent Trends report:
  - 51% said they don't share ranges and are unlikely to start
  - 22% don't share but are likely to start
  - 27% say they share salary ranges.
- Of those that share salary ranges:
  - 67% share with candidates early in the hiring process, and
  - 59% share with employees but only
  - 48% share publicly on job posts.
- There are many benefits of sharing. Employers stated it helps streamline negotiations (57%) ensures fair pay (55%) and filters out those likely to decline (54%). And as you might imagine the top reason not to share is the worry it would create salary disputes.
- According to the latest SHRM research 26% of Americans admit to talking politics in the workplace on a regular basis - at least 15 minutes per work week.
- The number of healthcare jobs in the U.S. will grow nearly 12% between 2018 and 2028 according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projections - nearly double the projected rate of all occupations.
- According to a 2017 Prudential survey, 90% of hospital executives believe that in the next 10 years they will experience a deficiency of specialists, general physicians, nurses, and other clinicians, which will hamper their ability to deliver high quality care.
- According to the global healthcare outlook by Deloitte in 2019 the top causes of current hospital staffing issues included increased demand for healthcare, heavy workload, poor work-life balance, declining morale, and well-being concerns.

## REMINDER: NEW I-9 FORM

The new online version of the I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form has been issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The new form dated October 21, 2019, is effective May 1.

The new form lists additional countries in the Country of Issuance field in section 1, among other minor changes visible only when completing the electronic version of the form.

The I-9 is used to verify the identity and employment authorization of individuals hired for employment in the United States. All U.S. employers must properly complete the I-9 for each person they hire in the U.S., including both citizens and noncitizens. Employers must retain the completed forms and make them available for inspection. Visit [I-9 Central](#) for more information.

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Open your DayTimers, Outlook, and all those Smartphones. The following is a look at upcoming events and workshops, special days, and other diverse and fun activities you will want to be aware of and schedule.

**PLEASE NOTE: due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have adjusted our educational calendar offerings.** To register for our workshops, go to <https://hranswers.com/events/> or click on the event below.

**May: It is National Asparagus, Barbecue, Hamburger, Bike, Dental Care Awareness, Egg, Photography, Strawberry, Walking, Skin Cancer Awareness, Women's Health, Teen Self-Esteem, and Water Safety Month!**

- May 2** National Brother and Sister Day
- May 4** International Firefighters Day
- May 5** Cinco de Mayo
- May 6** **HR Lunch Bunch – Webinar/Teleconference**  
[Topic: Improving Communication](#)  
12:00pm – 1:00pm
  
- May 7** World Laughter Day
- May 10** Mothers' Day
- May 11** Eat What You Want Day
- May 12** International Nurses Day
  
- May 13** **HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
Preventing Burnout  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)
- May 13** National Apple Pie Day
- May 14** **HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
How to Reduce Staff  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)

**May 15** National Pizza Party Day  
**May 16** National Mimosa Day  
**May 20** Pick Strawberries Day  
**May 21 HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
How to Apply COVID-19 Protections  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)

**May 25** Memorial Day  
National Wine Day  
**May 27 HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
How to Bring Employees Back  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)  
**May 30** Water a Flower Day

#### Coming Up:

**June 1** Say Something Nice Day  
**June 3 HR Lunch Bunch Online – Free Webinar/Teleconference**  
Topic: Promoting Employees  
12:00pm-1:00pm  
[Register Here](#)  
**June 4** National Cheese Day  
**June 5** National Hot Air Balloon  
**June 7** National Chocolate Ice Cream  
**June 9 HRA will be participating in *The Seminar Group's Labor & Employment Law Conference.***  
For more information: <https://www.theseminargroup.net/seminardetl.aspx?id=20.EMPOR>.  
Our guests are eligible for a \$200 discount off the normal rate! **Use Promo Code FAC200** when you register. We hope you can participate!

**June 16 HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
Corrective Action  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)

**June 23 HRA Webinar/Teleconference**  
Preventing Burnout  
9:00am – 10:30am  
[Register Here](#)

#### Looking Ahead:

**July 7 to HRA Supervisory Series – Tigard/Portland**  
**Aug. 25** 8:30am-12:30pm  
[Register Here](#)

View more details and register for our workshops on our website at [hranswers.com](https://hranswers.com).

## ON MY SOAPBOX

This month my Soapbox is based on an idea gleaned from *Harvard Business Review*. So, thanks to the author and editor of the article. For those who want to see the article, I have included a link at the bottom of this for you.

I don't mean to sound like Pollyanna, but even with the most gruesome of emergencies, there is always a silver lining. Sometimes you must look carefully to find it and I suspect there are some who would disagree and feel that there is no silver lining to Covid-19. But I would respectfully disagree.

Have you noticed the substantial increase in innovation, creativity, and ingenuity being demonstrated throughout this pandemic? I am once again impressed by the fact that when people are stressed, it doesn't prevent them from coming up with great ideas. In fact, the pressure that they are experiencing seems to generate new ideas and solutions.

I have a grandson that should have had his Senior Prom, his Senior party, and maybe most importantly, his graduation this year. But Covid-19 took all of that away. Because of that, I have been sad and regretful at how much he is missing. Once I really began to think about it, I realized that he was missing something, but years from now he would have a great story to tell about the graduation that wasn't.

I was surprised by a couple of things that made the news regarding non-graduations. There was a Principal in Texas who drove 800 miles to see each of his 612 Seniors. Virdie Montgomery, Principal of Wylie High School said this, "The most valuable gift any of us can give anyone that isn't replaceable is time. Where one spends one's time says a lot about what they value." He obviously valued his students and his personal contact made an indelible impression on them. If you want to know more, here is a link for you: <https://www.upworthy.com/principal-drives-800-miles-to-congratulate-each-graduating-senior-in-person>

A second story in the news that I marveled at was a story about Tom Pettoello, the Art teacher at Rogers and East Valley high schools in Washington. He decided that since the Seniors weren't going to have graduation, the least he could do was to ensure that the students experienced something special. So, he headed for the lush green of the football field. He started by writing, "A lot of good kids here." And then he proceeded to write each Senior's name. He invited the students to come sit by their name and have a new Senior picture taken. If you want more info on this, here is a link for you: <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2020/apr/17/a-lot-of-good-kids-here-names-of-rogers-grads-insc/>

If you have been surfing the web, reading the newspaper, or watching TV, you have probably seen stories like this. I don't think these new expressions of value would have happened if it weren't for the pandemic.

Creativity like this is not just the realm of education; it can happen in employment as well. Employers can use this crisis to think new thoughts and take new actions. We can reach out to employees who have been furloughed or the ones who are still working under difficult circumstances. Sending them a Starbucks card for a refreshing drink along with a note saying "We are thinking about you" is one small way to start. I am sure you will think of a myriad of ways to show that you value them and recognize that this time is not easy for anyone. Showing that you care will be a memory that employees will have for a long time.

Here is that Harvard Business Review link I promised. <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/the-one-good-thing-caused-by-covid-19-innovation>. Take care and stay well!!

*Judy Clark, Founder*

