HR Answers

advantage

August 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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IT'S BUDGET TIME

Is your organization one of the many which conducts their budgeting process during late Summer early Fall? If so, it's time to start thinking about your needs for next year. While this is usually a lengthy and difficult process, it does give an organization the opportunity to think about the direction it is headed, both employee and management development, as well as services, projects and expenses that might be appropriate for the coming year.

Once you determine the types of activities you plan to engage in during the upcoming year, a dollar (or resources) figure must be associated with it. It is not always easy to identify how much should be set aside for upcoming activities. Give us a call; we welcome the opportunity to help you estimate costs for any Human Resource projects that you might be considering.

To help you identify project work for which we might be an appropriate resource, a list of some of our services is here for your reference. Typically, we assist organizations by handling assignments where outside objectivity and/or technical expertise is needed. Some of the projects we specialize in are:

- Pay or salary research and salary structure design (yes, including Pay Equity);

- Development or revision of employee handbooks or policy manuals;

- Drafting job descriptions;

- Development of incentive plan(s) that tie your pay program to employee or team performance;

- A survey of your employees to get their perspective on workplace practices, policies, and/or benefits;

- Training programs that increase supervisory/managerial skills, enhance communication, or provide awareness of harassment; and,

- If this is the year that your employee count will cross one of those critical headcount thresholds that changes your compliance requirements (ADA, FMLA, AAP, OFLA, ERISA, etc.), we are capable of helping you meet those new requirements as well as navigate new requirements like FFCRA.

If you are working with a tight budget (or just want the learning experience) and need to do some of the work "in-house," we urge you to call us to find out what resources are available to aid in your project (i.e., manual and packets, research resources or online computer services, library materials, etc.). We are pleased to offer these resources and are happy to assist by providing a review of your initial work. There is no charge for any member of our staff to speak with you, and it would be our pleasure to assist you in your HR planning.
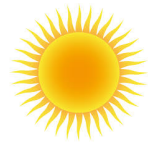
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"I DID NOT KNOW YOU DID THAT" – HR AUDITS

This article is dedicated to expanding your understanding of what HR Answers does, because we often hear *"I didn't know you did that!"* First, let's start with why an organization might want to conduct and HR Audit is (or, as some prefer to call it, an HR Review). A healthy HR function in an organization is as important as the physical and mental wellbeing of a human body. Typically, an organization may conduct an HR audit to get a clear picture of the overall status of HR in the organization and to find out whether certain systems put in place are yielding any results. HR audits can also help organizations identify any gaps, misses or lapses with compliance activity, and the reasons for those. Every organization plans certain systems and targets; and an HR audit can compare the plans to actual implementation.

Some of the potential benefits of an HR Audit include:

- Ensure effective utilization of human resources.
- Review compliance with laws and regulations (both state and federal).
- Instill a sense of confidence in the human resource department that it is well-managed and prepared to meet potential challenges and opportunities.
- Maintain or enhance the organization's reputation in a community.
- Identify and address HR-related concerns.
- Seek out HR-related opportunities.
- Conduct due diligence for mergers and acquisitions.
- Support initial public offerings.
- Give HR recognition for a job well done!

An HR audit involves an objective look at the organization's HR policies, practices, procedures, and strategies to protect the organization, establish best practices, and identify opportunities for improvement. An objective review of the organization's "current state" can help you evaluate whether specific practice areas are adequate, legal, and/or effective. The results can provide decision-makers with the information necessary to decide what areas need improvement. There are four different types of HR audits:

- **Compliance:** Focuses on how well the organization is complying with current federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- **Best Practices:** Helps the organization maintain or improve a competitive advantage by comparing its practices with those of firms identified as having exceptional HR practices.
- **Strategic:** Focuses on strengths and weaknesses of systems and processes to determine whether they align with the HR department's and/or the organization's strategic plan.
- **Function-Specific:** Focuses on a specific area in the HR function (e.g., payroll, performance management, records retention, etc.).

The general process of conducting an audit includes seven key steps:

1. Determine the scope and type of audit.

2. Develop the audit questionnaire.

3. Collect the data.

4. Benchmark the findings.

5. Provide feedback about the results.

6. Create recommendations or action plans.

7. Foster a climate of continuous improvement.

To learn more about these steps or explore if an HR Audit/Review would be a good step for your organization, please give us a call, and let us know if we can help. You can also click HERE for a sample checklist to see the areas we cover.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

By Paul Hutter, SPHR, Senior Consultant

Are your employees satisfied, or are they engaged? Employee engagement is not the same as employee satisfaction. Satisfaction indicates how content your employees are. Disengaged workers feel no real connection to their jobs and tend to do the bare minimum. Whereas engagement identifies their commitment to the organization, its employees, and customers. Engaged employees are what drives performance and what moves an organization from good to great. Engaged employees embrace change, search out ways to improve, and challenge the status quo.

Gallup distinguishes between employees who are "actively engaged" (loyal and productive), "not engaged" (average performers) and "actively disengaged" (ROAD warriors, or "retired on active duty"). Gallup also identifies that less than one third of the American workforce is engaged.

The level of employee job satisfaction in an organization often relates to factors over which the organization has control (such as pay, benefits and job security), whereas engagement levels are largely controlled or significantly influenced by the employee's manager (through job assignments, trust, recognition, day-to-day communications, etc.).

How is Engagement Determined? Employee engagement surveys have a different focus than other types of employee surveys. While employee opinion and satisfaction surveys measure workers' views, attitudes and perceptions of their organization, an employee culture survey measures employees' points of view to assess whether they align with the organization or its departments. Engagement surveys measure employees' commitment, motivation, sense of purpose and passion for their work and the organization. Employee engagement surveys have been developed specifically to measure the performance, strategic alignment, competency, and satisfaction of contributors.

Don't Ask if You Don't Want to Know. The results of an opinion/engagement survey can be extremely helpful to altering the culture of an organization if they are used. All too often an organization will conduct a survey, only to find they do not like the results. Common practice at this point is to do nothing. When you ask, you create an expectation. So, if your organization is going to conduct a survey, ensure the organization is prepared to do something with the results.

Planned Interventions. HR can lead the charge to create an effective employee engagement strategy, but it needs to be embraced by the entire organization. There is a clear gap between the optimism of upper management and what middle managers experience with their teams. To understand the whole-organization picture, it's essential to have an effective, multi-directional communication strategy in the organization. Effective communication is one of the most important factors that is most likely to bring company success. Organizations that thrive can articulate and communicate what success looks like – as individual employees, teams and departments, and the company as a whole. This increases engagement across the organization.

In their book *Follow This Path*, Curt Coffman and Gabriel Gonzalez-Molina report the average engagement figures for the United States: 30 percent Engaged, 54 percent Not Engaged, and 16 percent Actively Disengaged. This and other research point to the fact that "Leadership Has Failed." In Keith Ayers' book, *Engagement is Not Enough*, Keith points to leadership development programs that need to focus on:

- Leadership training is ineffective. Instead, development needs to be pin-pointed to the gaps in leaderships skill sets (predominately emotional intelligence), development of many skills, repetition, and consistent application over long periods of time. There is no silver bullet.
- Emotional Intelligence is not a fad. It has been proven time and again to be the single largest gain in improving leadership and ultimately workplace culture (which is directly related to employee engagement).
- Accountability is key. Without it, cultural change and engagement will never happen. At a minimum organization's need to track behavioral changes in leadership after a development program. More importantly, they need to track workplace cultural changes over time.

In the book the *Carrot Principle* by Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton they reference that good leaders have what they called the "basic four". These are goal setting, communication, trust, and accountability. They assert that if you take each of these attributes and combine them with ongoing purposeful employee recognition that you will get engagement.

Employee engagement and employee satisfaction are not the same things. If your goal is improved organization culture and performance, then the first step is to measure engagement followed closely by making the necessary changes within the organization to improve them.

Join us on September 2nd for HR Lunch Bunch where our discussion topic will be Employee Engagement. This is an opportunity to learn more and share your experience with others. For more details click here.

HAS IT CHANGED? RECRUITING, HIRING, AND ONBOARDING DURING COVID-19

Over the last few months HR Answers has been assisting clients with recruitment and the hiring of new employees. While there have been some modifications to the process due to the pandemic, overall not much has changed from earlier this year. Clients are using Zoom more for interviews, and sometimes also for onboarding. Most have elected to still meet with the top two finalists, mask-to-mask, for final in-person interview selection.

Special Note: Skilled labor and professionals/office support are still in high demand! Immediately contacting qualified candidates after they have applied to set up phone screenings remains critical. Keeping the recruitment process moving along as quickly as possible to ensure top talent does not take other offers is also important. This means within weeks of posting the job opening, final interviews for both non-exempt and exempt roles need to be concluded and offers extended if you want successful recruitments.

If you do not have the time, energy, or the expertise for most of the talent acquisition process, our Recruiting and Staffing department can assist! We provide help with the job descriptions, salary surveys, create specific interview questions, advertise the openings, conduct phone, Zoom, and final interviews, manage all candidate correspondence, and more!

Additionally, here also are some good resources for your recruitment and/or onboarding processes:
https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15723-hiring-coronavirus.html
and
https://www.hrtechnologist.com/interviews/recruitment-onboarding/hire-talent-post-coronavirus-pandemic/

Please don't hesitate to reach out to Gail at gmuller@hranswers.com or call 503-885-9815 to set up a time to chat.

HOW TO BE A 'FAVORITE BOSS'

The way we are managing employees today is a bit different. We need to manage anxiety while moving toward a new business model that focuses on accountability and productivity for our remote workforce. You are exploring and finding new and more effective ways of communicating when the benefit of being present and management by walking around is not available. You are tasked with strengthening your team and creating a deeper sense of trust and camaraderie even though there is distance or gaps in connecting. This might mean the way you have conducted business has been turned upside down. And yet the mother of invention is based on necessity. So, you are finding new and innovative ways of getting the job done and perhaps in some cases, even better than before.

In some respects, this time has been a wonderful opportunity to reset. As a supervisor you have an opportunity to reinvent yourself, your relationship to your team, and your leadership approach.

To keep yourself motivated and growing in the right direction, ask yourself this question: "How do I become someone's favorite boss in this new dynamic?

When we work with Supervisors, we often ask them to tell us about their favorite boss and their eyes light up and they say things like:

- They always made me feel like they had my back.
- They listened, really listened to my ideas and my concerns.
- They challenged me to do things I didn't think I was capable of.
- They made me feel included, they appreciated my input, and I felt like I could almost do no wrong when working with them.

What you realize when hearing these types of descriptions is that when people describe these individuals, they talk about who that person *is*, not necessarily what that person *did*. But more important than that is how they made someone feel, that lasts forever. It is the boss's character, encouragement, and personal concern (empathy), and involvement that makes someone a favorite boss. So now is the time ask "Who am I, and who do I choose to be in this work relationship and during these more challenging times? What do I want my legacy to be?

If now is the time for you to be working on yourself as a Supervisor, we encourage you to join us for our upcoming Supervisor Series starting in September. https://hranswers.com/events/fall-2020-supervisory-success-series-portland-tigard/

EMPLOYEES ACTING OUT – BE AWARE

It is fair to say that we are all navigating the new challenges if front of us differently. It is not surprising that when employees feel a lack of control and a high degree of stress that they might act out. According to Gartner's Surveys periods of uncertainty increase employee misconduct by as much as thirty-three percent.

This can look like missed deadlines, clumsiness, rude or inappropriate comments to co-workers or customers, arguments or walking away during an uncomfortable conversation, misuse of tools or equipment, and bouts with tardiness or absences. Clearly these are times when an employee needs a "reminder" conversation that they are not meeting expectations and what is needed going forward. And of course, make notes that you had the conversation. Just because COVID is here does not mean employees get a pass.

Of course, our concern is greater when the misconduct continues or increases in severity.
Things like damage to your property, becoming hostile to other colleagues, fraud, unauthorized removal of company property and even insubordination will elevate the conversation. Employers must once again document instances of this misconduct in the employee's file and provide the employee with a written warning that serves as proof of notice should the situation escalate beyond a single instance.

While it might be understandable as to why the employee(s) is acting out we still need to provide guidance and accountability for not only their performance but for their behaviors on the job. This is when a supervisor can start leading with heart and the head. Clearly the employee is not coping well and needs support. This is a wonderful time to encourage employees to utilize the services of the employee assistance plan. A source of assistance outside of the organization.

The goal is *always* to get the inappropriate behavior to stop. Because if we cannot, this could lead us to more serious corrective action activity, potentially a separation and of course depending on the situation, an

internal investigation. In our work as a consulting firm we've often been asked to conduct an internal investigation. They are not pretty, often awkward, and always time consuming for everyone involved. Many of these challenges stem from not following through and holding people accountable but it is also employees who are making poor choices.

We encourage supervisors, at all levels, to pay close attention to their employees during these trying times and when they start behaving unlike themselves. It is possible what you really have on your hands is a request for help. And if we can get to it early enough it stays at this level and is much easier to work with.

THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

Words are powerful things. They inspire us, make us think, make us laugh, make us wonder, and make us wish we'd come up with that saying first.

Several of us print quotes out and read them over and over again, discovering new meaning each time. Just a simple quote can change the way we feel about life or keep us going when things are getting tough. They remind us that others have shared our experiences and challenges.

Each month we'll present you with quotes to inspire and entertain you so you, too, can discover the power of words.

"Don't worry about failures, worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try." – Jack Canfield

*"The pain you feel today is the strength you feel tomorrow. For every challenge encountered there is opportunity for growth." – **Unknown***

"Build your own dreams, or someone else will hire you to build theirs." – Farrah Gray

"The only thing that stands between you and your dream is the will to try and the belief that it is actually possible." – Joel Brown

"Self-confidence is the most attractive quality a person can have. How can anyone see how awesome you are if you can't see it yourself?" – Unknown

*"We learn something from everyone who passes through our lives...Some lessons are painful, some are painless... but, all are priceless." – **Unknown***

"Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections." – Unknown

"Love what you have. Need what you want. Accept what you receive. Give what you can. Always remember, what goes around, comes around..." – Unknown

GENERATIONAL GAP

Today, running a business involves dealing with many kinds of people and age groups. The generational gap in the workplace is the difference in behavior and outlook between groups of people who were born at distinctly different times. Because each generation grows up in and with a different context, they have different work expectations when they are on the job. Learning how to communicate with the different generations can eliminate major confrontations and misunderstandings in the workplace. Recognizing and understanding the varying needs of people at different stages of their lives and career can improve workplace productivity.

At work, generational differences can affect everything, from recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing, and maintaining and increasing productivity. People communicate based on their generational backgrounds and each generation has different attitudes, behaviors, expectations, habits, and means by which they are motivated. Generational differences, relative to how people communicate, might affect misunderstandings, high employee turnover, difficulty in attracting employees, and gaining employee commitment.

As HR professionals, we recognize that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to managing multiple generations in the workplace; and that our role within the organization is to help it adapt as the workforce changes and grows.

We also recognize there are many benefits of a multigenerational workforce. Managers must be aware of the characteristics of the five workplace generations and act accordingly. Each generation has varied strengths and concerns as well as differences in styles and expectations which can sometimes create tension. This transition in age demographics presents organizations with both challenges and opportunities**.** The three key areas for opportunities are those of growth, development, and collaboration or cooperation.

Studying the work habits of each generation and proactively anticipating their needs can help organizations devise effective human capital management strategies going forward.

Examining what each generation brings to the workforce and how managers should respond to these traits can divide the field of generations into common classifications. Understanding the generational differences and traits can go a long way toward improving interaction between them. These five groups share some traditional work values but differ on the role of the manager, issues of loyalty, technical competence, and how much time must be spent on the job to define a good day's work. They also differ in terms of personal lifestyles and social values. These fundamental differences constitute the 'generation gap.' Believe it or not, members of each generation do tend to exhibit similar characteristics, however managers should be careful not to stereotype their employees based on these tendencies.

If you have time join us for Free HR Lunch Bunch on Aug 5 at 12noon for a discussion about our five generations in the workplace. https://hranswers.com/events/lunch-bunch-generational-considerations/

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.

To register for our workshops, go to https://hranswers.com/events/ or click on the event below.

August: National month of Crayon Collection, Eye Exam, Family Fun, Goat Cheese, Happiness Happens, Romance Awareness, Water Quality, Sandwich, and Wellness.

Aug 2   National Ice Cream Sandwich Day

Aug 4   National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day

Aug 5   **HRA Lunch Bunch Webinar – FREE**
Topic: Generational Considerations
12:00pm to 1:00pm
Register Here

Aug 13   **HRA Webinar**
Emotional Intelligence
9:00am to 10:30am
Register Here

Aug 13   **Job Search Workshop – Free Webinar**
11:00am to 1:00pm
Register Here

Aug 15   National Relaxation Day

Aug 18   **HRA Webinar: Just Cause – Due Process**
9:00am to 10:30am
Register Here

Aug 27   National Banana Lovers Day

COMING UP:

Sep 2   **HR Lunch Bunch Webinar - FREE**
Topic: Employee Engagement
12:00pm to 1:00pm
Register Here

Sep 3   **HRA Webinar: Do You Have a Renegade on the Team?**
9:00am to 10:30am
Register Here

Sep 10 to **Supervisor Success - Eight Week Series**
Oct 29 8:30am to 12:30pm
Register Here

Sep 22 **HRA Webinar: Second Chance Employment**
9:00am to 10:30am
Register Here

Sep 24 **Job Search Workshop – Free Webinar**
11:00am to 1:00pm
Register Here

HR LINK

As many of you are experiencing and know, more than 70% of the US population is currently under a local or state order to stay at home to slow the spread of COVID-19. For those who wish to use their time even more productively, there are several original programs that can add tremendous value to creating a more inclusive work environment (maybe even the world). Check out this link to programs for reinforcement of your DEI efforts and creating a more inclusive and sense of belonging workplace.

5 Must Watch Originals on Apple TV+, Netflix and YouTube for Today's Inclusive Leader

Q & A: COVID 19

Whether it's the CDC, DOL, a Health Authority, the Governor of your state, OSHA, or another public official's website you are sure to find a Q & A section that is growing on a regular basis with their frequently asked questions. As we continue to assist clients, we also have frequently asked Q & A. Below are the top five. As a reminder, while the pandemic is a new situation many of the good HR practices you have in place will answer almost every question you have. Act in good faith, be consistent, and document.

Q: **An employee has asked to be laid off because they do not want to be exposed to the potential of getting the virus. Should we go ahead and lay them off?**

A: No. A layoff is undertaken due to business necessity. And, during layoff process the organization must identify the process for determining which employees will be laid off using non-discriminatory factors. While that process can include volunteers, in the area of need, the process is started because of a decline or shift in business need. Rather, the employee needs to be reassured of the safe working practices that have been undertaken by the organization or potentially be allowed to work from home, depending on the job. In the best-case scenario the unintended consequences will be the financial impact to your organization and in the worst-case scenario it could be considered fraud.

Q: **Our business is slowly returning, and we have begun the process to recall employees. Employees have said no to recall and want to remain on Unemployment Insurance. That is fine, right?**

A: **No.** We hope you have a recall policy in your handbook and that you are following it. However, we know this is a frequently missed item in handbooks. Just as business necessity determines when they

are laid off, business necessity also determines recall. If you have an employee who has said no to recall, they have essentially resigned their position.   This needs to be made clear. However, it is also very important to learn why the employee is saying no. If the reason is one of the six (6) Families First Coronavirus Response Act qualifying reasons you must bring the employee back and approve the qualifying leave.

Q: **One of my employees was notified that they were directly exposed to an individual who tested positive for the virus. Several employees have worked with the employee who was directly exposed. Do we need to send everyone home?**

A: **No.** Only the individual who was directly exposed needs to contact the practitioner for additional guidance, which may require some leave (or working from home, if possible). This individual needs to watch for symptoms and inform a point if contact if any symptoms arise. The organization should continue to follow guidance on face coverings, social distancing and office cleaning and re-assure other employees that the work environment is safe.

Q: **Our organization has a Workshare agreement with the Employment Department where our employee receive partial Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Can an employee take PTO and still receive their UI benefits?**

A: **No.** An employee must be ready and able to work to qualify for their UI benefits. Taking any kind of leave would indicate the employee was not ready or able to work and this would likely impact their benefit calculation for that week.   However, if the organization finds it needs to reduce the number of hours, from what was agreed to, an employee may use appropriate paid leave to make up the difference without impact to their UI benefit calculation.

Q: **Most of our staff continue to telecommute and, at first, ultimate flexibility was provided as it was new to all of us and we were just trying to get work done. Looking ahead, telecommute may be our way of doing business for much longer than we anticipated. Do you have a sample policy?**
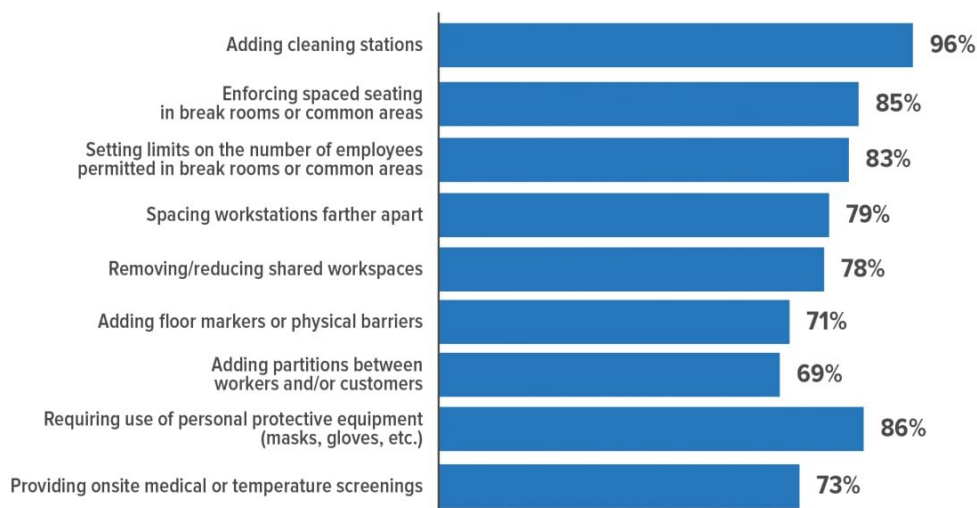
A: **Yes.** You also need an agreement form. By changing the work location, you are impacting the working conditions. Both the employer and employee need to understand what that means. Everything from schedules, IT hardware to Workers' Compensation coverage.

HR BY THE NUMBERS

Setting a return date is a good idea, two-thirds of HR professionals said, because it eases job-security concerns among staff, especially for those in physical and service industries such as health care, retail, and education. SHRM conducted a survey that collected responses in mid-May of 1,087 SHRM members working in HR. This research gives a glimpse into how COVID-19 has changed the world of work, and what workplaces will look like once they return.

EMPLOYERS CONSIDER COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS FOR RETURNING EMPLOYEES

Employers have implemented or are considering implementing some of the following physical changes to their work sites as they prepare to welcome employees back into the workplace.

Change	Percentage
Adding cleaning stations	96%
Enforcing spaced seating in break rooms or common areas	85%
Setting limits on the number of employees permitted in break rooms or common areas	83%
Spacing workstations farther apart	79%
Removing/reducing shared workspaces	78%
Adding floor markers or physical barriers	71%
Adding partitions between workers and/or customers	69%
Requiring use of personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, etc.)	86%
Providing onsite medical or temperature screenings	73%

Source: Society for Human Resource Management report, *Navigating COVID-19: Returning to the Workplace.*

Other strategies include:

- Staggering the start and stop of employees' workdays as well as break times to reduce the number of workers in one location at the same time (75%).
- Reducing the number of customers permitted on site at one time and taking measures such as counting the number of people as they enter (78%).
- Limiting the number of employees or customers on site at one time (81%).

ON MY SOAPBOX

Deborah Jeffries, Guest Contributor

One of the best actions you can take to improve your personal growth and development is to learn to take a closer look at your attitude. Every day you bring your attitude with you and it impacts your personal and professional relationships, work performance, friends, family, etc.

I generally start my workshops by asking a simple question: *"How are you feeling today – what's your attitude, what did you bring with you today?"* Sometimes, this brings bewildered looks to the faces of the attendees. Sometimes people want to be in my class and sometimes someone else thought it would be beneficial for them to attend. My goal is to get a feel for the room. This then allows me to know how much of a hill I need to climb to get the temperature of the room to a more positive setting for the best learning to take place. They are not alone. I must also check my own internal temperature before each class to make sure the vibe is what I want it to be. Listening to music before I start a program helps me get in the right frame of mind. Attitude is everything. It impacts the way others view and experience you.

We all make choices, literally thousands each day (what you will wear, eat, etc.). We can choose our attitude. We choose to have positive motivated conversations with ourselves or we can go down the path of negativity and misery. Believe it or not, it is a superpower we all have. All of us have experienced challenging times, had hurt feelings, as well as physical and emotional pain. The key is to realize it is not what happens to you that matters but rather it is how you choose to respond to the situation (you'll notice I did not say react...responding means being intentional).

The voice you pay attention to and hear the loudest is yours. This is true if you talk out loud or just have the internal dialogue going. Your brain hears you!! You are either your best or worst self-critic. No one said it was easy, it is hard work to be positive and optimistic. Things can be hard enough without working against yourself too.

This message is for all of you as much as it is a reminder to me as well. I have a purple rubber bracelet that I wear it says, "Complaint Free World". The message is clear, do not complain - be a problem solver. Again, choices we make.

Here are few strategies that I have used from an article from ***Success Magazine*** www.success.com/blog/attitude and perhaps you can apply to improve your attitude (or share with others):

Positive Affirmations. Affirmations repeated several times each day, every day, serve to reprogram your subconscious. An affirmation is made up of words charged with power, conviction, and faith. This serves as your mantra. You can pick from someone else's (Hoda Kotb "Don't let anyone steal your joy"), visit I AM MANTRA www.iammantra.com/todaysmantra or make up one of your own.

Self-Motivation. Discover what motivates you—what pushes you to take action to change your habits, your life. Self-motivation is one of the five key areas of emotional intelligence. You need to understand what lies below and drives you to believing in yourself.

A Positive Greeting. We used to have an employee who had a great response to the daily question "How are you doing. He always responded, "living the dream". We usually hear "fine". That is a response we do not expect to hear. That one statements says something about the individual, your perception of him and it usually elicits a conversation.

Humor. Humor is a powerful influence. I have a file folder filled with paper (yes, a hard copy). that I keep that has cartoons, cards, letter, jokes, etc. When I am feeling down or need a little jolt, I look through the contents and remember the positive kind words others have shared with me. I am a big believer in less stress live more. So, laugh. Positive energy coming from you is picked up on by others.

The Power of Words—The Success article references WOW words. Words and thoughts released to the universe cannot be taken back. We need to be thoughtful and watch our words.

Visualization. Studies of the psychology of peak performance have found that most great "performers" in all categories use affirmations and visualizations either consciously or subconsciously to enhance and focus their skills. Sports players and Olympians do it all the time. They see their performance and they see the win. Really see yourself walking and talking in a positive, upbeat manner in your interactions with others. Visualization works.

Let us know if one of these methods resonates with you. Feel free to step up to the challenge and make a commitment to yourself about what you will do to bring a more positive attitude to everything and everyone around you. And good luck, I know you can do it!