



advantage



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Holiday Expectations Causing Angst?

The holidays are shaping up for many individuals, their families, and us as employers. Many will not be spending the time the way they did last year and that may lead to expectations not being met.

Everyone will have their own level of comfort this year and that may be different than previous family and work gatherings. This is okay, we don't have to try to make-up for last year.

Here are some friendly reminders that could help if you are having some Holiday activities:

1. Keep your expectations of others at bay. If you have expectations, let them be for yourself. Remember you can't control others or change them, so don't even try. Just relax and enjoy the moments.
2. Stop with aiming for perfection and focus on the joy and allowing things and people to be what and who they are.
3. Set healthy boundaries for yourself so you are doing what is right for you and allow others to deal with the office and family gatherings in their own way. Just be inclusive! You are not responsible for the feelings or reactions of others.
4. Be aware if you have triggers during the season. This is an excellent time to practice self-awareness and then self-regulation. If the triggers are overwhelming perhaps looking toward your EAP for assistance would help.
5. There is a phrase "fake it till you make it." Instead, we would suggest you allow everyone to embrace all feelings this season and see them as an important part of the whole individual and that they are being their authentic self. Dance to the beat of your own drum while also being respectful of all the other drumbeats out there!
6. The Holiday season can be a busy one and perhaps many will try to make up for last year.... please remember the gift of self-care!
7. Worry less about gifts and more about creating a culture of sharing and caring. Create moments now! Remember good times and laughter and such – those last longer than any white elephant gift, etc.



Remember it is our expectations that get us in trouble. It's another year, another season, another holiday, and yes, this one could be different. Create opportunities for others (opportunities to connect, to bond, to share, etc.) they'll either participate or they won't. Focus on meeting your employees where they are at in this moment of time.

Holiday Parties

The season for holiday parties has arrived and depending on your circumstances this year may look different than last year's activities. For business people holiday parties tend to be looked upon as an opportunity for a combination of fun and celebration together with a chance for additional networking that will result in potentially profitable business connections.

How do you make the most of the networking possibilities or even decide if an event is worth attending? The suggestions below—which can also make sense all year long—are offered to help make your holiday events more enjoyable and your time more productive.

- Beforehand, go through the list of registrants, if possible. For some events, the names, and affiliations of those planning to attend will be distributed.
- Select from registrants those who might be interesting to meet as valuable connections, business or otherwise—or who you might enjoy helping in some way.
- If no one looks interesting to meet, do not go or do not stay long.
- Plan to meet two or three new people, and when you arrive search them out.
- Bring your calendar— on mobile phone.
- Bring plenty of business cards (yes, they are still a thing), but you can also swap information via your cell phone.
- Greet those you already know well or see often, but do not spend too much time with them; you have others to meet.
- Beforehand, find or create something interesting or stimulating to share that is related to your interests or business activities. This could be some major wins or roadblocks you face.
- Beforehand, think of some original questions to ask that will stimulate conversation and demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person (for example “What is a strength you have that I could not find on LinkedIn or your resume?”; “What is your dream retirement plan?”; “What is something that you are excited about right now?”; and “What was your last trip or is your next adventure?”)
- Carefully prepare your answer to the question, “What do you do?” The best answers tell what results you get for whom and stimulate further questions, such as, “How do you do that?”



- Consider having a backup sports or popular news story to discuss—while avoiding topics that are considered too controversial or inflammatory.
- Look for opportunities to gather signups for your regular updates or newsletters.
- Appear approachable—a smile and eye contact are usually all it takes.
- Get a commitment for coffee from at least one interesting person— “On a scale of 1 to 10, how interested would you be in meeting for coffee?”
- Plan an interruption strategy of sort to get away from the boring conversations. Don’t be condescending about it. Remember, each of us is a bore to someone.
- Listen and observe carefully and look for ways to say something supportive or helpful. For example, after several minutes of conversation, you could ask, “What is one challenge you face on which you would like three ideas for going forward?”
- When done with the event (meaning there is nothing more you can gain or contribute) depart without looking disappointed.
- Perhaps this can all be summed up by saying: at networking parties, don’t waste your time, and don’t make it all about you, look for ways to contribute to others.

Keys to Effective Coaching



One of the most critical supervisory or managerial roles is coaching employees. Whether it is teaching them some process or procedure they don’t know, or addressing an issue that has surfaced, or dealing with a repetitive behavior that is compromising their success, the supervisor as coach can have a profound impact on the employee personally and professionally. The sad truth is that coaching is not a native skill possessed by all of us. It must be learned and practiced in order to be effective.

One of the first, and most necessary steps is to think about what acting as a coach requires. Some of the research suggests that the following five items (which just happen to spell out the word “coach”) are a great place to start.

C = Commitment to the desired results

O = Observation and feedback

A = Assessment

C = Challenge

H = Holding them accountable, so they achieve their desired results (see related article on Accountability)

It is also essential from the first coaching contact and throughout the relationship with any employee that you listen for successes. They are the best building blocks to help the employee accomplish whatever is necessary. Everyone has had some occasion when they have tried or persisted with something that has worked out, been successful. Remind the employee that they have achieved in the past and give them confidence of achieving in the future.

Ask the employee about areas of their life, including those other than work, so you can build a better picture of patterns of thinking, beliefs, and success stories, as well as a sense of areas where they seem to have recurring challenges or difficulties.

“What is of greatest concern to you regarding your success at work?”

“What about this is most challenging to you...what have you had difficulty with?”

“What do you think/feel your performance needs are?”

“What ways have you tried to improve or correct this?”

“What assistance or information do you think would be most helpful?”

“What is boring or tedious?”



It is important to remember that the supervisor/coach has a perspective too. Sometimes we have done that job and can't understand why it is a struggle for someone else. Other times, our styles might be quite different, so there can be an issue with communication or thought process. Whether that different perspective or view might be helpful, it is often beneficial to share that perspective. Judgment needs to be used to ensure that there is real benefit in the sharing, and that it doesn't emanate from simply a desire to be "right" or impose an answer. Often, it is feedback that can help an employee begin to perceive their own real strengths or see a different perspective. Sometimes, employees are simply blind to how others view them, as it relates to both strengths and challenges.

Another critical element when embarking on coaching is to remember that coaching is not therapy. We aren't licensed to go there, and it can have a tremendously adverse effect on the

working relationship if we start talking about childhood experiences, or their relationships with their parents.... getting too personal. We are talking about a work situation that needs to have a different result. The emphasis of coaching is on having the employee take action, rather than understanding “why.” Some important concepts that typically govern the coaching activity are:

- It's not what happens inside the coaching session that matters; it's what the employee does outside the conversation that should be considered.
- Coaching can't be about the supervisor's ego. We must keep it out of the way during the process.
- Really listening to the employee will provide the greatest insight and ideas about how to help them make the necessary adjustments. This is not the time to show them all the clever things we know or could tell them. Coaching by listening, not telling, is often the most effective.

Watching an employee make needed changes, develop greater insight about their own behavior, or learn a new skill can be one of the most satisfying aspects of supervision. It requires care,

Leadership

The first step in solving any problem is recognizing there is one. How common is it for managers to ignore a problem in hopes that it might just go away? Too common. Let's be honest, how often does a problem just go away? You can ignore a problem, but that doesn't mean it has been resolved.



And if denial is the weapon of first resort for many managers, what's the second? Excuses. Deny you have a problem until you can no longer ignore it or refute its existence (it becomes too painful), and then the next step is to begin to make excuses for why the problem exists.

But denial and excuses bring you no closer to a solution. Once you acknowledge the challenge then you can explore what the causes are.

Managers, do not think for a minute this doesn't go on under your watch. How many times has your department missed a deadline only to set a new one? And how many times does that second deadline get reset after being missed? Move your deadlines back enough times and you never miss one! But have you really solved the concern of missed deadlines in your department? No.

Maybe your deadlines are too aggressive and unreasonable, causing you to continually miss them. Or might it be during the planning stages of a project, not all steps are considered and

therefore not included in your scope of work? Or could it be that the project manager isn't doing the job well and is causing repeated delays? There can be many reasons for the challenges, but again, admitting you have one is the first step in discovering the solution.

Employees with problems are the toughest to solve. People are complicated. Determining what is causing challenges with employees is difficult. Is the person lazy or incompetent? Do you have them in the wrong position for the skill set or experience? If you changed their duties or position, would it produce better results?

When it comes to people issues, you need to make sure you have done a thorough and honest assessment of the problem. When someone's livelihood is at stake, you don't want to be haphazard. Use the missed deadlines example—it might be easy to conclude that the project manager is failing at their job. However, after further exploration you might uncover a different challenge. What if the project manager isn't in full control of every step of the process? What if, after closer examination, you discover that the process breaks down at a certain point when another department becomes involved? Suddenly, the project manager might not be the problem. Taking your time when determining the cause of people issues is necessary.



To be an effective leader, you must be willing to face difficult performance and behavioral situations. Pretending that everything in your work world is perfect is only going to lead to a variety of other challenges. Admitting you have issues and moving quickly to find solutions is a key to success. No one goes through life without challenges. If you can't face them then you are bound to repeat them.

I Made a Mistake...What Now?

If it hasn't happened to you already, it will eventually. You'll make a faux pas at work. What to do when you make a grand mistake? Here are several rules on how best to handle it:

Rule 1: Always own up to your mistake. No matter how big or stupid, it's always best to admit your mistake up front. You'll keep it from becoming an even bigger blunder later.

Rule 2: No excuses, please. Even if your dog really did eat the report, it only serves to make you look as if you aren't taking responsibility for the mistake. This is a time for self-accountability. Forget about who or what the reasons are; concentrate on fixing the challenge as soon as you can.



Rule 3: Don't sit on or ignore the mistake until later. If you're quick about alerting people about your mistake, they can help come up with solutions to the concern before it worsens.

Rule 4: Find solutions. Be a creative problem solver. Do not just throw up your hands in despair. You'll only show yourself as someone who cannot tackle challenges head on. Be proactive in searching for a solution.

Rule 5: Learn the lesson(s) and move on. It's true that there's a lot to be learned from our mistakes (like don't make them again). So, make a list of what you learned and apply the knowledge to your job and to future situations.

Accountability

There is a fair amount being written now about the concept of accountability. Some have suggested that this is because of the passage a few years ago of the Sarbanes-Oxley law designed to minimize fraud and inaccurate/incomplete reporting from publicly held corporations. Accountability seems to be a word that people have trouble defining. Ask ten different individuals what "accountability" is, and you are likely to get ten variations on the theme, but few similar words. One of the best descriptions of the concept may lie in the words of the Treasury Board of Canada, which states the following in their Expectations Code, "Responsibility is the obligation to act, whereas Accountability is the obligation to answer for an action."

This seems to say it well, and it even differentiates appropriately between responsibility and accountability, which are verbal cousins but not exactly twins. Accountability is hard! It demands that we accept blame when things go wrong; and not only accept it but speak up and declare that it was our mistake. Being accountable means being responsible for the results (the outcomes), that we have a duty to apologize, correct the issue, and ensure to the greatest extent possible that it doesn't happen again. Being accountable means we must learn from mistakes and make them clear to others so that they can learn from them as well. Being accountable means never attempting to diffuse or shift culpability to others no matter how embarrassing or troubling the situation may be (so don't throw others under the bus).

It is often perceived as refreshing when someone simply says, "I screwed up." This level of candor, especially when augmented by "...and here's what I think we can do about it." shows maturity and acknowledgement that none of us is perfect. Working to establish a culture committed to accountability requires organization leaders to model the desired behaviors. This

isn't something that can live only at the level of most employees. In fact, if it isn't demonstrated by those at the top, it will never really flourish in the rest of the organization.

Some of our best lessons come from making mistakes. Demonstrating accountability ourselves and expecting it from everyone can result in a learning organization positioned to deliver on the quality promises made to customers, employees, and each other.

Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new. ~ Albert Einstein



client accolades

Recently the Oregon Business Magazine listed their *Top 100 Non-Profits to Work For in Oregon*. We are fortunate to be associated with several of those who made the list and call them clients and friends. Congratulations to you all – this recognition is well deserved.

- #7 Emerald People's Utility District
- #18 Portland State University Foundation
- #22 Bridgeway Recovery Services
- #24 Partnerships in Community Living
- #26 Exceed Enterprises
- #31 Cat Adoption Team



hr links

We know your time is precious and that you are always looking for resources to assist you with the variety of task and responsibilities you have. We think this month's link will be helpful...or at least another tool to add to your toolbox.

<https://www.careeronestop.org/BusinessCenter/Toolkit/GettingStarted.aspx>

This site allows for quick access to tools to help you recruit, train, and retain your workforce. The Job Description Writer walks you through a step-by-step process of building a meaningful job description. It also gives you an opportunity to explore local training options and connect with funding resources for training.



whatever the question

Q: We have a new hire starting Monday and the background check just came back fully. The candidate lied about having a BS degree. Are there grounds to rescind our offer? This candidate has had a long career and obviously did fine without a degree. It's the part about lying and putting it on the resume that is most concerning to us. The background report we received two days later revealed the BS degree was not verified. When we asked the candidate, they said they had taken all the courses and was only one written test away, didn't finish school due to personal issues (son died) and is currently in the process of finishing it now. Can we rescind offer without causing issue? Would you rescind offer?

A: The first step is speaking with the candidate to find out why the information in the background check doesn't align with the information gathered during the process. (There could have been a mistake, and you will likely need to start the clock on an adverse impact notice). Following getting their side of things, don't get lost in the process here. Remember this is a person with a real life, just like all of us. First question: does the person still meet the qualification standards without the degree? If the answer is no, then let the candidate know you are rescinding the offer and what they need to qualify and encourage them to apply again when that is achieved. In that same conversation also let them know that honesty is the best policy and that is the expectation for all employees of the organization. Having the explanation in advance would have been better, even though they are not qualified – at this time. If the answer is yes, you will need to make a judgement call. The real question is not what to do in this situation. It is what will you do in all situations like this, regardless of how much or how little you like the candidate or how desperate you are to fill the role. If you choose to go ahead and let them work, put in place a specific expectation about being honest and then manage to that expectation. If you choose not to hire them, cover the adverse impact responsibilities and re-open your recruitment or look at your next best candidate. This is not a rescinded offer; this is an adverse impact for failure to meet the background check criteria.

Is there a question you would like us to answer?

Email the question to info@hranswers.com and include the subject “newsletter question”. We will publish the answer in our next issue.



hr by the numbers

Sixty-three percent of employees with a bad manager are thinking of leaving their organization within the next 12 months. We asked respondents the following question: *Rate your manager on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being a “terrible” manager and 5 being a “world-class” manager.*

- An encouraging 65% of respondents considered their managers “world-class” or “good.” Only 13% said their managers were “terrible” or “not-so-great.” The remaining 22% chose “average.”
- Of the employees with bad managers (“terrible” or “not-so-great”), 63% are thinking of quitting in the next year. Only 27% of employees with good managers (“world-class” or “good”) said the same.

Employee Management Survey Results - The Predictive Index

A new Gallup analysis finds that 48% of America's working population is actively job searching or watching for opportunities and as many as 55% are planning to jump ship in the next 12 months. Businesses are facing a staggeringly high quit rate - 3.6 million Americans resigned in May alone and the August number was 4.2 million -- *and* yet we still have a record-high number of unfilled positions. And Gallup discovered that workers in all job categories, from customer-facing service roles to highly professional positions, are actively or passively job hunting at roughly the same rate.

The 'Great Resignation' Is Really the 'Great Discontent' (gallup.com)

According to PayScale's 2021 State of Remote Work Survey, 46% of employees expect to have remote work options after the pandemic.

From an employer perspective they are saying 50% to have a flexible workplace after the pandemic, 26% to go back to a traditional office environment and 6% to have some sort of hybrid option after the pandemic.

According to the survey, organizations are discussing and considering whether salaries should be adjusted for remote workers. At this time, only 69% are not considering lowering wages and that means one third are.



thoughts to think about

The greatest losses are unknown and unknowable. ~ Dr. W. Edwards Deming

Innovation has never come through bureaucracy or hierarchy. It always comes from individuals. ~ John Sculley

The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it's the same problem you had last year. ~ John Foster Dolls

*You seldom accomplish very much by yourself. You must get the assistance of others.
~ Henry J. Kaiser*

We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge. ~ John Nesbitt

There is no mystery to satisfying your customer. Build them a product and treat them with respect. It's that simple. ~Lee Iacocca

To become a great bullfighter, one must learn how the bull thinks. ~ Spanish proverb

Anything you do is everything you do. ~ Buddhist saying

When working towards the solution of a problem, it always helps if you know the answer.

~ John Peer

calendar of events



9 Building Rapport



1 HR Lunch Bunch: Auditing Your HR Department

2 Employee Recognition

15 Onboarding: Jump Start New Employees

16 Interviewing for Emotional Intelligence

29 Soft Skills: Motivation

Coming Up...

Supervisory Success Series starts February 1st!

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on my soapbox



Choice is an integral part of our daily lives. Ordinarily, we are good at making choices. Now and then, we come up against a decision that is not so easy. That is especially true when we come to a crossroads where there are more than two options. If it is something simple like making a choice between four different restaurants, it is a matter of preferences, with the consequences being you will have a great meal at any of them. So, the choice is unlikely to cause adverse consequences. But other times, the consequences of a poor choice can have a life-long impact. Some of the choices may have a positive short-term result. The choice between going to a party and studying for an exam is an example. The party is great, and you met a new guy or gal, and you are interested in continuing that relationship. But the result is you didn't pass the test and you will have to wait six months before you can take the test again. Your employer will not be pleased with that result and delay. Poor choices can have enormous consequences. I am sure you can think of a few devastating outcomes you have heard or read about. You may even have experienced some of these in your extended family. I know I have. Wrong decisions of ours are always identifiable only in hindsight, but by then the adverse consequences are unavoidable or are already occurring.

There are three items that can reduce the likelihood of making poor choices. The first is having a goal. Without a goal, it is nearly impossible to make a decision that helps you reach an intended target. It doesn't have to be a big goal or become an obsession. It just helps us determine which decisions to make when faced with a choice. If I want financial security in my later years, then making choices to save money and squirrel it away will help me reach that goal and spending it on something I really don't need will make it more difficult to achieve my desired outcome. So having a goal can make choices easier even if they make us turn away from the instant gratification.

The second thing that helps us make good choices is considering the consequences. If we make important decisions immediately, the chances are we have not considered what may come of that choice. Some people do this automatically. They don't make sudden choices; they ruminate about them for a while. That can be irritating to those who make instant decisions, but it is likely that those who think about the different outcomes may make better decisions. Considering the different outcomes gives a chance to reflect on how the decision will help us achieve our goal. Without a goal, the decision cannot be made against a desired outcome.

The third element to good decision making when faced with a choice is a sense of our own values. A landscaper was here to give me a bid recently. She said she wanted to send out a specialist in paving stones to look at my driveway which is suffering from tree roots and is becoming very uneven. She said jokingly that I shouldn't shoot the gentleman when he came to look. I responded saying, "I wouldn't do that, not ever do that." I realized this was a value/belief I had that was so strong I couldn't even joke about it. I am sure my firm response felt strange to her. Our values help us make the right decision when faced with something that might be appealing. The invitation to do something only slightly wrong, especially if we have been good for a long time, can

have a significant appeal. But wrong will still be wrong, and there may be consequences much more negative than we thought.

Being able to choose is something we believe in here. It gives us real freedom. That freedom can lead us to bad choices. Failing to exercise good judgment can have consequences that turn our lives upside down. Taking time to think, considering our values, and realizing we won't really know the effects of our decisions until after they have been made helps us make better decisions and experience more positive results. And learning from the decisions we have made that turned out to have ugly outcomes can help us not make that choice again.

I hope you find these words meaningful. I know I did. Sometimes, Soapbox is written for me because of something that is happening in my life. I always hope it is valuable to you as well.

Judy Clark, Principal and Founder

To see more of Judy's writing and read the history of HRA Answers, [visit our website](#).

Editor: Deborah Jeffries, SHRM-CP, 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 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 503-885-9815 or email us at info@hranswers.com

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