



advantage



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From Our Founder

Judy Clark, SPHR, CPC, IPMA-CP

It is amazing how time can get away from you. At the end of this year, I will have spent 51 years in human resources; most of those at HR Answers. I have been blessed to work both inside organizations (13 years at Cummings and Associates, Equitable Savings and Loan, and Eastmoreland General Hospital) and 38 years at HR Answers, Inc. and all its predecessor names. At the end of the year I am stepping away to engage in whatever comes next. My HR career has been thoroughly rewarding. At times it has been serious, but there have also been plenty of humorous moments as well. You may be familiar with the phrase, "You can't make this stuff up." It is certainly true that real life is more unpredictable, often leaving all of us at HR Answers shaking our heads in amazement. I won't say that I enjoyed each day; there were some that were tough. The vast number of days, however, were very satisfying.

As I progressed through the years, I had more and more thoughts about my future departure and how I would try to find the right circumstance for transitioning HR Answers to a new owner. For those of you who have already worked with Laurie Grenya, you know what a superb HR professional she is. I had been approached a couple of times prior to finding Laurie. For a variety of reasons, those just didn't work out. Once Laurie was on board, we quickly learned about her various strengths. Since the ownership transition of HR Answers in September 2021, I have played a supporting role focusing on expert witness work. I have been able to watch Laurie make some big decisions and tackle new products and services. Keep in mind that all of this was going on at the same time as COVID. Simply said, she has done a h--l of job!!

I have had the opportunity to work with some of the nicest people I have ever known. And the projects that we worked on together were meaningful and the true definition of Good HR. That is all I ever wanted...to help people and organizations do good HR. I believe that organizations that do "good HR" are better run, more profitable, and make a difference in their communities. I cannot emphasize enough how much I have enjoyed the chance to work with so many wonderful clients. That's the part of all of this that I will miss the most. I am not going to move out of the Portland metro area so if you see me on the street or in a restaurant, please come by and let's chat for a moment. It may give me time to catch up with you. Here's hoping that our paths will cross soon and frequently.

Very truly yours, Judy

P.S. Did you notice I wrote this whole letter without saying "retirement" once? 😊

CELEBRATE WITH US

COVID Update!

If you missed it we sent out an ALERT that Oregon OSHA, in alignment with updated public health guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), rescinds its COVID-19 Workplace Requirements for all Workplaces ([OAR 437-001-0744](#)) and Requirements for Employer-Provided Labor Housing ([OAR 437-004-1115](#)) effective April 3, 2023.

View the memo that was issued <https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHArules/advisorymemos/advisory-memo-covid-19-rule-requirement-changes.pdf>

Neurodiversity

Is neurodiversity on your radar? A neurodiverse workplace is one that values the benefits of difference and looks for opportunities to support and accommodate the best work of every employee. The neurodiversity movement is dedicated to the belief that neurodivergence does not determine human value. Simply stated, a difference is not a deficit, and neurodiversity embraces the entire spectrum of human capability.

The goal is to have an environment that is even more inclusive and welcoming to the neurodivergent population. HR Answers recently conducted a program on neurodiversity and some of the considerations and activities we shared with attendees might be helpful to you.

Hiring, onboarding, and training new employees is a process and a big piece of the employee life cycle, and we certainly want to get the new employee onboard and acclimated to the organization. However, that is only a piece of the puzzle. There are other considerations as the employee continues through the cycle. While this “list” is not intended to be a comprehensive list please consider it and compare it to what you are doing and using. Here are some of those areas for you to assess what you are doing now and how you may want to explore doing some things differently.



Educate your workforce

- Train ALL employees
- Misconceptions/Myths
- Use inclusive language

Create a welcoming and supportive environment

- Mentoring and professional development opportunities
- Create an Employee Resource Group for support

Adjust and modify your hiring process

- Review listings and applications. Compose a clear job description.
- Rethink your interview approach. Let candidates know exactly what to expect.
- Discuss accommodations. No one is more qualified to explain accommodations than the candidate or employee who needs them.

Explore reasonable accommodations for current employees

- Schedule changes
- Remote work
- Quiet workspaces (noise cancelling headphones)
- Additional breaks
- Changing the physical space
- Providing a quiet space
- Attendance at social event optional
- Offering instructions via email/printed instead of verbally
- Reassigning to a different team or vacant position
- Establishing buddies or job coaches



Consider changes/improvements to your:

- Onboarding activities/process
- Reading materials (policies handbook) - include pictures when possible
- Coaching conversations— no vague instructions
- Training Activities—checklists, asking how the individual learns best
- Performance reviews—providing information in advance

Accommodating difference creates more opportunities for employees and their employers. As you move to create an inclusive, neurodiverse workforce, take time to learn about all your employees, and provide what they need to do their best work. When inclusion is the goal, accommodation and respect bring everyone closer to achievement.

Ten Insights For Conflict Resolvers

To advise and train leaders in the important and nuanced skills required to solve conflicts among employees, we've distilled guiding concepts into 10 key principles. These are outlined below in hopes of helping you successfully bring healing to fractured working relationships and renewed refocus to the organizational mission.

1. **Questions, not statements:** When stepping into the interaction, it is often best to craft and pose questions, rather than making declarations. Most of what you say should have a question mark at the end.



2. **Do not judge:** Allow your judgments to pass through you like water. Be aware of them, but don't believe them. Instead, treat them as additional information to consider.

3. **Focus on needs:** People in conflict often frame their points of view in terms of formulated positions (e.g., "You need to do X"). Such stances often obscure their true needs. The savvy facilitator helps parties resolve surface issues by finding ways to name and satisfy their underlying needs.

4. **Summarize, then ask:** Sitting between two warring colleagues can be daunting. You are balancing many threads at once (i.e., emotions, facts, history, proposals). If you are uncertain about what to do in a given moment, simply summarize what's been shared or what has occurred in the meeting, and then ask a question. This technique provides a break, time for reflection and the opportunity to redirect the process.
5. **Encourage direct dialogue:** A key goal of facilitated conflict resolution is for the involved participants to effectively communicate. It is wise, therefore, to either stay out of their way when they are talking or manage their dialogue with the primary goal in mind of maximizing their willingness and ability to talk with each other.
6. **Quiet:** Success is inversely proportional to how much you say.
7. **Heat seeking:** A common instinct is to avoid or whitewash moments of overt tension or avoidance. However, when facilitating tense discussions and negotiations, move toward the hottest topics. The heat you see is a beacon highlighting where you should focus your attention and interventions.
8. **Pivot to the future:** Help parties consider how to change their future behavior and create a preferred working relationship. Which person may have been right or wrong is less important than what will enhance their future interactions for working together successfully.

9. **Resist jumping to solutions:** Good decision making requires that the situation is defined and understood at the start. Only then is it prudent to develop options for resolution and select the right agreements. It may feel counterintuitive, but the resolver sometimes needs to slow it down and avoid hasty solutions. Your job is to fix this conflict and avert any future ones.

10. **Don't work too hard:** It is their dispute; one they have created and perpetuated. Consequently, they have the primary responsibility to maneuver their way out. While you are there to help the process along, be vigilant about working harder for a positive outcome than they are. Try to relax and relinquish as much responsibility as possible to them.

We wish to thank C. DeVere Sheesley, MA, for this article. He has over 32 years of experience putting derailed workplace relationships back on track. His team at In-Accord are among the most seasoned conflict management professionals on the West Coast. We are pleased to have a long-standing partnership with him and his firm. Feel free to reach him by calling (503) 723-9982 or www.inaccordnw.com

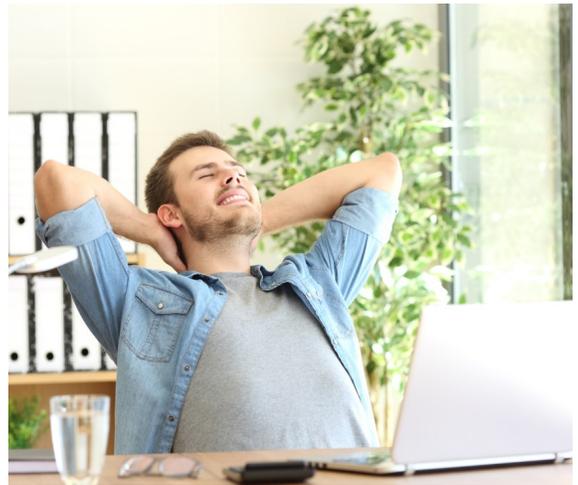
Emotional Fitness - Pausing on Purpose

We create a lot of stress for ourselves by constantly going, going, going, doing, doing, doing. How often do we pause, breathe, and really think (productively)? Taking even FIVE minutes to pause on purpose which can calm our nervous system and clarify our thoughts. If you can create a powerful pause for yourself, you could improve your focus, your productivity, and most importantly your peace, happiness, and wellbeing.

To get started, you need to understand how your nervous system works.

Your nervous system is like a train track. The two tracks it can choose from are the “fight or flight” track, and the “rest and digest” track. What’s important to know is that your nervous system cannot simultaneously be in fight or flight mode AND rest and digest mode. It’s physiologically impossible.

Herein is a powerful tool we can use to break up the chronic stress in our lives! If you can learn to trigger your own relaxation response, you can give your brain and body a break from the chronic stress that is all too common in today’s modern world.



At any moment you can pull the track-switch lever and experience rest, peace, and calm. (This is

why meditation is all the rage these days). But you do not have to don monk robes, take a vow of silence, or even know anything about eastern philosophy. You can learn to calm your mind and your body. Here is a simple process to get you started.

1. Simply stop what you are doing. Choose to stop. Stop doing. Stop thinking. Stop worrying. Just stop.
2. Now, breathe. Become fully aware of your body. Your breath. Notice your surroundings. Keep breathing.
3. Next, choose an image to focus your mind on. Choose something to visualize. It could be something from nature. Perhaps the top of a mountain, a forest stream, an arid desert at sunset, or a babbling brook. Choose something that would engage all your senses. Sight. Touch. Taste. Smell. Hear.

There, you did it! Did you feel your neck and shoulders relax? Did you feel your heart rate steady, and your facial muscles become calm and passive? THAT is your relaxation response! You just gave your adrenal glands and your nervous system a break. You turned off your chronic stress. Hoorah!



This is something you can practice and get more and more familiar with. You could learn to tap into that calm and peace at any moment.

How would this affect you physically, mentally, and emotionally? What if you began practicing this pause each morning and night? Imagine if you took a few five-minute breaks like this throughout the day - at work and at home.

Developing this ability to pause on purpose will help you become more aware of yourself. Some call this practice “mindfulness.” By practicing mindfulness, you can get back in the driver’s seat of your life. You don’t have to be a victim of your stress, your surroundings, your thoughts, your fears, or your emotions. This is where wellness begins. With awareness and presence. Mindfulness can unlock your personal power and wellbeing. How will you start pausing on purpose?

Special appreciation to Danielle Dinkelman, NBC-HWC of Advanced Corporate Wellness, LLC for writing this article and sharing it with us. She can be reached at danielle@acwcoaching.com, www.acwcoaching.com or 801-888-3361.

Incorporating Gratitude Into Your Culture

At its core, gratitude is appreciating your surroundings. Take it one step further – it is mindfully being aware of the positive aspects of life along with the people, factors, decisions, and environments that led to them.

Practicing gratitude can be a powerful strategy that can propel your organization's growth upward. When you express gratitude for the work your teams (and individuals) put in, you create an experience for them that leads to the belief that their contributions matter. This means simply recognizing and communicating what you're genuinely grateful for.

When you practice gratitude, you are consciously focusing on the positives in your life. [Research](#) suggests if you do this consistently, it rewires your brain to notice more positive elements of your life, subconsciously. This actually leads to increased happiness. In turn, gratitude is important because it neutralizes our negativity bias.

Gratitude is important because everyone wants to be appreciated. Yet [University of California, Berkeley research](#) shows people are least likely to express gratitude in the workplace. This creates a gap between what your employees want and what your organization delivers. In turn, employees may leave to find another organization that can fulfill their need to feel appreciated.



Gratitude is central to [giving appreciative feedback](#), which is showing appreciation to your colleagues and what they bring to the organization. This includes their work, skills, effort, and personal qualities. Giving appreciative feedback keeps your people motivated, positive and engaged.

Appreciative feedback can be demonstrated in many ways, both big and small. Examples include:

- A manager dedicates a portion of a department meeting to recognize the team's efforts for a major project
- HR formalizes a monthly focused recognition program that honors exceptional performance
- An employee thanks the team for covering for them while they were on vacation
- Employees thanking executives' responsible actions during a time of crisis

These gestures will have a positive impact on your culture because gratitude is contagious.

When you express gratitude to a colleague, it motivates them to reciprocate that behavior to you or others. This creates a chain reaction, which makes gratitude integral to your culture. Research shows that gratitude is strongly tied to greater happiness and positivity, which are key indicators of a strong culture.

It is easy to see some key benefits and ROI of gratitude within your organization when it is practiced.



- Increased employee motivation and engagement. This means appreciation and recognition are at play by all.
- Frequent displays of empathy. Not only recognize someone's action but also the effort behind it. It is important to see things from someone else's shoes.
- Encourage your people to help. Motivating others to lend a hand. In fact, a University of California, Riverside study found that people who received kindness not only reported higher levels of happiness and a better sense of camaraderie but were also motivated to help others.

- Promotes mental well-being. Research suggests that gratitude can lead to many mental health benefits: better sleep, less anxiety, improved stress management, and more. Healthy employees are key to a successful organization.

So, what can you do to bring more gratitude to your organization and make it more of a daily practice?

- Start meetings with gratitude. The meeting could start with a simple question: "What are you grateful for today?" Starting with gratitude sets a positive tone for the rest of the meeting.
- Recognize employees on a regular basis. Focused recognition should be done throughout the year. Examples include an employee spotlight in your company newsletter, encouraging shout-outs during meetings, or organizing outings to celebrate hard work. The recognition should focus on behaviors that reinforce your core values and create the culture you hope to build.
- Say "thank you." These two simple words can go a long way. A survey conducted by Reward Gateway revealed that 75% of U.S. employees said that if managers thanked them in real-time, motivation and morale would improve. Believe it or not a written 'thank you' note is still effective. People value these notes because of the extra time and effort it took to write them.
- Encourage rest after hard work. This signals to your employees that you not only recognize their hard work but also care about their well-being.

Oregon Minimum Wage Increase

The Bureau of Labor and Industries in Oregon has completed their annual review of the Consumer Price Index and announced a minimum wage increase of \$0.70 per hour. This increase will take effect on July 1, 2023. Please remember there are three different minimum wage rates in Oregon. The location of the work determines the wage rate required. Below are the new rates by location:

Standard Minimum Wage: \$14.20 per hour

Portland Metro Minimum Wage: \$15.45 per hour

Non-Urban Minimum Wage: \$13.20 per hour

To read the official notice from Commissioner Stephenson, please visit the [BOLI website](#).





client accolades



Oregon Business Magazine recently published their annual list of the 100 Best Companies to Work for in Oregon and once again several of our clients made the list. **Congratulations** to you - it is clear you all are doing some wonderful things inside your organizations.

Please join us in recognizing the following organizations:

Large Organizations (more than 100 Oregon employees):

- #3 [LMC Construction](#)
- #8 [Aldrich](#)
- #15 [Rogue Community Credit Union](#)
- #17 [Pacific Landscape Management](#)
- #32 [R&H Construction](#)

Medium Organizations (35 to 99 Oregon employees):

- #2 [Oregon Restoration](#)
- #5 [Steele Electric](#)
- #11 [Hagan Hamilton Insurance](#)

Small Organizations (15 to 34 Oregon employees):

- #7 [Percipio Consulting Group](#)
- #12 [Davidson Benefit Planning](#), An Alera Group Company



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April was National Disabilities Month. Since we celebrate with our April Fool's issue, we missed highlighting a few resources we think you may benefit from, so we are sharing them now.

Jonathan Katz discusses ODEP's work to promote inclusive employment policies and practices, including those seen in successful autism hiring programs at several large IT organizations. He notes the IT industry's leadership in recruiting and retaining autistic individuals, and the value it has brought to organizations across a wide range of industries who emulate them. We think there might be some takeaways for others.

- [Read "Bringing Lessons from Autism IT Initiatives to Everyone"](#)

Edward Mitchell brings attention to the importance of financial education for people with disabilities and shares some resources about finance and savings basics that are universal. He also addressed the additional factors that come into play, such as whether individuals had their disability from birth or acquired it later in life; their diagnosis; access to health care; and the role their previous work experiences have played.

- [Read "Advancing Equity: A Financial Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities"](#)
- [Read "Secure Your Financial Future: A Financial Toolkit for People with Disabilities"](#)

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion team wrote a blog for the Campaign for Disability Employment. The blog focuses on resources available to employers who want to expand their diversity, equity, and inclusion programs to include accessibility. Moving from DEI to DEIA can be done effectively and with ease if you are aware of and make use of available resources.

- [Read "Now is the Perfect Time to Include Disability in Your DEI Plan—Because Disability is Diversity"](#)



whatever the question

Q: When returned paychecks, 401k statements, and W-2s come back to us, and we are unable to find the correct address what are we supposed to do? Do we have any obligation to attempt to track down these former employees? At what point does the state of Oregon consider an uncashed paycheck to be abandoned? Are we supposed to turn them into the Department of Labor?

A: With returned paychecks (not just pay stubs) you should look at the governing state law. Each state handles the process a little differently for wages that have not been cashed.

Oregon wage laws do not provide rules defining paycheck abandonment, but there are other laws that dictate how you must handle unclaimed property, including wages and commissions of your former employees.

If your books show that an ongoing employee has failed to cash a payroll check, it's a good idea to check with that employee as to the reason. In some cases, the employee has simply forgotten to make a trip to the bank. In other cases, the check is lost, stolen, or damaged.

You met your first obligation by establishing and maintaining a regular payday for employees. Despite issuing the paychecks on time, if you have reason to know that employees have not actually received the money due to them, you do have an obligation to follow up with the individuals. In some cases, the best option will be to stop payment on the original checks and issue new ones.

Even with respect to your long-departed employees, it would be risky to simply consider their pay as "abandoned" and let the matter drop, since claims for wages may be filed up to six years later in Oregon courts.

Under Oregon's Unclaimed Property Act, the Department of State Lands (DSL) acts as a trust agent for unclaimed property. According to ORS 98.352 and OAR 141-045-0061, employers and other "holders" of property belonging to another must make a diligent effort to locate the rightful owner of the asset before it is turned over to DSL. At the very least, you must mail a written notice to your employee's last-known address concerning the outstanding wages. It would also be prudent to document your efforts to reach the employee by phone, so that you can show you made a reasonable effort to locate the individual.

Property and wages become "unclaimed" after a specified time period, when efforts to contact the owner have failed. The "dormancy period" for paychecks and wages is three years, so if you are unable to contact your former employees within that period of time, their wages are considered unclaimed, and you must deposit the funds with DSL.

The law requires you to make annual reports and transfers to DSL of any unclaimed property you are holding. You must submit these reports, along with employees' unclaimed wages, to the agency between October 1 and November 1 each year. For a period of five years after reporting to DSL, you are also required to maintain records and documentation related to the unclaimed wages and your "due diligence" efforts to locate the employees in question.

SIDE NOTE: The goal of the Unclaimed Property Act is to reunite as many people as possible with their money, including wages and commissions due to them. Individuals can easily learn whether DSL is holding funds for them by simply typing in their names at the agency's Web site, www.oregonstatelands.us.

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



In honor of the "Longest Day" celebration on June 21st (*the day with the most daylight — the summer solstice*) the Alzheimer's Association has a fundraiser activity to bring awareness of this disease. Their goal is to *fight the darkness*. We thought we would share some statistics with you. As our population continues to age and they continue to remain working longer this disease impacts

our workplaces. Even if no one at work is directly impacted you have employees who are caring for loved ones who are experiencing and living with this this unkind disease. Visit www.alz.org/thelongestday for more information.

More than **6 million Americans** are living with Alzheimer's, and over **11.5 million** provide unpaid care (this includes your employees – impacting our workplace in a variety of ways). The cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias is estimated to total **\$345 billion** in 2023, increasing to nearly **\$1 trillion** (in today's dollars) by mid-century.

1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.

The lifetime risk for Alzheimer's at age 45 is 1 in 10 for women and 1 in 10 for men.

Between 2000 and 2019, deaths from heart disease have decreased **7.3%** while deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased 145%.

While only **4 in 10 Americans** talk to their doctor right away when experiencing early memory or cognitive loss, 7 in 10 would want to know early if they have Alzheimer's disease if it could allow for earlier treatment.

If you want to learn more join us May 3rd at 12:00pm for HR Lunch Bunch when we will be joined by Rachel Saraohn. Our conversation will help you recognize common signs of the disease in yourself and employees and next steps to take. She will share more about the cutting-edge research, where to turn for support, and how you and your business can have an impact. [RSVP here](#)



Development Dimensions International (DDI) conducts an annual survey, their Global Leadership Forecast. While we wait for their numbers from the 2023 survey, we do have other numbers from them that we are not sure have changed that much.

Organizations around the world continue to face a leadership crisis. Employees at all levels in the workplace feel undervalued, marginalized, and underappreciated in more ways than one.

U.S. organizations spent \$160 billion on employee training and education, yet:

- **58%** of managers said they did not receive any *management training*.
- **79%** of people quit their job due to *lack of appreciation*.
- **77%** of organizations report they are currently experiencing a *leadership gap*.
- Only **10%** of CEOs believe their company's leadership development initiatives have a *clear business impact*.
- **63%** of Millennials said their leadership skills were not being *fully developed*.

We believe there are a variety of things you can do about these concerns including providing development opportunities for your leaders. We would suggest if you have some new leads or new supervisors then enrolling them in our upcoming Success for New Supervisors Series starting June 8th is a good start. [Visit our website](#) for more information.



thoughts to think about

"In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing." ~Theodore Roosevelt

"A strong man stands up for himself; a stronger man stands up for others." ~Chris Rollins

"Just a few sweet words to a depressed soul and you might be saving a life." ~Benita Ohaju

"If everyone could read your mind, would you think differently?" ~Cece Dwyer

"Just because people are different doesn't mean you can't be their friend." ~Tiara Brow

"Teach people the language of kindness and they will speak it to others." ~Oghogho Abieyuwa Odiase

"Our skin is just an envelope. We are the letter." ~Valanvhie Emile

"Many things can calm the heart. Only kindness can heal it." ~Scott Douglas

"I never knew how much words hurt until they were aimed at me." ~Kathleen Hagan-Rogerson

"When you judge me, you show the person that you are, not the person that I am." ~Jasmin Maldonado

calendar of events



03 HR Lunch Bunch: Recognizing and Understanding Alzheimer's in Our Organizations

05 Supervisory Short: Overcoming Negativity



09 HR Systems Selection & Implementation Success

11 The Five W's of Documentation



18 Professional Practices: Compensation Fundamentals 1: Market Analysis and Salary Surveys



23 Professional Practices: HR Compliance - What You Don't Know Can Hurt You



25 Paid Leave Oregon: Policy, Notice, and Claims

Success for New Supervisors

8-Part Series on Thursdays

June 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, 20, 27

8:30am to 12:30pm

Two Learning Options Available!

In-Person Learning

8:30am to 12:30pm

[REGISTER](#)

Virtual Learning

1:00pm to 5:00pm

[REGISTER](#)



- 01** HR: Party of One
- 02** Supervisory Short: Delegation
- 07** Improving Communication Skills
- 07** HR Lunch Bunch: Recruiting Solutions for 2023
- 08** Advanced Supervision Series



- 08** Professional Practices: Conducting an Effective Internal Investigation



- 13** Professional Practices: Coaching Employees



- 20** Paid Leave Oregon: Policy, Notice, and Claims

- 21** Onboarding: Jump Start the Employee Experience

- 21** So You Think You Want to be a Supervisor



- 22** Professional Practices: Compensation Fundamentals 2: Philosophy, Structure, and Policy

- 28** Creating a Culture of Gratitude



- 07** Supervisory Short: Effective Meetings



- 11** Professional Practices: Employee Handbook - Your Guide to Consistency



- 20** Professional Practices: HR Records Management



- 27** Professional Practices: Employee Opinion Surveys

[REGISTER](#)

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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