



advantage



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Navigating The Changing Landscape Of The Workplace

To remain competitive and cultivate a thriving environment for your employees, it is crucial for employers to reevaluate their operational strategies. The workplace is evolving rapidly, demanding a fresh perspective. This article offers valuable insights to help you navigate compliance requirements and stay at the forefront of trends.

The Evolution of Workplace Policies

When was the last time you reviewed your employee appearance policies? With recent changes influenced by the pandemic, many workplaces have embraced a more casual atmosphere. Perhaps this has prompted you to strike a balance between employee comfort and the culture along with the professionalism expected. While every workplace is unique, there are some key questions to consider. We have created a checklist you can use for comparing your existing policy for inclusivity, accommodation, and legal considerations. [Download the checklist.](#)

The expectations and standards set a few years ago may no longer align with current cultural shifts and legal obligations. Take the time to consider these essential factors:

1. Update bereavement policies: Shifts in employee mental health awareness and well-being have reshaped the understanding of bereavement leave. Stay informed about recent trends, laws, and best practices, ensuring your policies reflect your obligations.
2. Rethink PTO management: Be sure your policies have incorporated the new OR and WA Paid Leave Laws. Many employers have explored the "unlimited PTO" approach, offering flexibility and administrative relief. However, be mindful of potential pitfalls.
3. As remote work and business travel intertwine, employees may seek opportunities to combine work and leisure. Develop a comprehensive policy addressing this trend, considering factors like employee safety, productivity, and business requirements. [Download our checklist.](#)
4. Establish guidelines for social media (communication policy) usage: The evolving dynamics of social media call for updated policies that comply with employment and labor laws. The goal is employee and employer protections including reputation considerations.



Positions and Responsibilities Are Developing

You should consider refreshing job descriptions to enhance your compliance program and minimize litigation risks. Out-of-date, vague, and inaccurate job descriptions may cause challenges. Do your titles reflect the actual work being done? **Remember FLSA.** Job descriptions can support or contradict an employer's classification of an employee as exempt or nonexempt. **Consider ADA.** Job descriptions that detail the essential functions of a particular job aid an employer's analysis of whether an employee can perform the essential functions of their job with or without reasonable accommodation. **Equal Pay Laws.** Job descriptions may support an employer's compensation structure.

With our changing workplace you might want to consider the need for a Chief Remote Officer (CRO) if you have employees working remotely. Explore important considerations and discover how to develop a CRO's job description effectively.

Developments in the Ways Employees Work and Get Paid

There has been a great deal of conversation lately asking the question: could your organization move to a four-day workweek? Explore the potential benefits and factors to consider before implementing this increasingly popular workplace policy.



Combat the challenges of a competitive job market by offering Earned Wage Access (EWA) to your employees (a popular way for employees to access their earned wages before their next scheduled payday). Discover how this employee benefit program can help attract and retain talent (of course not necessarily appropriate for all workplaces). However, be aware of the legal compliance issues associated with implementing an on-demand pay benefit program and of course before implementing an EWA program, ensure that any direct deposit arrangements are compliant with your state laws and consider the associated charges for using an EWA service.

Not All Progress Is Good: Combatting Negative Attitudes at Work

Address the rising trend of "Quiets" and their impact on your organization. Whether it is quiet quitting, firing, promoting, etc. these are buzzwords for activities that have been in our workplaces for a *l o n g* time, unfortunately. However, if it gets us talking about these unprofessional activities then let's talk. These trends are a lack of solid, effective communication, employee recognition and engagement. We all can do better. So, educate yourself and your

management team on steps to prevent and counteract these phenomena, to maintain a motivated workforce.

Counteract the negative consequences of "resenteeism" in the workplace. Implement proactive measures (like allowing multi-channel communication for employees to share concerns and **listen**, ensuring managers have 1-on1 meetings with employees, address performance concerns quickly, conduct stay interviews, provide employee appreciation and recognition) to building and reinforcing a positive work culture and address resentment-related issues effectively.

Prevent "career cushioning" (updating resumes, contacting recruiters, and sharpening skills) and retain high-performing employees by conducting stay interviews. If you are interested in incorporating this practice into your existing activities, download our [list of questions](#) to get you started in another activity to engage with your workforce and foster loyalty.

Technology in the Workplace is Always Evolving

Stay informed about the advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) with insights into the proposed AI Bill of Rights and potential considerations for employee use of ChatGPT. Assess how algorithm-based evolutions may necessitate updates to your trade secret protocols. Additionally, discover the current AI practices implemented by employers across the country.

Beware of the challenges posed by disappearing messages and unauthorized messaging applications. These are apps used by employees that go "off-grid" and use unauthorized third-party messaging fall beyond typical email and texting protocols.



You also need to be thoughtful about scammers. Protect your organization from the rise of workplace scams in remote and hybrid work settings. Employers are getting scammed by fake applicants and overemployed workers. Employees are getting scammed by fake coworkers and even applicants are scammed by fake employers. You must stay vigilant and if something seems off and someone is asking for personal information that usually does not ask or asks in a manner that is not "normal", you should pause and question the process.

Common Workplace Practices May Need to Be Adjusted

Stay informed about recent developments that could impact severance agreements. Familiarize yourself with a new NLRB decision that may render certain provisions unlawful, even in non-unionized settings.

Be aware of potential changes to non-compete agreements. Get up to speed on the proposed federal rule that aims to ban non-compete agreements between employers and various categories of workers.

HR Alerts, Updates, and More

The 2023 Oregon Legislative session will be ending soon. When it does, we will do a comprehensive report on the changes that each employer needs to think about. There is one piece of legislation that needs your attention quickly. Many of you are aware of the benefits window opening for all employees to use their Paid Leave Oregon (PLO) insurance. The goal with that implementation was to align, as closely as possible, with the existing unpaid protected leave provided by the Oregon Medical Leave Act (OFLA). (Quick reminder: OFLA applies to all employers with 25 or more employees in Oregon.) The alignment of these two requirements has not been easy.

[Senate Bill 999](#) has amended OFLA and several of the effective dates to align with the opening of the PLO benefits window. Read our most recent Alerts [here](#).



July 1, 2023 Washington's Long-Term Care Tax Deductions Start



Employers are reminded to start withholding a 0.58% premium tax on their Washington employees effective July 1, 2023. Brief flashback – Back in 2019, Governor Inslee signed the Long-Term Services and Supports Trust Act, creating a first-of-its-kind state-mandated long-term care Trust dubbed the WA Cares Fund. This Fund is meant to pay a small amount of long-term care benefits (up to \$36,500 adjusted for inflation per lifetime) to Washington residents beginning July 2026.

The legislation was not well received. Opponents filed a class action lawsuit. Dissatisfaction with the law was so great that its January 1, 2022 roll-out was recalled and postponed. Since then, the Legislature has “made key improvements” to the program, and tax collection begins anew as of July 1, 2023. Payments will be made with your Washington quarterly payroll tax returns. Self-employed individuals can [opt-in](#) “as soon as applications are available.”

Cliff Notes for Oregon employers with Washington remote workers: If you have determined that your employees who work from home in Washington should be paying the WA Paid Family & Medical Leave tax, they will also owe WA Long-Term Care premiums. If you have employees working from home in Washington who are not regularly scheduled to work at least one day per week onsite in Oregon and you are not yet withholding WA Paid Family & Medical Leave taxes and submitting them to the WA Employment Security Department (“ESD”), we should probably talk. Read more [here](#).



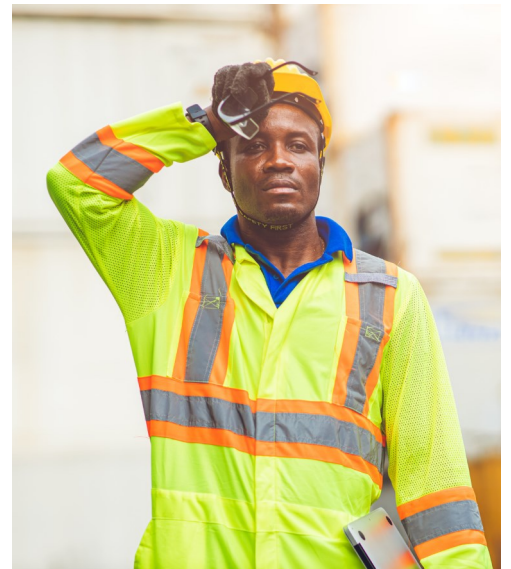
The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has released its updated [Know Your Rights](#) notice to address the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act which took effect on June 27, 2023. Make sure your “poster” is updated (and share with your remote employees).

It's Summertime: Heat Illness Prevention Reminder

Oregon OSHA encourages all employers to refresh their knowledge of workplace safety and health rules designed to protect workers from the dangers of high heat.

This is especially important as temperatures in Oregon rise this summer. Oregon OSHA urges employers to focus on heat stress prevention, including acclimatization, which involves gradually adapting the body to work in the heat. Other critical steps to prevent heat illness include water, rest, shade, and training.

Oregon OSHA maintains heat illness prevention rules under which employers must take concrete steps to protect workers from the hazards of high heat. The rules apply across industries and to settings in which employers provide labor housing. Workers have a right to a safe and healthy workplace, and they have the right to raise concerns free of retaliation.



The following fact sheets address general workplace requirements and employer-provided housing requirements in both English and Spanish:

- Key requirements for general workplaces – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)
- Key requirements for employer-provided housing – [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

More heat illness prevention resources are available on Oregon OSHA’s [A-to-Z topic index page](#). The resources include a video training in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) that satisfies certain training elements of the heat rule. Learn more [here](#).

Older Workers

Employers are relying on older workers more than ever. The Bureau of Labor Statistics [has projected](#) that more than half of the labor force growth in this decade will come from workers aged 65 years and older, even as overall growth will be slower than it has been in recent history. [Gallup has observed](#) that, of workers aged 55 to 74 years, far fewer are retiring.

There is a good reason for employers to retain and hire older workers. Older workers can model strong work ethic and professionalism, and they often have strong “soft skills,” including leadership, problem-solving, and communication. Older workers also provide context and perspective, based on their experience, which bolsters collaboration and creativity. [Research shows](#) that many qualities, including “wisdom, resilience, compassion, and tolerance of stress,” increase with age. Older workers also [stay with employers longer on average](#), contributing to stability and continuity.



And while employers are relying increasingly on older workers, older workers are also relying increasingly on employers. The increased prevalence of retirement plans that require an employee to decide whether and how to save for retirement offer flexibility, but they also create uncertainty that can require an older worker to delay retirement or return to work from retirement.

Unfortunately, those older workers who delay or return from retirement often face discrimination. An [AARP survey](#) found that nearly two-thirds of older Americans believe discrimination based on age is common. About a third of older workers had overheard negative, age-based comments about others at work and a sixth had received such comments themselves.

Over half say they were asked when they were born while applying or interviewing for a job.

The EEOC is committed to addressing these problems by vigorously enforcing the [Age Discrimination in Employment Act \(ADEA\)](#) and ensuring that older workers who want or need to work are afforded the same opportunities as younger workers. The EEOC not only conducts outreach and education on the requirements of the ADEA, but it also enforces those requirements through investigations and litigation.

In addition, the EEOC and the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs have partnered to expand access to good jobs for unrepresented workers, including older Americans, through the joint Hiring Initiative to Reimagine Equity (HIRE). The EEOC is also tackling the impact that artificial intelligence (AI) is having on all workers, including older Americans, through their AI and Algorithmic Fairness Initiative. Indicators of age—including education and experience—are included on applications and resumes, meaning that older workers can be susceptible to biased screening or selection mechanisms.



Employers need to be cautious not to assume that older workers are less capable than younger ones. Older workers are integral to most workplaces and to the economy. It is inherent for all employers to continue the efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against all workers.

Your Wellbeing Matters - What To Do When You Feel Stuck

If you feel stuck, frustrated, or burned out with health, fitness, or wellness, this message is for you! Maybe you’ve “been there done that” with dieting. Maybe you are struggling with a medical diagnosis. Maybe you’ve tried all the mindfulness tips and tricks, and nothing works for your stress. When it comes to getting your personal health in order, you might feel hopeless and helpless.

You are not alone. The folks at **Advanced Corporate Wellness** share this article with us. Many of the people we engage with in our wellness coaching programs feel this way. Here is how you can help yourself get back in the driver’s seat of your health and take back a bit of your power.

First, don’t be afraid to start small.

Folks who feel jaded in their health goals often feel that way because of a series of “failures”. If that’s you, then the best thing to do is to start with small, easy, enjoyable lifestyle tweaks that will

support you in feeling your best. In our coaching, we call this starting with the low hanging fruit. For some this could look like working on going to bed at an earlier time. For others, it might be starting to make lunch for themselves more consistently. Choose a small, doable, enjoyable habit that could make a difference for you and focus your energy on that. Once it's your new normal, you'll start to build back your confidence in being able to make positive changes in your life.



Second, you'll need to heal old stories.

If you continually tell yourself that you are a failure, or you'll always be sick, or you're worthless, or you're weak, or you're lazy, then you'll stay stuck. You can start to flip the script! Working with a therapist and/or a coach can help you address the negative inner dialogue and limiting beliefs that are keeping you stuck in your health frustrations.

Third, take a back door approach.

If you have one aspect of health & wellness that you don't want to touch with a ten-foot pole - here is your permission slip to leave it alone! If you know your sleep is terrible but whenever you try to work on it you fail miserably, then try the backdoor approach instead.

The five building blocks of healthy living we use in our coaching philosophy are:

1. Sleep
2. Nutrition
3. Movement
4. Stress Management
5. Mindset

All five of these building blocks are connected to each other. When you work on one, the others are impacted. It's like a game of "cat's cradle" or a web. If you tug and pull on one corner, the others move in response. If addressing sleep head on has not worked for you, take a look at ANY of the other 5 building blocks and watch what happens. If you're eating a little better, you might find it easier to fall and stay asleep. If you exercise during the day, you'll be more ready for rest at night. If you're addressing your biggest stressors, you'll stay up worrying less and less. If you address your mindsets and internal dialogues, you'll feel more mentally peaceful. See the connections? What experiments will you try?

To go deeper into this gentle approach to health and wellness, check out the book [**If Diets Don't Work, What Does? A Doable Enjoyable Guide to Living the Life You Want.**](#) It's a self-coaching guide for recovering yo-yo dieters and anyone who feels frustrated with their health journey.

We don't have to stay jaded with health & wellness. There are ways to dig ourselves out of the pit we find ourselves in. Starting small, healing old stories, and taking a back door approach could be just the thing. You deserve to be in the driver's seat of your health as much as circumstances allow. Here's to feeling a little more hopeful.

Special appreciation to Danielle Dinkelman, NBC-HWC from Advanced Corporate Wellness, LLC for writing this article. danielle@acwcoaching.com | 801-888-3361 | www.acwcoaching.com





client accolades

Oregon Business Magazine recently recognized its list of the 100 Best Green Workplaces in Oregon for 2023 and several of our clients made the list. We are honored to work with these organizations and value their commitment to not only being GREEN but giving back to their communities and taking care of our planet. CONGRATULATIONS to you all and keep your energy and efforts going!!

#15 [Pacific Landscape Management](#)

#31 [Sokol Blosser Winery](#)

#45 [Rogue Valley Mentoring](#)

#46 [Mt. Hood Meadows](#)

#47 [Oregon Restoration](#)

#50 [Exceed Enterprises](#)

#68 [Anerich Massena](#)

#71 [Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon](#)

#79 [LMC Construction](#)



hra happenings

New Hire

Please join us as we welcome Marcelle Sannen, J.D., PHR to our staff. She is taking on the role of Professional Consultant. She has a wonderful generalist background with 20 years of HR experience, and she has her J.D. We are very fortunate that she has joined our team. We look forward to having the opportunity for you to meet her (on the phone and in person).

Video Library

Did you know HR Answers has a section on its website now of a collection of recorded videos we share as a resource to you? This library contains videos from HR Answers, our partners, and guest speakers. And there is no fee for these.

Passions Interviews

We are thrilled to share with you a recent project - a series of video recordings that give you an inside look into the passions and expertise of our consulting staff. In these recordings, our team members share their personal passion, insights, and advice on a variety of topics related to HR. Through these staff interviews, you'll get to know our team members on a deeper level and gain valuable knowledge. So, sit back, grab a snack, and get ready to be inspired by the amazing individuals who make up our team!

Newly Added:

- Compensation, Laurie Grenya
- Training, Deborah Jeffries
- Avoiding Lawsuits, Judy Clark
- Employee Relations, Anna Lee
- Coaching & Feedback, Jennifer Schoorl
- And more will be coming soon!

We also have some recent recordings of our HR Lunch Bunch conversations. A variety of topics are there from recruiting, company culture, the employee experience and mental health. We encourage you to check them out.

These and more can be found at <https://hranswers.com/resources/video-library/>



hra happenings

We are thrilled to announce a celebration in honor of Judy Clark's remarkable 51-year career in Human Resources. Judy has been an integral part of our organization for over half a century, and her contributions have been invaluable. Her dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to excellence have helped shape our company's culture and values. We invite you to join us in celebrating Judy's career and all that she has accomplished. The event will take place on November 3rd, 2023, and the guest list includes colleagues, friends, and family who have been touched by Judy's work and legacy. Please add your email to the guest list so you don't miss any details! We look forward to honoring Judy and sharing this special occasion with you.

[ADD MY NAME](#)





Employee engagement continues to be a top 5 topic for most HR professionals and organizations for 2023 and beyond. According to the employee engagement statistics, 71% of executive managers regard employee engagement as a critical factor for an organization's success. We thought we might share some of the best books to supercharge employee engagement and offer you some tactics that other leaders have discovered. Use this link <https://blog.empuls.io/best-employee-engagement-books/> to learn about 15 employee engagement books that will transform your workplace, boost productivity, and create a thriving organizational culture.



whatever the question

Q: I am concerned that I have an employee who may be involved in payroll fraud. I am not sure how to proceed.

A: As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. According to one study by fraud experts, approximately 15% of all business theft is perpetrated through payroll fraud. This type of fraud is one of the easiest frauds to commit.

There are some steps you need to take if you suspect employees of fraud. Without question, the organization and legal counsel should move quickly if you suspect fraud.

- **Assemble and deploy a forensic investigative team** and preserve the chain of evidence. Bring aboard forensic specialists and legal counsel with the skills to fully investigate and uncover fraud.
- **Don't be hasty.** Don't fire the "bad actor" too fast. Moving too fast can impede your discovery of improprieties and can inhibit the ability of a forensic investigation team to secure data and gather information from suspected employees. Co-conspirators may use this time to cover up their involvement.
- **Secure potential evidence.** The organization should move as rapidly as possible to safeguard any data that can assist investigators and serve as evidence in a prosecution or civil suit. This includes securing electronic devices such as computers, thumb drives, discs, cell phones, and related software and storage programs, as well as the employee's physical workspace.

- **Avoid inadvertently destroying evidence.** Executives may feel the urge to examine a suspected employee's electronic files, or an IT staff member may shut off or connect an external device to a computer. These actions can render the devices useless as evidence, as they have been altered from their original state. Instead, a computer forensic specialist can and should mirror hard drives and carefully search for relevant data in a way that preserves the chain of custody.
- **Restrict the employee's access.** After an employee has been notified that they are the target of an investigation, their access to information systems should end. Passwords should be deactivated, and the employee should not be allowed to touch or remove anything from the office. The employee should also be accompanied while in the office and escorted from the premises.
- **Notify your insurance company.** Most insurance policies carry a 30- or 60-day notification provision from the first day a potential loss has been discovered. Failure to notify the insurer can result in a loss of coverage. Once the insurance carrier is notified, proof of loss must be filed within a specified time frame. Do not be afraid to ask for extensions to ensure proper documentation of the claim.

Now moving beyond an individual situation. There are several general steps an employer should consider when thinking about this area of fraud:

- Conduct an internal fraud audit to detect weaknesses in your current payroll and accounting systems
- Adjust your oversight methods (checks and balances), to catch fraud before it happens
- Analyze your accounting records (invite someone else to conduct a review) to detect fraudulent activity

More specific steps include considering:

- Sophisticated time clocks or systems that require a unique employee pass code to be entered when clocking in.
- Manager or supervisor approval of all timecards or timesheets, including all overtime.
- Executive approval of all bonus-type compensation.
- Mandatory vacations for those with payroll responsibilities with another employee performing this function in their absence.

- Executive approval of all paychecks.
- The ability to modify wage rates, add employees, etc., within the system should be restricted to only those necessary. These individuals should have their records periodically reviewed.

Ghost employees. This type of payroll fraud occurs when nonexistent employees are added to the payroll and another employee benefits by receiving their wages. Ghost employees may never have existed, or they may no longer be current employees of the organization but are intentionally left on the payroll. This fraud is typically more prevalent in larger organizations with large numbers of employees and weak internal controls.

- Conduct periodic payroll audits in which all employees must physically sign and show proper identification to receive their paycheck or pay stubs.
- Cross-reference the payroll roster for duplicate addresses or Social Security numbers.
- Investigate all returned W-2 forms.
- Verify Social Security numbers with the Social Security Administration.
- Randomly inspect your payroll database for employees with P.O. boxes or those with no deductions (i.e., healthcare, state/fed withholdings).

Require direct mailing of checks or have management distribute them physically to employees.

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

Creating a supportive work environment is not only essential for the health and well-being of your employees, but also key to attracting and retaining top leaders. Menopause is not just a concern for women it is a workplace concern.

Menopause impacts 20% of today's workforce—many of whom are at the height of their careers. Despite its prevalence, many employees are dealing with serious symptoms in silence.

Average age of women in menopause is 51.

For women of color (African American) – menopause can last 10 years.

In addition to nearly 50% of menopausal employees taking sick days, almost 20% have actually quit or considered quitting their job due to symptoms.



What percentage of "free" time does your employee group have in a day? The data from Microsoft's most recent research says it all.

- 8.8 hours a week reading email
- 7.5 hours a week logging meetings
- 2 out of 3 employees struggle to find time and energy to do their job.



Here are a couple of stats from [Bullhorn's 2023 Global Talent Trends Report](#).

- **3 out of 5 workers** say they want recruiters to reach out at least once a week
- **70% of candidates** say they have given up on a promising opportunity because the process took too long.
- Workers who report a strong experience throughout every stage of the lifecycle were **6x as likely** to want to work with their firm again.



The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) [announced a new report](#) finding that nearly half of workplace accommodations made for people with disabilities can be implemented at no cost to employers, and of those that do incur a one-time cost, the median expenditure has decreased when compared to previous reports to only \$300.



thoughts to think about

"Self-esteem comes from being able to define the world in your own terms and refusing to abide by the judgments of others." ~Oprah Winfrey

"Treasure your curiosity and nurture your imagination. Have confidence in yourself. Do not let others put limits on you. Dare to imagine the unimaginable." ~Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson

"Low self-confidence isn't a life sentence. Self-confidence can be learned, practiced, and mastered—just like any other skill. Once you master it, everything in your life will change for the better." ~Barrie Davenport

"It is confidence in our bodies, minds, and spirits that allows us to keep looking for new adventures." ~Oprah Winfrey

"Confidence comes not from always being right but from not fearing to be wrong." ~Peter T. McIntyre

"To excel at the highest level—or any level, really—you need to believe in yourself, and hands down, one of the biggest contributors to my self-confidence has been private coaching." ~Stephen Curry

calendar of events

FEATURED TRAINING PROGRAMS

Success for Supervisors

8-Part Series on Thursdays

September 7, 14, 28, October 5, 19, November 2, 16, 30

Two Learning Options Available!

In-Person Learning

8:30am to 12:30pm



[REGISTER](#)

Virtual Learning

1:00pm to 5:00pm



[REGISTER](#)

Comments from our attendees:




"I want to thank you for an outstanding series. I will retain and build upon the teachings of this series for the remainder of my career. It is truly a foundation."

"I felt calmer and confident in directing the conversation, asking better questions, getting better answers, because I knew what I was looking for. Today's class prepared me more than I anticipated. Thank you!"


Thanks for great classes - very helpful and useful in my day-to-day activities!"

calendar of events




- 07** Supervisory Short: Effective Meetings
- 12** HR Lunch Bunch: The Quiets
-  **11** Professional Practices: Employee Handbook - Your Guide to Consistency
-  **20** Professional Practices: HR Records Management
-  **27** Professional Practices: Employee Opinion Surveys



-  **02** Building a Culture of Belonging
- 04** Supervisory Short: Building an Effective Team
- 08** Professional Practices: Auditing Oregon Pay Equity
- 16** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Emotional Safety



-  **12** Professional Practices: Job Descriptions - A Valuable Resource in Risk Mitigation
- 15** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Understanding Micro Aggressions and Micro Inequities
- 08** Professional Practices: Conducting an Effective Internal Investigation
- 27** HR: Party of One

[REGISTER](#)

HR Answers, Inc. is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP®



calendar of events

Upcoming Topics:

- So You Think You Want to Be A Supervisor?
- HR Lunch Bunch: HR Records - Getting Them Back In Place
- Supervisory Short: Safety and Wellness
- Professional Practices: Americans with Disabilities Act
- Looking for a Supervisor
- Before You Say “Yes” to the Promotion
- Professional Practices: HR Compliance - What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You
- Interviewing for Culture and Emotional Intelligence

HR Answers, Inc. is recognized by SHRM to offer Professional Development Credits (PDCs) for SHRM-CP® or SHRM-SCP® recertification activities.



on my soapbox

It is July so I will share some thoughts I have been ruminating on this year, what the holiday we celebrate this month, what it stands for, and how we have so many people that love this country, but act in destructive ways. This year I have been thinking about Patriotism, so let me start with the Internet.



Wikipedia has this definition, “Patriotism is the feeling of love, devotion, and sense of attachment to one's country. This attachment can be a combination of many different feelings, including ethnic, cultural, political, or historical aspects. It encompasses a set of concepts closely related to nationalism.” It is believed to derive from the French language in the late 1500s; although, there are people who believe it is founded on similar words in the Greek and Latin languages.

My decision to focus on Patriotism is driven by my belief that our population has many different views of that concept; some of them positive, but some of them potentially harmful. Some view it as something that comes around each year on the Fourth of July. They put out their flag and enjoy a day off work. Some have fireworks, either setting them off at home (not so much anymore) or going to an organized event of high-in-the-sky magic. These people may think about the reason for the holiday or not. Others may think about our country, but just in passing when our national anthem is played. And for still others, patriotism leads them to fight for our country or volunteer in organizations that make us stronger or provide service to many who are struggling.

Still for others, patriotism may be like a religion heightening the fervor they already feel for America. This can lead to Nationalism. Patriotism and Nationalism are similar, but Nationalism can have a dark side. It is suggested by Dictionary.com that “Nationalism generally has a negative connotation. It is used for political ideologies and movements that have a more extreme and exclusionary love of one’s country—at the expense of foreigners, immigrants, and even people in a country who aren’t believed to belong in some way, often on racial and religious grounds.”

For me, patriotism is pride in our country and I’m proud to be an American. I expect us to always try to meet the standards that we say we have. Sometimes we fall short. I am not so upset when a mistake occurs, but I am truly upset when we don’t acknowledge the mistake and learn from it.

I am always surprised by what I discover when doing research. The time spent writing this month’s Soapbox is no exception. I was planning to dive into how I think about patriotism, but I

found something infinitely better than my thoughts. I found a list of ten things we each can do to act out our patriotism, if only to our family and friends. I hope you find several things you can do on this list. I know that I have.

Ten Things We Can Do to Demonstrate Our Patriotism

1. Vote – you might be surprised by the number of people who don't.
2. Offer support to a Veteran or a Veterans group.
3. Fly the US flag – and learn to fly it correctly.
4. Support the National parks – they are one of the best perks of this country.
5. Enjoy a parade, especially on Fourth of July and/or Veterans' Day.
6. Support our active-duty service personnel – tell them “thanks”.
7. Read about US history or visit a museum – learn about our history.
8. Support our schools – schools make us stronger as a society and as a country.
9. When a serviceman or woman in your community passes away, show your respect and gratitude by giving or sending a note to the family.
10. Donate blood – it is the true gift you can give freely without expecting thanks from the recipient.

Patriotism is easy to think about on or around the Fourth of July. But it is something that we should think about year-round. We can think about how privileged we are to live here. We can commit to share ourselves and our time on behalf of our country. If we live as patriots, we give back to this country just a little of what we have been given.

Judy Clark, Principal and Founder

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

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