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Upcoming Events

Free Webinars

Tuesday,
August 23rd
2022



How to Keep Your Employees Safe as We Return to Travel

The Role Your Company Plays in Employee Travel (Business or Pleasure)

sponsored by  learn more [🔗](#)

Thursday,
August 25th
2022



HR Trends: An Individualized Approach to People Ops

Learn How To Best Strategize and Deliver an Individualized Hr Approach

sponsored by  learn more [🔗](#)

Thursday,
September 8th
2022



Scaling for Success: HR Compliance for Now and the Future

In The World of Human Resources, Compliance is Critical

sponsored by  learn more [🔗](#)

Tuesday,
September 13th
2022



Employee Habit vs. Addiction: Knowing When and How to Intervene

The Business Case to Support Addiction in the Workplace

sponsored by  learn more [🔗](#)

News Briefs

HR Stories You Might Have Missed

Retirees could be the answer to staffing part-time positions

July 11, 2022

If you're still short-staffed and looking for employees, we've got some terrific news! A new study found that 94% of people who said they were unemployed and 68% of retirees would consider returning to work.

The CNBC All-America Workforce Survey polled Americans online on how the pandemic changed their work and lives. Of the more than 2,000 respondents, 1,200 were employed, 450 were retirees and 400 were unemployed due to the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

Remote form I-9 inspection flexibility extended

July 12, 2022

I-9 filing flexibility has been extended – again – through October 31, 2022.

Since March 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have allowed flexibility in the remote filing of I-9 forms.

[Read more](#)

SHRM under fire: Explosive lawsuit alleges race discrimination, retaliation

July 13, 2022

It's been busy at the legal office of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) recently. Less than a week after settling a disability discrimination lawsuit for allegedly denying ADA disability accommodations to learners during educational events, SHRM was served with a second lawsuit for racial discrimination and retaliation by a former member of its educational design department.

What in the world is happening inside HR's venerated *Voice of All Things Work*?

[Read more](#)

SHRM pays \$221K to settle disability discrimination lawsuit

July 13, 2022

Who was involved: The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and three HR professionals who are hearing impaired.

What happened: The HR professionals are members of SHRM. They alleged the organization violated Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires businesses to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access goods and services. Specifically, the HR pros said the training and events teams failed to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure its online content was accessible to hearing-impaired and d/Deaf individuals. Plaintiffs stated in their complaint that SHRM habitually provided inadequate transcriptions, captioning, and sign language interpretation in the following products:

[Read more](#)

Bad news, good news: Salary budgets for 2023 are going up!

July 14, 2022

Despite the likelihood of the recession that's looming in the not-too-distant future, 64% of U.S. companies plan to budget for an overall average salary increase of 4.1% in 2023. That's up slightly from 2022 (4.0%) and the highest since the Great Recession of 2008.

And it's all thanks to the Great Resignation that created a tight labor market that has more job openings than bodies to fill them.

[Read more](#)

EEOC updated Q&A on COVID-19 and ADA

July 15, 2022

Ready for some updates? Great! Because as of July 12, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated its Technical Assistance Questions and Answers on COVID-19 testing and vaccine in the workplace.

One major change is to A.6. "Under the ADA, may an employer, as a mandatory screening measure, administer a COVID-19 viral test (a test to detect the presence of the COVID-19 virus) when evaluating an employee's initial or continued presence in the workplace?"

[Read more](#) 

EEOC updated Q&A on COVID-19 and ADA: Part 2

July 18, 2022

Last week we told you about some of the updates the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) made to its Technical Assistance Questions and Answers on COVID-19 testing and vaccine in the workplace on July 12. We promised you a part two, and here it is.

[Read more](#) 

BLS changes occupation definitions: What HR needs to know

July 20, 2022

One year out from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2021 release of 50 newly defined occupations of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), the baseline is stabilizing – let's look at what changed.

Perhaps as a response to the tectonic shifts in the labor market caused by COVID-19, the 2021 update arrived faster than expected. BLS tends to make major updates to the SOC list every 10 years or so, refining categories in 2000, 2010 and 2018. The theme of this update appeared to be a refinement of categories and profession types, such as splitting out the new *Software Developer* occupation from *Web Developer*, added in 2010.

[Read more](#) 

Injunction blocks EEOC sexual orientation guidance: What it means

July 21, 2022

A federal district court in Tennessee has issued a preliminary injunction that temporarily blocks the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) from enforcing a technical assistance document it issued last year regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The court ruled that the plaintiffs, consisting of 20 state attorneys general, are likely to succeed on their claim that the technical assistance document violates the Administrative Procedure Act (APA)..

[Read more](#) 

Case Study

An 'employees come first' benefits platform yields a 92% approval rating



"People come first" has always been our mantra, and we wanted that to be the anchor to our benefits philosophy, too.

As a business, we want to deliver honest financial products to improve people's lives. That's what we wanted our benefits package to do, too – improve employees' lives. And as a young company, we were doing well at it. Then the pandemic hit, and the entire world changed. We knew then we had to ramp up our benefits to meet our employees' new needs.

We always viewed our benefits package as a huge talent attraction and retention tool. It was one way to differentiate ourselves from the competition. So, we weren't afraid to make a large financial investment because we knew if we wanted to meet our business growth objectives, we had to attract and keep the best people.

That's why the core of our benefits program has always been providing low- to no-deductible health plans, as well as covering the full cost of medical coverage for our employees and their dependents. Since our people come first, we wanted to make sure they had access to the benefits they needed, especially in situations where they had to receive medical care.

The wallet program

After some research, we realized the answer lies in giving spending power to employees – and our wallet program was born. Every month the company puts money into four different wallets for each employee. The wallets are a way to offer 100 different benefits in one because of the depth of the eligible expense list. Employees can use it on nearly everything and customize it to their own needs.

Here's how it works:

- **Food wallet (\$220/month)**
– This wallet can be used for meal delivery kits, groceries, etc. So, if an employee is working late at home, they can order out and the food wallet will take care of it.
- **Tech wallet (\$200/month)** – The monthly stipend from the tech wallet can be used for setting up an employee's home office. They can purchase a mouse, keyboards, desks, chairs, etc., or they can pay their internet or phone bill. The stipend is for whatever they need to work from home.
- **Lifestyle wallet (\$250/month)**
– Employees can use this wallet for essentially anything around health, well-being and convenience-related expenses, like gym memberships, fitness equipment subscriptions,

apple watches, education classes and the list goes on.

- **S.A.F.E journey (family planning) wallet (\$20,000 total)** – This wallet is a lifetime allowance for surrogacy, adoption and fertility-related expenses. So, people who have different family-forming needs can tap into this wallet.

25 away days

After the pandemic hit and everyone was sent home to work, we realized that our employees were just as productive at home as they were in the office. So, we made the decision to go remote first.

But then we realized that employees sometimes had difficulty disconnecting from work now that it was in the same place they lived. To combat that we implemented a "25 away days" program. It includes the regular statutory holidays, as well as additional days. At least once a month, the entire company shuts down for a long weekend.

And our 25 away days program is separate from the company's unlimited paid time off program and health leaves.

What we found was even if we told people to take time off, if they were forever getting pinged

Case Study

An 'employees come first' benefits platform yields a 92% approval rating (continued)



or emailed, it was hard for them to stop working. So, we just said let's give everybody off and get everybody offline, so they don't feel the pressure of having to sign on because their co-workers are still working. It's a huge benefit that has helped boost morale and mental well-being.

'Life happens' leave

As if the pandemic wasn't enough to deal with over the past few years, events keep happening in our world that affect our employees. For example, to combat what's going on in *Roe v. Wade* in part, and to cover times when life throws you a curve ball, the company implemented a "life happens" leave.

This program provides 10 days for people to take off for reasons just because life happens. Whether it's a mental health day, time off for moving or time off to travel out of state to get a medical procedure or service, employees have 10 days to use at their discretion.

We provide people that time off so they're not feeling pressure to not use their unlimited PTO. It's a dedicated bank for that specific reason, and we expect people to use it.

In addition, we recently created a \$5,000 reimbursable travel expense program for employees who need a medical procedure or service that isn't available or legal in their home state.

Great benefits need a great communication strategy

These benefits are great, but they won't hit the mark with employees if they don't know about them or how to use them.

The final part of our "people come first" benefits program was implementing an effective communication strategy. Our executives recognize the impact that benefits have on our employees.

We grew from a small company where people were connected to each other. It speaks to the way we've grown. It's sort of a paternalistic mentality to make sure that people are taken care of.

Our executives realize the true impact that benefits have on people and believe we are all in this together when it comes to navigating a pandemic or wars abroad. They understand there are so many different life events that are happening and since we're one big family we need to find a way to support everyone. It's a lead by example mentality and preaching the message.

That's why when we did the new rollout, we used emails and a series of webinars around open enrollment. The idea was people learn in diverse ways, so we provided them with information in different modes: virtual, interactive and asynchronous.

This way they could take in the information as they needed to do individually.

And in all our communications we told our employees what actions were required of them and that we realized this was a lot of change, but we were there to help them through it.

The final key was constant and frequent reminders.


The result was an overwhelmingly positive approval rating

Our employees are quite happy with the new benefits programs.

Twice a year we do a company-wide engagement survey. In these surveys, we ask one specific question about benefits, "Do the benefits programs at Affirm meet the needs of you and your family?"

The results from our latest survey – end of 2021 – found that 92% of people answered that question strongly positive. That says to me that whatever we are doing, it's resonating with our people.

(Mike Roeding, Director of Global Benefits, Affirm, San Francisco)

[Read more Case Studies in your Membership Dashboard](#) 

10 AREAS TO MAKE AN IMPACT



LEADERSHIP

HR's critical role in building organizational resilience



by Michele McGovern

The last two years were full of HR lessons – and this could be the most important: Resilience makes a difference.

It likely helped you trudge through volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. And now, resilience – the ability to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges and change – is a critical business strategy.

At work, resilience is an organization's and its employees' "capacity to thrive, rather than just survive, in high stress environments," according to Chartered Institute of

Personnel and Development (CIPD) researchers. It sounds like what organizations and their people did throughout the pandemic – from strive to thrive.

"Employee resilience has been a flaming-hot topic with plenty of new ideas. The problem with most is the notion that employees can do it themselves," says Chris Altizer, co-author of *Growing the Elephant – increasing earned advantage for all*, and an adjunct lecturer on global leadership and management at Florida International University College of Business. "But, leaders contribute to workplace

resilience when they lead with their own participation. From their own resilience, leaders can more effectively remove barriers to employee performance, improve workplace culture, and slow the great resignation."

Even if it's not in your actual company mission or business strategy, when you help employees improve resilience, you build a resilient organization.

But recognize this: You can't just tell people to become more resilient – or expect it. Because resilience is partly a psychological trait and partly

a variable psychological state, some people will always be naturally more resilient than others. You can't tell people to "buck up" or "be strong" – but you can influence how resilient they can become.

Here are strategies to build organizational resilience – some through people, some through process.

Get a baseline

How resilient is your workforce? Find out the baseline, so you have a better idea of where to help employees.

Dr. Katharina Näswall, a University of Canterbury Psychology Professor, created one of the most widely used assessment tools for resilience. (You can [request permission to use the tools here.](#))

It's an 11-question survey. Employees respond to these statements on a sliding scale from "Never" to "Always."

1. I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work.
2. I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time.
3. I resolve crises competently at work.
4. I learn from mistakes at work and improve the way I do my job.
5. I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work.
6. I effectively respond to feedback at work, even criticism.
7. I seek assistance at work when I need specific resources.

8. I approach managers when I need their support.

9. I use change at work as an opportunity for growth.

From there, you can get a sense of employees' levels of resilience. For instance, the more "Always" responses indicates a more resilient employee, team or organization.

Address employee top factors

Offering "resilience training" could be met with skepticism and resistance. But, you can create opportunities for development in the areas that are most critical to resilience.

CIPD researchers found these five factors predict resilience most. We've added training tips for each:

- **Self-efficacy:** That's employees' belief in their ability to perform tasks at a certain level. *Manage it:* Give front-line managers the tools and time to work with employees to set stretch goals and plan development and coaching to reach them.
- **Positive affect and optimism:** These are general moods such as joy, cheerfulness and enthusiasm, plus the belief in positive outcomes. This is baked into company culture. Positivity is also built on recognition. *Manage it:* Give employees the tools and public opportunities to recognize each other for accomplishments.
- **Sense of coherence:** This is a belief that what happens will be manageable, comprehensible and meaningful. *Manage it:* One way employers can contribute to that is with predictability – in schedules, operations and the future. Also, be transparent, so

employees know what to expect. And give employees time and space to build relationships. Having a support system helps people cope when the unexpected happens.

- **Social support:** This is the help and advice employees get from managers or co-workers. *Manage it:* This can also be improved with time and space to build relationships.
- **Leader-member exchange:** This is the positive relationships between managers and their employees, which reduce work-related stress and increase psychologically safe spaces at work. *Manage it:* Hold town halls and focus groups where employees can ask leaders direct questions – and expect transparency.

Address organizational top factors

Resilient people can help make a resilient organization. But there's more to it than that.

"Resilience ... has never been tested as it has the last few years. Production pummeled, supply chains broke and service from a dwindling and exhausted workforce hit at all-time lows. The business impacts of burnout and open positions are real," Altizer says.

"Common sense tells us resilient people make for resilient organizations and resilient organizations outperform and outlast less resilient competitors," Altizer continues. "But, when leaders and HR people are in the same boat as their workforce, it's hard to stop bailing the rising waters of turnover and disengagement to fix the resilience holes in the hull."

That's why companies that have built resilience are more apt to stay ahead. Organizational resilience helps them remain able to change strategy seamlessly, adapt for cultural shifts and move with agility through uncertainty.

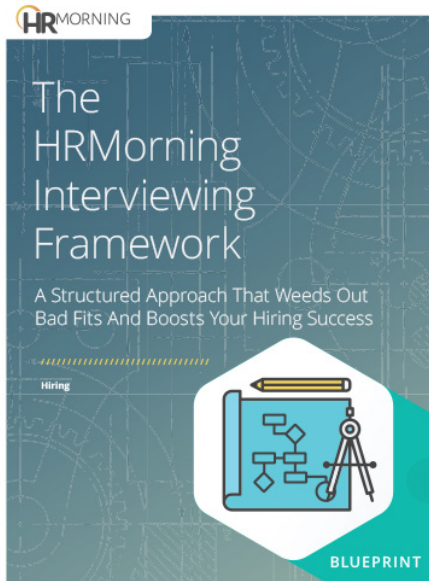
To make that happen, resilient organizations have five common traits, according to the Deloitte Global Annual Readiness Report. They are:

- **Adaptable.** Leaders in the Deloitte report said employee flexibility and adaptability was the most critical factor to their organization's success.
- **Collaborative.** Leaders at resilient organizations remove silos and reward collaboration between individuals, teams and business units. Collaboration leads to faster decision-making, less risk and more innovation, researchers found.
- **Trustworthy.** Top organizations build trust from top down through transparency and regular communication. That means the leaders are expected

to share information – the good, bad and ugly – with employees and the impact it can have on them.

- **Responsible.** Resilient organizations feel – and act on – a sense of responsibility to their stakeholders; employees, investors, their communities and causes. They work to balance stakeholders' needs with business goals to remain resilient.

[Read this article online](#) 



The HRMorning Interviewing Framework

A Structured Approach That Weeds Out Bad Fits And Boosts Your Hiring Success

This systematic, repeatable interview process – when properly applied – is designed to help you develop a structure that provides you a better-than-average success rate for bringing outstanding new employees on board.

After reading this blueprint we'll take you from an unstructured interview approach where you "trust your gut" to guide your decision-making, to a clear-cut, structured, research-backed process proven to improve your hiring success – combined with company-specific assessments and tools for interviewers to follow in a consistent way – without fail.

[get the guide](#) 

Help employees work out conflict when they don't like each other



by Michele McGovern

LEADERSHIP BEST PRACTICES



Personality differences. Moral misalignment. Work style disparities. Character clashes. They're conflicts in most workplaces every day.

Even HR pros have to work with people they dislike. But if you're lucky enough to not be in that situation, you likely have to manage people who hate each other.

Aside from separating sparring employees – which can be difficult – you want strategies to make conflicting relationships workable. Here's help from Amy Gallo, co-host of the Women at Work podcast, and the author of the HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict.

Temper it

Your gut reaction to a colleague who gets under your skin will likely be negative. It will also set the stage for how an uncomfortable conversation plays out – and how the situation moves forward.

So you want to manage reactions before you react to conflict. Think less about how your nemesis acts and more about how you react. Take the deep breath. Don't speak until you've mentally worked out what you'll say and prepared the calm tone you'll use.

Zip it

This is a critical tactic for leaders: Keep your distaste for co-workers to yourself.

It's tempting to want to gripe to colleagues about people you struggle to get along with, but doing so is unprofessional and will hurt your authority and credibility.

Even worse, leaders who talk negatively about others set a terrible example for their employees – and can tarnish their nemesis' reputation. If you must vent, choose a peer outside the office.

And when you need to get involved in employees' conflict, lead by example. Ask them to avoid attacking people and personalities and focus on behaviors that cause issues – and can potentially be resolved.

Flip it

It's hard to be objective in a bad relationship. But it's important to take a better peripheral view of the situation and ask yourself, "Could it be me?"

Consider what it is that you don't like. Perhaps a:

- specific action that sets you off
- difference in attitude or values
- personality trait that reminds you of someone you don't like, or
- position, possession or situation that makes you jealous.

If any are a factor, there's a good chance you're part of the problem. Try to identify your role in the tumultuous relationship, and work to clean it up.

Build on it

Try spending more time with someone you don't want to spend any time with!

"One of the best ways to get to like someone you don't like is to work on a project that requires coordination," says Robert Sutton, author of *Good Boss, Bad Boss* and *The No Asshole Rule*.

It's not ideal at first. In fact, it's probably the exact opposite of what you'd want to do. But researchers have found that people in this situation find themselves understanding each other better and developing some mutual empathy once they work more closely together. What often happens is they find another common like or dislike that bonds them.

Speak it

If nothing else works – and you must work effectively with someone you don't like – address it.

The key is to address what annoys you with a It's-not-you-it's-me approach. Focus on a behavior the person can control and how it impacts you and your work together.

For instance, "Tammy, I feel you try to one-up me every time we collaborate and our VP is involved. This behavior makes me reluctant to work with and sometimes speak to you. How would you suggest we proceed?"

Be prepared: Your adversary may get defensive, take it personally and escalate the situation.

If that's the case, try this last tactic from Sutton: "Practice the fine art of emotional detachment or not giving a \$h!t."

[Read this article online](#) 

Does poor review tell all, or is there hidden bias?



"This is ridiculous!" Employee Hazel Matthews practically screamed as she burst into Benefits Manager Betty Murphy's office. "My boss gives me a bad review and low marks on 'respect' and 'professionalism', and now I don't get my bonus or a raise. This is bullcrap! I was counting on that money."

"I'm sorry about that," said Betty. "But I would appreciate it if you would lower your voice. And I feel the need to point out that this is a good example of why your manager did that."

"Now, if you calm down and have a seat, we can talk about this," continued Betty.

"I've spoken to your supervisor, and she has three documented incidents of you screaming at co-workers. Your colleagues say you're unapproachable," Betty continued. "And when you get upset, your attitude becomes disruptive – just like it did a few minutes ago."

"If people here weren't so rude to me, I wouldn't have to act this way," said Hazel. "Do I need to remind you about Janet leaving that mess for me to clean up?"

"No, your manager gave me a copy of the report," Betty said. "It was addressed and is water under the bridge."

Majority gets a raise?

"Seems to me, I get a bad rap here," said Hazel. "And this poor review means I don't get my bonus or a raise. Isn't that convenient for my department and its meager budget. I bet everyone who isn't a minority like me got a raise."

"That's just untrue," Betty said. "We use the same evaluation form for everyone. But performance is individually based. You used to get good reviews. What happened?"

Hazel, however, felt it was true. She stomped out of Betty's office without another word.

She then sued the company, claiming race bias.

The company fought the case. Did it win?

See decision on next page

You Be The Judge

Does poor review tell all, or is there hidden bias? (continued)



The Decision

Yes, the company won when an appeals court agreed with a lower court's ruling in its favor.

The employee's attorney claimed she was the victim of race discrimination because she received "undeserved" low performance scores that disqualified her from getting her bonus or a raise. She claimed other employees who weren't minorities, were rude and quarreled amongst themselves, and yet they still got good reviews, bonuses and raises.

The company's attorney argued the employee received fair – albeit, poor – reviews. The low scores on professionalism and communication reflected her poor work in those areas, and they were backed by incidents that were documented with HR.

The court agreed she was a member of a protected class, worked toward legitimate job expectations and was subject to an adverse job action. But, she didn't prove the fourth element of a race bias case: She didn't prove there was another worker who was similarly rude and aggressive, and was treated more fairly than her.

Document and update

This case is a good reminder of the importance of documenting performance issues – even the softer, more subtle kinds like collegiality – and being sure employees know where they stand.

Just because someone is in a protected class doesn't give them free rein to be disrespectful and abusive to their managers and co-workers. They need to be held to the same standards as everyone else. Just make sure you are holding everyone to the same standards.

(Based on Abebe v. Health and Hospital Corp. of Marion County. Dramatized for effect.)

[Read more You Be the Judge in your Membership Dashboard](#) 

The science of kindness at work – and how to infuse more at yours



by Steve Sonnenberg, HR Expert Contributor

The pandemic reminded us how quickly disease – plus stress, anxiety and pessimism – can spread.

But it's not only negative things that can spread quickly. Kindness and generosity can be positive contagions at work and in life.

Research shows the key to spreading kindness is through acts of goodness. And this cycle of goodness isn't only for communities or personal lives; it can also be implemented into the workplace.

How the goodness cycle happens

Sayings like “one good act deserves another” and “one kind act will always create another” are popular, but these sayings are more than stickers on walls: They have behavioral science behind them.

Multiple studies have shown that when one person performs a kind act, the recipient is more likely to perform a kind act of his or her own for someone else. One study shows how one act of kindness has a cascading effect, as the recipient does a kind act for someone in his or her social network, then that recipient does another kind act, then so on and so on.

Another study in *The Journal of Social Psychology* showed that people who spend their money on others are actually happier than those who

spend money on themselves. Giving of ourselves – our time, our money, or even simply our listening ear – makes us happier, which, in turn, makes us more likely to give of ourselves again.

When people perform acts of kindness, both they and recipients are buoyed up, reaching new levels of happiness. Then, because of their higher happiness levels, both giver and receiver are more likely to be kind in the future.

Just like the pandemic, kindness can spread easily and quickly, spreading feelings of joy and happiness.



Importance of kindness at work

Because people spend a majority of their waking time at work with other people, they can spread kindness and happiness there. This isn't just a good thought that doesn't produce a ROI. Kindness and acts of goodness can actually transform a business. Here are some of the benefits:

- **Kindness can increase productivity and satisfaction.** Employees who are respectful and kind to each other have 26% more energy, 36% more satisfaction with their work, and

44% more commitment to their organization.

- **Kindness can make people healthier.** When employees feel safe and secure in their work relationships, they can enjoy lower heart rates, lower blood pressure, and stronger immune responses. That means lower absenteeism and fewer sick days.
- **Kindness can produce higher-quality work.** When employees feel happy and satisfied at work, they are more creative.
- **Kindness can lower stress levels and increase engagement.** A culture of comfort and happiness can increase engagement levels while a culture of fear and pressure does the opposite.
- **Kindness makes everyone happier.** When leaders are happy, that trickles down to happier employees. And when employees are happy, they're more willing to put in extra effort and help those around them.

Creating a culture of kindness, service and gratitude can provide a ROI for any company in any industry. But how do you build it into the culture?

How to inject kindness into work

One of the best things about the goodness cycle is that it doesn't take much to get started. Acts of service and kindness don't need to be big or expensive in order to benefit companies. Here are three ways to start spreading kindness in a workplace.

- **Greet with a smile.** A typical adult only smiles 20 times a day, compared to children who smile an average of 400 times a day. Smiling can actually boost a person's mood, reduce blood pressure, increase endurance and reduce pain and stress. A smile is also contagious. When someone smiles, the person they're smiling at has a natural inclination to smile, which gives them the same benefits listed above.
- **Encourage employee recognition.** When employees are recognized, they feel more valued and appreciated. And when employees feel more valued and appreciated, they are more motivated to do their best work, more engaged and more loyal to the company. More than 80% of employees agree that recognition improves their experience, relationships, engagement and happiness at work. Recognition can be anything from giving employees a personalized gift, to saying "thank you" after a job well done, to a public recognition for a birthday.
- **Treat employees as individuals.** Employees are people with lives outside of work. When leaders treat them like individuals with lives and interests and struggles, employees will feel more supported and cared for. A great way to do this is by offering flexible work arrangements. Whether that means a hybrid in-office/work-from-home schedule or flexible PTO rules, this flexibility can improve an employee's work/life balance, which increases happiness.

Implement the goodness cycle

Simple acts of goodness and kindness improve the mood and health of those who are involved. Those feelings are then easily spread to everyone else.

For example, Awardco has implemented the Goodness Cycle with Goodness Grants, an award given to one employee each month (\$1,000 no strings attached!) for doing good and helping the people around them. We accept submissions from around the world, and we've already seen goodness and kindness spreading because of it.

While not every organization can do something to this scale, the principle remains the same: recognizing the good around us and encouraging goodness in everything we do will go a long way to improve the world where we live.

[Read this article online](#) 

Do employees want flexibility? No, it's actually autonomy they crave



by Michele McGovern



Best practices for *hybrid work*

Almost everyone says they want flexibility these days. Some even demand it. But two researchers found what they say isn't exactly what they want.

"What it seems they really want is autonomy," say Holger Reisinger and Dane Fetterer, researchers at

Jabra in their work published in *Harvard Business Review*.

"Within the context of hybrid work, this means having the ability to be the primary decision-maker of where and when they do their work."

So it doesn't matter if employees say they want to come into the office two days a week, work from

home on Mondays or never step inside company walls. What almost all of them are saying is they want to feel like they call the shots on how, where and when they work.

The good news: You don't have to hand over total control. Instead, Reisinger and Fetterer suggest

these strategies to make autonomy the reality:

5 levels of autonomy, flexibility

First, let's look at different degrees of autonomy and flexibility. Not all employees need the same balance to be happy and productive, so offering what's appropriate for each can add to their job satisfaction.

1. Low autonomy, low flexibility: must be in the office full time.
2. Low autonomy, medium flexibility: work at both home and office, the company choosing which days where.
3. Medium autonomy, medium flexibility: work from different locations with a minimum number of days in office weekly.
4. Medium autonomy, high flexibility: work remotely full time, choosing where to work.
5. High autonomy, high flexibility: work wherever, whenever and with full access to the company office space.

Create principles, not policies

For employees and roles that can be done with some flexibility, try creating principles rather than policies on where and when the work gets done.

The researchers give this example: "In a shift from policies to principles, 'minimum three days in the office per week' may become 'there is inherent value in both the physical office and remote locations. We strongly encourage employees to consider which locations best enable them to most effectively carry out certain tasks.'"

This feels less restrictive. Just

making employees feel like they have choices is more than enough to encourage them to make the best decisions for the company, their team and themselves.

Invest in competence

The more skilled employees are at their tasks, the more autonomous they'll be.

So invest as much time and resources as you can into helping employees master their job skills. Then empower them to do their jobs without oversight. When you train employees to be better, they will be more confident and thrive no matter where they work.

Build relations

Regardless of where and when employees work, researchers found they still accomplish more when they have a sense of belonging. Hybrid work can diminish that, especially when employees communicate less and worry about career advancement – the old out-of-sight-out-of-mind fear – more.

Researchers suggest you "focus on building a virtual-first, but not virtual-only, culture where employees have a clear line of sight to their role within the organization."

Invest in tech

Bottom line: Employees must have the same technology capabilities anywhere they work.

[Read this article online](#) 

The Cost of NonCompliance



McDonald's franchisee to pay \$1.5M to settle class-action sexual harassment suit

Who was involved: A McDonald's franchisee and several female employees at the Cedar Street location in Mason, Michigan.

What happened: Backed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a former female employee filed a sexual harassment lawsuit alleging a male co-worker "frequently grabbed her body parts, including her crotch, breasts, and buttocks. He pulled her hair and pushed her into other workers." The suit also claimed the man referred to her as a "bitch" and other derogatory slurs commonly directed toward women. The complaint asserted that the location's general manager saw some of the harassment but failed to step in and correct the behavior. Three other women joined the lawsuit with similar allegations. Twenty more women submitted sworn statements asserting they were sexually harassed by the same man. In 2019, a Michigan federal court held the case could proceed as a class action on behalf of about 100 female employees.

Result: The franchisee agreed to pay \$1.5 million to end the lawsuit. Approximately 100 women are eligible for a portion of the settlement. Awards will vary depending on harassment suffered by individual victims. The average award is estimated to be about \$10,000.

Info: [Former McDonald's workers win \\$1.5 million in class-action sexual harassment lawsuit](#)



EEOC: Company's COVID procedures violated GINA

Who was involved: Brandon Dermatology – a medical practice in Tampa, Florida – and several employees.

What happened: The employer reached an agreement with the EEOC to stop collecting its employees' family members' COVID-19 test results. Doing so violated the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), the EEOC determined. GINA prohibits employers from requesting, requiring or purchasing genetic information about applicants or employees and their family members, except under very narrow circumstances which did not apply in this case. Relevant here, GINA's definition of "genetic information" includes "information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual's family members."

Result: Affected employees will be compensated through the restoration of leave time or back pay. They will also receive undisclosed compensatory damages. Further, under the agreement, the employer is required to:

- Review its COVID-19 policies
- Conduct training on EEO laws as they pertain to COVID-19, and
- Post a notice.

Info: [Brandon Dermatology Resolves EEOC Genetic Discrimination Finding](#)

[Read more The Cost Of NonCompliance in your Membership Dashboard](#) 

The truth behind Rage Quitting – and what HR can do about it



by Michele McGovern

Expert Tips to Retain Employees



Is Rage Quitting all the rage now? And, if so, what can HR professionals do to curb it?

You might feel like it's out of control. But it's not exactly a new phenomenon – more like an HR issue on steroids these days.

Unfortunately, there's an underlying reason at the root of most resignations. More than 65% of employees who quit say they were working in a negative company culture, according to a FlexJobs survey

A toxic workplace leads to more Rage Quits. And you've probably

seen your fair share of dramatic quits – perhaps a tantrum at a perceived slight or a hissy fit followed by a purposeful walk out the door.

While any one of those could have happened 10 or 15 years ago, they happen more often and publicly now: Disgruntled employees feel

The truth behind Rage Quitting – and what HR can do about it

they have plenty of options, and they use social media to blow up their Rage Quit.

“Toxic company culture drives people to leave their jobs more than any other single factor,” says Sara Sutton, Founder and CEO of FlexJobs. “It’s critical that leaders emphasize building healthy cultures that are inclusive of all their workers’ needs.”

About 15% of quitters are raging angry, but all employees who resign are dissatisfied at work. And that’s not how HR wants any employee to feel. So here are expert tips to improve culture and avoid or respond to Rage Quitting:

Make resilience a priority

Employee resilience is important to curbing turnover. But Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan Business School researchers are adamant: Stop telling your employees to be resilient.

Instead, create systems, training and discussions that prepare employees to handle change, withstand hardships and adapt to new realities.

Bottom line: Telling employees to grin and bear it will likely lead to resentment and Rage Quitting.

“Uncertainty and challenging situations are often beyond our control. But how leaders respond – that is, whether they make work a place where employees feel supported, or push them until they burn out and give up – is not,” say Liz Fosslien and Millie West Duffy, authors of *Big Feelings: How to Be Okay When Things Are Not Okay*.

Four of their tips to build (not demand) resilience:

- **Make well-being the expectation.** Try this for the subject at group meetings:

How can we better incorporate balance as part of our days? Then make an agreed-upon idea a ritual – same event, time, place and day – which is a proven way to create balance.

- **Build team accomplishment lists.** Instead of just doling out “to dos,” regularly review what’s been accomplished.
- **Put status updates and check-ins in their place.** Managers can do those in communication apps. Spend time in one-on-ones asking, “What one thing can I do to better support you this week? What kind of flexibility do you need right now?”
- **Create shared language.** Many employees aren’t comfortable sharing emotions – and sometimes, they hit an internal boiling point and they let loose the rage. So give employees a tool to let others know how they’re feeling without having to bleed their hearts out. One way: Use cards in meetings. Red means “I’m struggling.” Yellow means, “I’m stressed.” Green means “I’m OK.”

Be proactive with retention

As an HR pro, you likely encourage or spearhead a proactive approach to employee retention. But often the buck stops at front-line managers. If they don’t implement the strategy, it won’t work to avoid unnecessary quits.

Train managers how to:

- host regular one-on-ones. Give them questions to ask, follow-up responses to common issues and guidance on where to get help for concerns they aren’t equipped to deal with, and
- identify pre-quit (or pre-Rage Quit) behaviors. A few of the

most common, according to Harvard Business School experts:

- productivity drops more than normal
- withdrawal from team dynamics
- less interest in pleasing the manager and colleagues
- change in attitude from positive to negative, and
- loss of enthusiasm for their work, goals and company mission.

Add more fun

Burnout leads to turnover – and it comes in many forms. Employees might be overworked, bored, overwhelmed, underappreciated, micro-managed or under-managed. And any one of those make work less fun. Possibly miserable.

“A lot of the fatigue and burnout that many are feeling as of late is due in part to the repetitiveness that sometimes comes with working remotely,” says Allyson Tom, VP of People & Culture at Blueboard. “There’s also been a loss of some of the spontaneity and variety that came from running into people in the office.”

For those remote employees, bring back variety to work with space for small talk and random conversation for 10 minutes at the start of a meeting.

Intentional play helps, too.

“We encourage one another to bring some play and creativity into our work, from disrupting the workspace with moments of play, like a mid-meeting dance break, to dedicating spaces, meetings or team gatherings to simply play,” says Tom. “We encourage people to take the time they need to indulge in their passions – and to do that without

The truth behind Rage Quitting – and what HR can do about it

feeling guilty. Investing in your personal time and relationships ... helps people become fuller, better versions of themselves.”

Respond to Rage Quitters

Despite your best efforts, you – and your front-line managers – will still likely get a Rage Quitter from time to time. Assuming it’s someone you want to keep on staff, you might be able to talk him or her out of the rash decision.

If you can calm the quitter enough to have a conversation, explore these questions together to see if there’s a better solution:

- **Is this an unusual situation or trend?** If it’s a years-long struggle, yes it might be time to go. But if it’s a new or unique issue, it leaves room for review.
- **What role do you play in the situation?** Sometimes employees need perspective on how they’ve influenced what’s happened – and how they might change things in their favor.

- **Will this matter in the long term?** Expand the time view by a week, month or year to get perspective on whether it’s a big, quit-worthy event or a smaller, short-term frustrating glitch.
- **What are the emotions at hand?** Explore who is angry, potentially overreacting or influenced by other life events – and how those issues might pass.
- **How else can you influence the situation?** Quitting might not be the only way to change what’s going on.

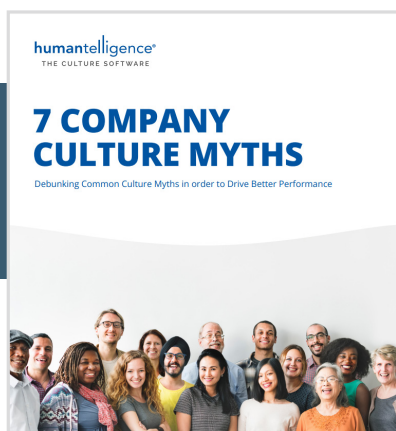
Put the Boomerang in perspective

Rage Quitters have the potential for a second chance, especially in today’s tight labor market. More than 50% of employees who’ve left jobs in the past year would consider going back to it, according to a Lever survey. Even Rage Quitters have regrets.

But when it comes to rehiring Rage Quitters, make sure you cover these critical elements when re-interviewing potential boomerang employees:

- **Reasons for leaving.** You likely have documentation on what happened and why. But now that emotions have settled and circumstances are new, you’ll want to discuss why they left and why they want to come back.
- **Reasons for leaving – Part II.** You’ll also want to understand why they want to leave the other employer who seemed so hot not so long ago. This might reveal if they’re ready to be long-haulers or double boomerangs.
- **What’s changed (and what hasn’t).** Explain new processes and changes that have occurred since they left. Perhaps more importantly, talk about what’s remained the same because you already know they weren’t fond of some things in the past.

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Company culture has changed: How HR can make it better



by Michele McGovern

Company culture isn't what it used to be.

Bottom line: Stress and burnout rose. Overall well-being fell. And employees don't seem to be taking it well. Most took fewer vacation days.

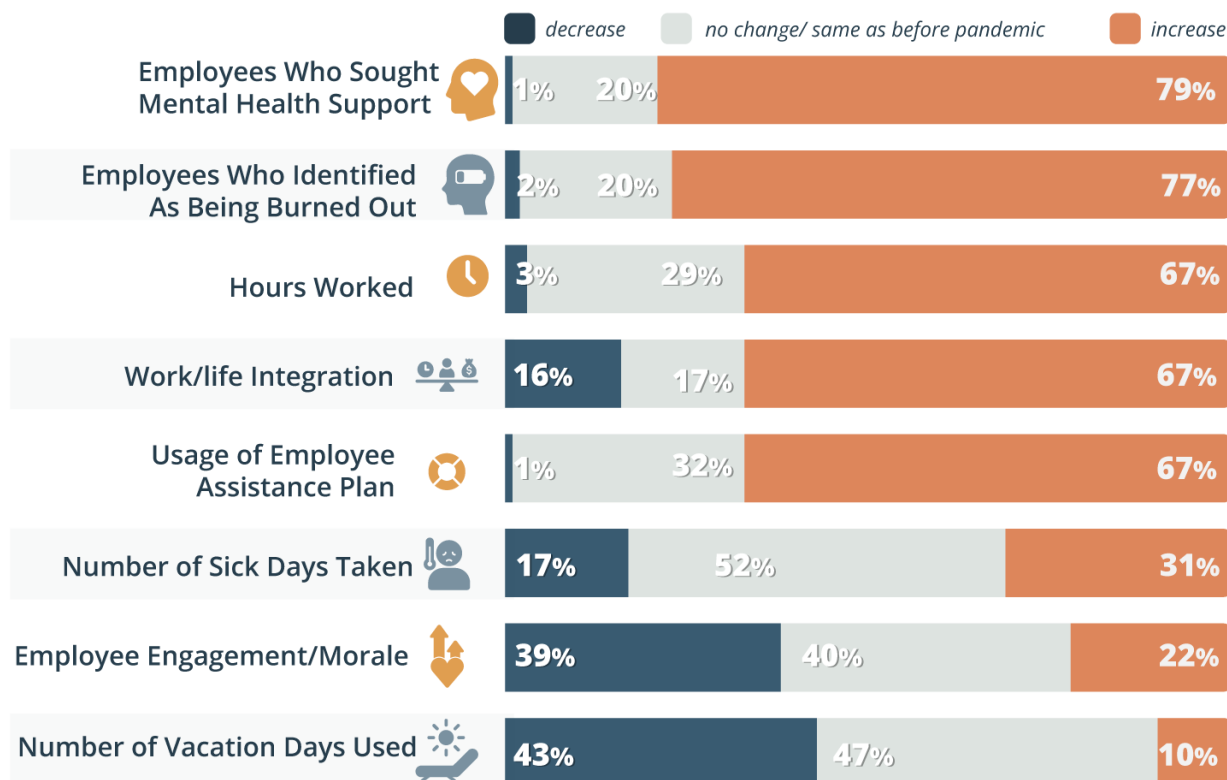
"Since the outbreak of the pandemic, employee well-being has declined and burnout is on the rise," said

Rebecca Ray, PhD, Executive Vice President of Human Capital at The Conference Board. "To retain workers, HR leaders will need a strong focus on improving the employee experience. That includes both allowing and encouraging employees to integrate their work and personal lives in a way that works best for them."

Specifically, here's what Conference Board researchers uncovered in their fourth survey in a series, Reimagined Workplace: 2 Years Later, which explores how companies and employees have changed. You can click through to find more tips on improving the employee experience and reinventing company culture.

[Read this article online](#)

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, on average, how have the areas changed for your employees?



data from: The Conference Board's "The Reimagined Workplace Two Years Later"



Was worker fired for lying or because of his national origin?



HR manager Lynn Rondo prepared herself as employee Oumar Sy entered her office.

"You wanted to see me?" Oumar asked.

"Yes, thanks for coming in," Lynn said, clearing her throat. "I wanted to talk to you about an incident on the loading dock the other day. Someone backed a truck into the building, causing some damage," Lynn paused. "Do you know anything about this?"

Made fun of accent

"No," Oumar said, avoiding eye contact. "Must've happened after I left for the day."

"Are you sure you don't know anything?" Lynn pressed.

"Yes," Oumar insisted.

Lynn sighed and turned her computer screen toward him. "Oumar, we have security footage that clearly shows you were the driver." Oumar didn't reply.

"I'm sorry," she said. "The damage was bad enough, but dishonesty is strictly prohibited in our handbook. You're fired."

"This isn't fair!" Oumar said, standing up. "I know the real reason I'm being fired. It's because I'm from Africa. People here are always making fun of my accent, and you never did anything."

"Oumar, that's not ... "

Oumar stormed out and sued for national origin bias. Did the company win?

See decision on next page

You Be The Judge

Was worker fired for lying or because of his national origin? (continued)



The Decision

Yes, the company won when a judge dismissed Oumar's case.

Oumar's lawyer argued that the incident on the loading dock was a convenient excuse to fire Oumar. Really, he was fired due to his national origin, his lawyer claimed. Oumar was harassed by his colleagues due to his accent, which the company never handled properly.

But the court disagreed. It said Oumar committed two fireable offenses: the damage at the loading dock and lying about it afterward.

The court went on to say that the company's handbook clearly stated dishonesty wouldn't be tolerated. Therefore, it was just following its own policy by firing Oumar for lying. His national origin had nothing to do with his termination, the court concluded.

Analysis: Following policies saves the day

This case acts as a reminder of how important it is for employers to follow and enforce policies consistently. The company was able to present a very clear-cut case: an employee committed two separate offenses, then was fired due to what was stated in the handbook.

If the company didn't have a clear policy or didn't follow it to the letter, Oumar's bias claim could've held more weight.

Cite: Tamba v. Publix Super Markets Inc., U.S. Ct. of App. 11th Circ., No. 19-14108, 11/20/20. Fictionalized for dramatic effect.

[Read more You Be the Judge in your Membership Dashboard](#) 

Meet Our Editors

Our editors read and vet hundreds of sources and hand-select the most relevant, practical content. Then we add our seasoned perspective and deliver actionable insights to help you understand what today's trends mean for your business.



Reneé Cocchi

Renée Cocchi has a passion for learning and helping other professionals do their jobs more effectively and efficiently. She earned her Master's Degree from Drexel University, and she's spent the past few decades working as a writer and editor in the publishing industry. Her experience covers a wide variety of fields from benefits and compensation in HR, to medical, to safety, to business management. Her experience covers trade publications, newsmagazines, and B2B newsletters and websites. When she's not working, she spends her free time just chilling with her family and volunteering at a local dog shelter. Her goal in life is to help all shelter dogs get happy, loving homes!



Tom D'Agostino

Tom D'Agostino is an attorney and legal editor who has more than 30 years of experience writing about employment law, disability law and education law trends. He earned his B.A. degree from Ramapo College of New Jersey and his J.D. from the Duquesne University School of Law. D'Agostino, who is a member of the Pennsylvania bar, is a past member of the American Bar Association's Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities and the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Legal Services to Persons with Disabilities Committee. He has provided technical assistance in the production of segments for television's ABC World News and 20/20, and he has been quoted in periodicals including USA Today. He is also a past contributing author of Legal Rights of Persons with Disabilities: An Analysis of Federal Law, which is a comprehensive two-volume treatise addressing the legal rights of people with disabilities. Tom is passionate about baseball and authentic Italian food. When not writing, he enjoys spending time with family.



Michele McGovern

Michele McGovern writes. A lot. These days, she covers HR, digging deep into company culture, DEI, leadership, management and the everchanging world of work. In the years between getting a BA in journalism from a state school and writing about HR, she wrote about big-city crime for a wire service and small-town life for local newspapers. She's a mediocre mom, decent wife, wannabe athlete and consummate pursuer of fun - on land, snow and water. Follow her on Twitter @sheknowswork. Find her on LinkedIn @michele-mcgovern-writer



Carol Warner

Carol Warner has been a writer and editor since 2008, covering the latest trends in employment law, education law, safety and security, human resources, employee training, and emergency response plans. She attended East Carolina University and earned a Bachelor's degree from New York Institute of Technology. When she's not writing, she spends most of her free time listening to audiobooks, playing Scrabble, and solving crossword puzzles.



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Alison Roller is passionate about engaging and informative storytelling through writing and social media. She has been writing since 2018 on a range of topics: politics, higher education, leadership, workplace culture, and diversity, equity, & inclusion. A graduate of West Chester University in Journalism, she is currently pursuing her M.S. in Communications from Syracuse University. When she's not working, you can find her hanging out with her cat, knitting, and scrolling TikTok.



Dr. Kelly Makino

Dr. Kelly Makino has been delivering HR and talent solutions for 15 years to businesses ranging from local family businesses to some of the most successful organizations in the USA. She now leverages her time spent as an architect of award-winning work cultures and leadership development programs to provide the updates, articles, and research that equip HRMorning's readers to do great work. Dr. Makino is a formally trained organizational psychologist, holding a Macro MSW from University of Pennsylvania and an EdD from University of Southern California. She carries SPHR, LMAC & CCMP certifications, and is an active member of PSPS, SIOP, and OD Network. When not at work, Kelly can be found on the beach or tromping around the city on the hunt for good eats with her husband and teenagers.

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