

Quiet Quitting is real

How can HR shatter the silence, rekindle engagement

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HR MORNING

September 2022





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
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
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Free Webinars

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Unconventional Ways to Engage Your Hybrid and Remote Employees

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From Training to Thriving

Sharlyn Lauby's Keys to a Skilled Workforce

sponsored by  paycom [learn more](#) 

Thursday,
October 6th
2022



Market Dynamics Impacting Compensation in 2022

sponsored by  TriNet [learn more](#) 

Tuesday,
October 11th
2022



Employee Voice: Strategies for Success to Actively Listen & Act on Employee Feedback

sponsored by  kazoo [learn more](#) 

News Briefs

HR Stories You Might Have Missed

ADA update

Reasonable accommodation, COVID-19 and mental health: The time is now

August 9, 2022

Now is a great time for HR departments to review their policies regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with mental disabilities.

It's no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of most everyone, and perhaps an even steeper one on individuals with preexisting mental health issues.

[Read more](#) 

Why this transgender prisoner's ADA case is big news for HR

August 19, 2022

A new federal court ruling has opened the door to greatly expanded protections for people with gender dysphoria under the ADA. And even though the case does not involve an employment-related dispute, it has clear and significant implications for employers and HR pros.

The court's finding that gender dysphoria can be an ADA disability in the case of a prisoner challenging the conditions of her confinement applies with equal force to the statute's employment provisions. This is because establishing the existence of an ADA-qualifying disability is a preliminary hurdle that plaintiffs must clear in ADA cases – regardless of the context in which unlawful bias is being alleged.

[Read more](#) 

Termination mistake — court explains where company went wrong

August 24, 2022

A termination is justified if an employee is caught stealing, right? Not necessarily. This case shows that everything isn't black and white — especially when managers make mistakes during the termination process.

Key takeaways for HR: Not every manager has received training to properly handle the dreaded termination talk. That's why it's crucial for HR pros to establish best practices for termination, such as:

[Read more](#) 

Health News

Monkeypox: Facts from the CDC

August 8, 2022

The past few years have been extremely hard on everyone, but some more than others. So, when the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on July 23, some people understandably got a little upset.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines monkeypox as “a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus. Monkeypox virus is part of the same family of viruses as variola virus, the virus that causes smallpox. Monkeypox symptoms are similar to smallpox symptoms, but milder, and monkeypox is rarely fatal.”

[Read more](#) 

Compensation News

EEOC releases report on pay data: What you need to know

August 3, 2022

On July 28, an independent study from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) concluded that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)'s first-time collection of pay data "may be used effectively" to help identify and combat pay discrimination.

The report, commissioned through a unanimous vote by the EEOC in 2020, analyzed pay data from 2017-2018, collected via EEO-1 Component 2 to determine if it was a valuable tool to help fight pay discrimination in the workplace. The data was collected from private employers and federal contractors.

[Read more](#)

CEOs & CFOs tightening belts: Salary raises for A players

August 3, 2022

Inflation is hitting the workforce hard. But Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) aren't reacting by raising all salaries even during the Great Resignation.

A June 2022 Gartner survey found that out of the 130 CFOs and CEOs surveyed 28% plan to give all employees a raise in response to inflation. But 51% only plan to give raises to top performers.

[Read more](#)



Exclusive HRMorning Guide

Why Good People Jump Ship And What You Can Do To Keep Them

Good employees – the ones who are engaged, productive, and look forward to coming to work each day – are a hot commodity. There just aren't enough of them to go around, and competitive organizations find a way to steal the best and brightest. Your challenge is to keep them engaged and avoid having a revolving door that lowers morale and eats away at productivity, efficiency and profit.

[get the guide](#)

Open Enrollment Is Coming!

Benefit strategies for 2023

August 10, 2022

Hard to believe, but we're halfway through the year. And firms and their HR professionals have been planning their benefit strategies for next year as the Great Resignation marches on into 2023.

Due to fluctuating economic conditions and the tight labor market, 2023 is going to be a balancing act between ensuring benefits are financially sustainable, and able to attract and retain talent.

[Read more](#) 

Best ways for HR to communicate during open enrollment season

August 15, 2022

As employers look for ways to attract and retain employees in a competitive job market, healthcare benefits are quickly becoming an important factor in employees' decisions to join or sometimes leave a company. If HR can do a great job to communicate during open enrollment season, they can keep employees engaged and happy.

A recent study showed that 23% of employees who left their roles in 2021 cited poor benefits options as a reason for searching for new opportunities. Of those who took a new job, 42% said their new employer provided better benefits.

[Read more](#) 

Cool company benefits: The most-loved unique benefits you can offer

August 16, 2022

Looking to up your benefits program? Take some hints from a recent Reddit thread of the coolest, most unique benefits that users have at their workplace.

When you hear "benefits," paid time off (PTO) and holidays are probably at the forefront of your mind. But these benefits are a little more out-of-the-box than your regular flex days and shortened workweek. If you're looking for some extra time-off perks, consider implementing these unique benefits:

[Read more](#) 

2023 wellness program: Trends for healthier, happier employees

August 30, 2022

Remember when offering a wellness program entailed providing some healthy snacks in the office and offering yoga or weight loss classes?

Well, those days are gone.

Today, workplace wellness means prioritizing employees' mental and physical health, and making it easily accessible to everyone no matter where they work – onsite, remote or a hybrid of both.

Oh yeah, and one more thing: Workplace wellness programs are a must-have if you want to win the battle for talent.

[Read more](#) 

Case Study

Employee engagement jumped 28% with new, multicultural mental health provider



We had always worked hard at our company to cultivate an environment where our employees felt free to bring their whole selves to work. But in early 2020, being in retail was hard and our employees struggled to deal with what was happening in our world.

We wanted to do everything in our power to help our employees but weren't sure at first how to do it. After some deep reflection, it became apparent that our employees needed a more robust mental health program than what we currently offered.

We investigated different options and chose to work with [Modern Health](#) because of its easy-to-use platform and ability to provide our employees and their families with immediate access to care, as well as a comprehensive list of providers to choose from. Via an intuitive app, employees and their families could be matched with a provider and have appointments set up within 24 hours.

Employees also had access to coaching, self-service digital resources and group therapy sessions. All the mental healthcare options gave them the ability to access the type of support they needed at that point in time in their mental health journey.

Launch plan

But we knew to make this investment worthwhile, we had to get the message out to all our employees and get them to use the app and services. Our new partner collaborated with us on a launch plan that included support from our leadership touting the importance of well-being, as well as benefits overviews promoting and encouraging our employees to register. They even provided our workforce with a virtual roadshow to ensure that all our employees across the country had equal access to the plan's rollout.

And being that we had such a culturally diverse workforce, the fact that our new mental health provider had such a huge international network of therapists and coaches in 55 countries, who spoke 50-plus languages was extremely well-received by our people. They were able to find someone they could talk to and relate to because they shared cultural backgrounds.

Employee engagement

Since the rollout, we've gotten a lot of positive feedback about how fast and easy it was to find someone to talk to and how caring and engaging the therapists were.

In fact, shortly after the launch, we saw a 34% registration rate and an astounding engagement rate of 31%. We were thrilled with that number since our old Employee Assistance Program, which focused mainly on one-on-one therapy, had a utilization rate of only 2%. But it didn't end there, we also now have 65% of our people using at least one of the self-serve digital resources, and we've already had to up the number of sessions offered from six to eight.

Our employees now feel heard and supported by management.

(Kareem Gayle, Head of Human Resources, Aesop Americas, New York)

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

Stop 'Quiet Quitting' before it happens: 5 proactive steps to take



by Michele McGovern

Can HR stop Quiet Quitting before it happens?

Yes, you can curb the trend based on the mindset: *I want to take care of myself and reclaim control of my mental and physical well-being by setting healthy boundaries at work, knowing my time is valuable.*

Opinions are all over the place on the subject. Some think, "Damn straight, we shouldn't have to go above and beyond at work to sacrifice our lives!" Some think it only makes sense to purposefully create that space between work and life. Others think Quiet Quitting is career suicide.

Still, more than 40% of employees are considering a job change, according to research from McKinsey. Couple that with Quiet Quitters – who are less likely to be engaged in their workplace and more likely to stay strictly within the boundaries of their job description – and organizations will likely have difficulties meeting goals.

Almost all forms of quitting revolve around engagement – so Quiet Quitting isn't entirely new to HR pros like you. But you want to stop any kind of quitting, especially now as many companies are just bouncing back from the Great Resignation.

"Work is not just a place anymore but should be a source of fulfilling relationships and a community to which employees feel connected," says Niamh Graham, SVP of Global Human Experience at Workhuman. "It should add to their happiness and provide a sense of meaning to their life, making them feel a part of



something bigger, something better and full of positivity."

So HR and front-line managers want to make efforts now to stay ahead of Quiet Quitting (or Loud Quitting or everyday quitting). Here are five ways to keep employees engaged – or rebuild engagement that might have been lost in the Great Reshuffle.

Know who's Quiet Quitting

While any employee can become disengaged at work – and disenchanted with the things that first attracted them to their employers – some employees are more likely to quietly quit. It's your younger workers.

Almost 55% of employees born after 1989 are not engaged, according to Gallup research. They show up to work and do the minimum, which is the essence of Quiet Quitting.

And employees who are 18-34 are more likely to feel burned out than the rest of the workforce, according

to a Talkspace/The Harris Poll Employee Stress Check 2022 Report.

"These findings crystalize what we've long known to be true: successful organizations and employee wellness are inextricably linked. Employers must take notice and make meaningful investments in their employees' long-term well-being. Their workplaces depend on it," says Dr. Varun Choudhary, MD, MA, DFAPA, Chief Medical Officer of Talkspace.

Keep an eye and ear out for younger workers' stress struggles. Train front-line managers on the signs of abnormal stress and how to help employees.

Re-focus on recognition

One of the bigger reasons employees become disengaged is they don't feel their efforts are appreciated. And that further interferes with their ability to recognize the value and purpose in their work.

"Good recognition staves off burnout," said Ed O'Boyle, Global Practice Leader at Gallup, when he

spoke at Workhuman Live 2022. "Lack of recognition kindles it."

Unfortunately, it looks like burnout – and its result, Quiet Quitting – is being kindled. Nearly 85% of company leaders in one of O'Boyle's studies said recognition is not a strategic priority.

HR professionals might want to nudge the C-Suite on this subject. Employee engagement depends on recognition for their contributions. When employees see the value of going above and beyond, they will more likely stay engaged. They need to understand the impact their work has on colleagues, company success, their community and/or a greater good.

Give employees tools and the power to recognize each other for work that matters. It's helpful on two fronts: 1) Managers can't possibly see or experience all of their employees' recognition-worthy efforts, and 2) Employees often know each other best and understand what's significant to each other.

Meet today's needs

Employee engagement depends much more on purpose in the workplace these days. But perks still have their place in engagement and curbing turnover.

What's critical now: Recognize and respond to the different working situations – remote, hybrid and on-site – and what can make each more comfortable and inviting to employees.

For instance, almost half of employees who are in the office say fitness perks such as yoga studios and office gyms, and access to designated quiet space in open space offices are preferred perks, according to the study from Framery and Feelback Group. At the bottom of their list now are things

that used to be attractive hiring perks: communal game areas and drinks on tap.

"The findings should put a final nail in the coffin of the ping pong tables, beer kegs, scooters and other artifacts of 'mandatory fun' office culture," says Samu Hällfors, CEO of Framery. "Working from home made it possible for people to exercise more regularly and to do more quality work without the constant interruptions of the open office. These are tangible benefits that made employees happier and more productive, and it's clear that they don't want to give them up as they return to the office."

But that doesn't mean those particular perks work for every workplace. HR pros will want to work with executives (to determine the financial ability to provide perks) and front-line managers (to determine the ability to execute) to find your ideal perks. Finally, you'll want to survey employees to find out what will keep them engaged.

Connect more often

People don't leave – or quietly quit – employers. They quit bosses. That's why it's important for front-line managers to connect with employees more often, especially remote workers.

"Checking in frequently via weekly one-on-ones that discuss both professional and personal development can help employees feel more engaged and motivated in their career paths and current jobs," says Elizabeth DeGroot, Director of People and Finance at Eden.

Help front-line managers facilitate meaningful one-on-one meetings with their employees. You might cover the topic in management training. Even better, give them guides for having productive, meaningful

conversations that help employees develop and stay engaged.

Offer more career management

Quiet Quitting is a career decision. Employees have decided or are considering a decision to change their career. And when the decision is to Quiet Quit, it won't likely have the same impact they once did.

At a time when turnover remains high, and employees are increasingly finicky about the work arrangements they believe are ideal (remote was all the rage, now hybrid is), try to help employees carve out their best careers with you.

You might be able to prevent a Quiet Quitting decision by helping employees manage their careers better from the day they start with you.

In fact, 94% of employees would stay at a job longer if they had access to career development, the LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report found.

Here's a best practice: Verizon created the Talent GPS, which offers a transparent view of jobs companywide and key competencies needed to succeed in each. With this, employees can take control of navigating their careers within the organization. It helps them visualize their next move and come up with strategies to get there.

"Feeling stuck and isolated in today's work environment may lead your employees to carry out the bare minimum," DeGroot says. "If you want your company to thrive and innovate, you must invest in your employees with the right tools and feedback that will enable them to be engaged and motivated in their roles."

[Read this article online](#) 

Create a culture of accountability: 6 ways to keep employees accountable



by Alison Roller

Keep **Employees** Accountable



When employees hear the word “accountability,” it can sometimes have a negative connotation. Many people associate accountability with fault or blame.

Accountability is crucial for any organization so it thrives, meets project deadlines and maintains equitable workloads. But when employees hear the word “accountability,” they think of fault or blame. So, how do you take the fear out of accountability? By creating

a company culture steeped in accountability for all individuals.

One key piece of an accountability culture is effective and efficient management. “Management is getting work done through others,” says Michelle Coussens, Owner and Strategist, Plan B Consulting. Through a culture of productivity and accountability, an effective manager can help maintain a degree of stability, predictability and order.

To build an accountability culture, manage employees’ performance

effectively. Here are five steps, outlined by Michelle Coussens, from the recent Resourceful Manager webinar, Culture of Accountability.

Set expectations

When you’re in a dynamic, fluid work environment like many of us are today, setting expectations may not be as traditional as it once was. Some ways you can help set expectations:

Create a culture of accountability: 6 ways to keep employees accountable

- Use the 80/20 rule, aka the Pareto Principle: 80% of value comes from 20% of effort. Evaluate your best assets and give them priority to help get maximum value from them
- Avoid procrastination: Prioritize challenging or intensive tasks to keep productivity high. Hold off on boring or administrative tasks for when energy is lower, and
- Allow yourself and others to fail: If employees are afraid to fail, chances are they won't try new things, which means a lack of innovation and new ideas.

Set micro-goals

Micro-goals focus on the steps along the way instead of the full picture. They can help keep your team accountable and ensure big projects don't fall behind schedule by breaking up a big project into bite-sized chunks.

Pick achievable objectives, results and timelines for micro-goals. A good micro-goal will also have leading and lagging indicators as well as milestones and decision points. Pick specific metrics, and try to avoid metrics that are difficult to understand or explain.

Help develop and manage structure

Like setting expectations, a structure can help keep things on track for your employees

Batch similar tasks into a time frame to create structure and manage micro-goals. But don't "scope creep," which is adding more tasks to the project and broadening the scope. Better bet: Add follow-on projects as needed to build on the initial project.

A good way to help manage structure in a task is by using the TASC approach from Brené Brown's Dare to Lead:

- Task: Who owns the task?
- Accountable: Do they have the authority to be held accountable?
- Success: Are they set up for success with time, resources and clarity?
- Checklist: Is there a checklist to make sure that the task is accomplished?

Communication is a key part of managing structure – if you don't ask questions and identify issues, accountability can wane. It's also important to make sure that you're adjusting based on the questions you've asked and the problems you have identified.

Fairly assess actual performance

You'll get a good indication of performance when you monitor progress and results. To assess performance fairly, look at performance through an objective lens to determine if they are progressing towards goals. Instead of looking at just deadlines, look at

other indicators of performance like quality, quantity and timeliness.

You may also want to consider balancing efficiency and effectiveness – doing things right vs. doing the right things. A good balance of the two will help keep your team accountable and ensure that things are not just being done, but are done well.

Communicate timely feedback

According to a PwC employee survey, nearly 60% of respondents would like feedback on a daily or weekly basis. Feedback boosts motivation and enhances performance, reinforces direction and heightens engagement.

Celebrate progress

Be sure to recognize and reward employees when they have completed a project or made significant progress on a project. Recognition is impactful for employees and helps motivate employees to continue making progress.

[Read this article online](#) 



\$184K

Layoffs during the pandemic: What a \$184K ADA mistake looks like

Who was involved: Gas Field Specialists Inc., a natural gas well service company in Pennsylvania, and an employee who had been with the company for 15 years.

What happened: The EEOC filed a disability discrimination lawsuit on behalf of the employee, alleging he was fired because he has a history of cancer. According to the suit, the owner of the company said he didn't want the employee to get sick with COVID-19 and "had to lay off anyone with health issues" during the pandemic.

The ADA prohibits companies from making employment decisions – including lay-offs – based on a real or perceived disability as well as a history of disability.

Result: The company has agreed to pay \$174,000 in lost wages and \$10,000 in compensatory damages to the employee. The consent decree also:

- Prohibits the company from taking adverse actions against workers with underlying medical conditions that increase their risk of more severe health complications if they were to contract COVID-19.
- Requires the company to document its business reasons if employees are not recalled from seasonal layoff.
- Orders the company to provide ADA training for managers and HR staff.
- Compels the company to report to EEOC any employee complaints of disability discrimination.
- Requires the company to provide compliance reports to the EEOC for three years.

Info: [Gas Field Specialists to Pay \\$184,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Case](#)

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

BUILDING COMPANY CULTURE



What's next for employee engagement? 5 ways HR can make a big impact



by Michele McGovern

What's next for employee engagement?

If you haven't asked this of yourself – or trusted colleagues and HR allies – start asking now. It's critical because most organizations haven't managed to move the needle on employee engagement since the pandemic started.

Just 32% of employees are engaged, according to research from Gallup. That's actually a slow and small decline since 2019. And don't think that hybrid or remote work will fix engagement woes. All three groups of workers – remote, hybrid and on-site – became less engaged. And

remote employees' engagement waned the most!

The stagnation hasn't panned out well for employers, either: Almost 40% of employees shoulder more work these days because colleagues have left; 53% are stressed; 35% are burned out; and 24% feel isolated. That's all according to Workhuman's Workplace Index: Mid-Year Pulse Check.

"Organizations are continuing to learn how to maintain culture and performance," says Niamh Graham, SVP of Global Human Experience at Workhuman. "Business leaders will need to continue to invest time, resources and effort in programs that help build and maintain

company culture and that help humans stay connected, productive and engaged."

So HR professionals and their leadership partners will want to focus on culture as they move toward what's next for employee engagement.

Here are five ideas to improve culture and revitalize engagement.

Be intentional

Many organizational leaders believe culture grows organically – and engagement follows. But most companies are still built and survive

What's next for employee engagement? 5 ways HR can make a big impact

with some level of bureaucracy or protocol.

And that's OK. Culture can take root when you're intentional with a plan on what's next for employee engagement and straightforward on what you hope to do.

"Communicate your plan with transparency," says Jenn Lim, CEO of Delivering Happiness and author of *Beyond Happiness*. "Celebrate the wins together, as you highlight the top one to two challenges that need to be addressed. Be transparent that everything can't be addressed overnight but progress can be made when done together."

So, for example, if you want to break down silos so employees have more freedom to share information – and less red tape to access it – admit there's a siloed problem and ask for ideas to fix it.

Most importantly, use employees' ideas to solve culture issues. Employees become naturally engaged in a culture they've helped curate. And when their voices are heard – and acted on – they'll more likely continue to interact and participate.

Rethink organizational structure

Most companies have a top-down structure today. Information, ideas and decisions flow from the top few to the bottom many.

It's an organizational concept that came out of World War II. When soldiers came home from war and started their first civilian jobs, they only knew the military way of doing things: Direction

comes from the commander down. As those soldiers moved up in their careers, they adopted that same management approach.

"But original organizational charts were more like trees," says Matthew Whiat, Founding and Senior Partner at Chapman & Company Leadership Institute when he spoke at Workhuman Live 2022. "The leaders were the trunk, the base, the roots. Employees, the front line, were up high, reaching out."

You might not be able to change your organizational chart or shake up management immediately, but you might take steps toward what's next for employee engagement by giving employees a higher level of autonomy.

At SuccessFuel, the parent company of HRMorning, our founder Ed Satell has always encouraged job ownership, telling employees they are meant to be the CEO of their role. As employees learn (through mistakes and victories), managers lessen the reins until the employee makes the decisions on how the job gets done – and how to achieve the next great thing.

Acknowledge, manage stress

Employees who are stressed struggle to be engaged. In fact, they're more likely to resent the experience and employer.

And the call for help to manage stress is up about 33% since the beginning of the pandemic.

"There are more stress-related calls and the severity of the issues is higher," says Rick Taweel, CEO of Espyr, a well-being solution

provider. "And the only way to normalize mental health and its impact on employee experience is to talk about it more."

One way to do that is through "Conscious Conversations," suggests Taweel. Invite employees to join a group – but don't make it mandatory – with a facilitator, who is ideally a clinician and makes it a safe space to talk about struggles in and out of work.

To make it a safe space, ask employees to define it. For instance: No judgment. No politics. Respect for each other. Nothing leaves the room.

Just giving employees a space to talk about stress can help re-engage them in their workplace.

Add purpose to work

People like a higher purpose, even when it comes to their work. In fact, Gen Z and millennials are willing to turn down jobs that don't align with their values, according to Deloitte's Global 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey.

To put that into perspective, consider this: More Gen Z job candidates would prefer to work at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital than at big corporations such as Google, Amazon and Apple, according to research from The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS).

Even if your organization isn't a non-profit or in the impact-oriented field, focus on purpose-driven employment. Talk about your values and missions that are community-, environmental-, socially responsible- and/or charitable-driven in your recruitment strategies.

What's next for employee engagement? 5 ways HR can make a big impact

Whatever the purpose, you'll also want to help employees make the connection between what they do and how it positively impacts the values and mission.

Further that by giving employees time and resources to help your business mission and their own impact-oriented passions.

Make 'care' a priority

"The No. 1 reason an employee leaves a company or joins a company is based on this: 'No one cares about me. No one thinks about me,'" said Ed O'Boyle, Global Practice Leader at Gallup, when he spoke at Workhuman Live 2022.

Employee engagement suffers miserably in cultures where people don't care.

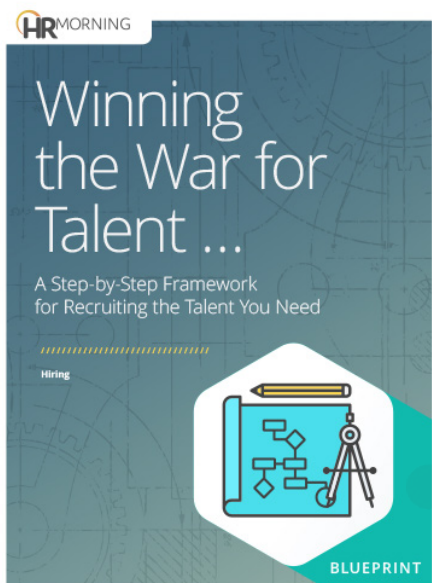
To rebuild or strengthen the care element at work, Graham suggests:

"It starts by demonstrating to employees that they are valued. Recognition is a simple way organizations can prioritize their investment and commitment to their employees and inspire them to feel connected, confident, celebrated and cared about."

Give management and employees tools (and reminders) to congratulate and celebrate work and personal successes – such as promotions, anniversaries, birthdays, adoptions, weddings, etc.

"By doing this, organizations show they care about the employees as people, as human beings," Graham says.

[Read this article online](#) 



Winning The War For Talent

A Step-By-Step Framework For Recruiting The Talent You Need

Whether you're filling a position in the warehouse or the boardroom, you'll always be under pressure to find and hire the very best.

With so many influences affecting your company's approach to hiring, you need a foolproof way to improve the likelihood of finding the best candidate time and again.

This Blueprint provides a 6-step framework with clear strategies to ensure your time and energy are used wisely to effectively pursue the most successful paths and get the most out of your recruiting efforts.

[get the guide](#) 

New hires jump ship? Here's how to recognize risk, offer support



by John Markey, HR Expert Contributor



RECRUITING AND RETAINING

As companies continue to feel the impact of high turnover, it's important to understand why employees are leaving – most especially why new hires jump ship quickly.

A recent Mercer study cites stress as a leading factor behind the Great Resignation. Adding to the worry now are very real concerns about a shaky economy as employees often leave when they feel financially insecure or vulnerable. They're also more likely to take a job that has a higher salary even if it may not be the right opportunity. Relatedly, organizations have been stressed as they feel pressure to bring new employees

on board, even if some hires are not completely suited for the job.

All of this upheaval is causing a great deal of job dissatisfaction as workers realize the grass isn't always greener when they arrive at a new organization. A recent The Muse survey found 72% of those that moved organizations in Q4 '21 and Q1 '22 admitted they were surprised that their new position or company was different from what they were led to believe during the interview process.

Much of the discussion around the topic is centered around employees and how they can address or even avoid these disappointing experiences. But, companies also play a role and

should consider making changes to their recruitment practices, and looking at how they can adapt their culture to meet the needs of all employees, including new hires.

Growing pains with culture shifts

Companies have been competing for talent at an unprecedented level, while at the same time rethinking themselves, their work environments, and in general, their own employee/employer contracts. This includes where people can work, the percentage of time in the office, time off policies and more. The strict guidelines instituted

during the pandemic have shifted to more relaxed protocols, and corporate guidance has changed as organizations redefine their norms.

While this transformation will likely result in a more supportive workplace down the road, the impact on recent hires right now is especially confusing. Taking a new role is always nerve-racking, but doing so amid intense change can take a toll. And while industry leaders might perceive the recent accelerated hiring and demand as a positive sign, it's also a reflection of the pressure organizations are feeling. And that pressure is often passed along to new employees, especially as many are being quickly deployed without the historical onboarding and safe landing opportunities.

Keep recruiting real

One of the most effective ways to improve new hire satisfaction is to vastly improve the candidate experience. A streamlined process that centers on transparency and honest conversations is beneficial for both candidates and employers. Here are some considerations to keep in mind during the recruitment phase:

- One of the best steps an organization can take while recruiting is to be honest about how the first few weeks will be organized, and the training that new hires will (or won't) receive. This can give candidates greater confidence that their new employer is prepared to support them on the journey, rather than deploying them immediately into firefighting scenarios.
- It's important to present an accurate representation of the job, and not oversell to get people in the door. If it's a lateral move for the employee, talk about different skills and experiences the company can help develop. Point out future career advancement opportunities in the organization. If those are limited, consider contributing to outside training or educational courses. Candidates who are attracted to a growth-oriented company, but not offered the right tools or provided with time and mentorship will quickly become disillusioned.
- Provide expectations up front. Be specific about how many days employees are required to be in the office; the hours employees need to be available; how accessible they need to be to clients and colleagues off hours; and the company's reporting structure and management styles. If there's any flexibility to adjust these based on the employee's needs, let them know. If not, be honest that these are the expectations and there's no wiggle room.
- Confirm collaboration and communication styles. A Gallup report found that 53% of workers expect to be hybrid while 24% plan to be fully remote, which means collaboration must evolve. Understanding the candidate's style can help determine if they'll fit in with the existing team. And knowing what collaboration tools they prefer will help managers and team members be better prepared when the new hire starts. A mismatched style can result in a disconnected and dissatisfied employee who struggles to communicate their frustrations.

Nurture new hires

It's no surprise that stress leads to high turnover among new hires, and emerging talent is especially vulnerable. A recent survey showed that mental health struggles among younger generations have accelerated and worsened throughout the pandemic. For all employees, the following strategies can help workers feel safe, engaged and happy in their jobs:

- New workers without established relationships in an organization may fixate on company stability. If it seems there are financial insecurities, the employee may seek a new position elsewhere that they perceive as more stable. It's important to keep workers clued in on how the company is doing financially and its philosophy for letting people go should it come to that. Is it last in, first out? Or, are there other performance metrics taken into consideration? These might be hard conversations, but it's better to have them than risk an employee being caught off guard with an abrupt layoff.
- Technology has given workers more freedom and made them more productive. But there are negative consequences, including feeling like they can't unplug, especially when they've just joined an

organization. Leaders can help by consolidating platforms and encouraging all employees to periodically step away from their devices. When it comes to online conferencing, a recent Stanford study found that video chats can exhaust the mind and body. Simple steps like letting employees know they can turn off the video camera or move around during a call can help reduce fatigue.

- Gartner found that 68% of employees whose work could be done remotely report that their employers have required them to return to the workplace in some capacity. If there's the ability to offer hybrid or remote options, consider acting on it. This could ease stress for employees that have concerns around being in-person during rising COVID-19 cases. In addition, cutting down on commuting costs can help lower financial strain.

- While data is helpful, the truth is that new hires share their general sentiment with people they trust, particularly if they were referred in. Getting a pulse from across your workforce is critical to help identify the challenges new hires might be experiencing whether related to stress, wellness, job satisfaction, training, workload, or other employment issues.
- The importance of weekly one-on-one check-ins cannot be overemphasized. Due to the volume of work, client demands and lack of resources, many employees feel leaders have lost their cadence of meeting with new hires. This simple but critical human connection can help engage and retain new hires as well as long-tenured employees. It's important that the conversation is not a "to do" list but a purposeful learning and mentoring conversation. Managers should

use the opportunity to coach the employee, offer them a sense of stability, recognize their work and show that they value their personal growth goals.

At the end of the day, communication is critical to successfully transitioning new employees into their roles and helping them fit in with the company culture. It should start with honesty and transparency during the recruiting phase, and continue with open dialogue throughout the employee engagement, but especially during those critical first few months. If you don't take the lead, they likely will. And it might be right out the door.

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About Guest Writer



John Markey is a managing director of client services at AMS, a global provider of talent outsourcing and advisory services. He has account relationship responsibilities across several clients and oversees AMS's internal talent acquisition teams, its Grow Your Own strategy and its Project Recruitment Outsourcing offering.

Did company do enough in response to alleged harassment?



HR Manager Betty Murphy knocked on Samantha's door. When Samantha looked up and saw Betty, she smiled and said, "Hey, Betty. What brings you up to the eighth floor?"

"Good thing we have elevators," said Betty. "My knees would never let me climb all those steps. But I wanted to tell you personally that maintenance has finished putting new locks on your office door and installing cameras."

Samantha was in the process of transitioning from male to female and had returned a few months earlier from one of her surgeries. When she arrived at the office someone had scrawled "Mr." on her nameplate. She filed a complaint with HR. The company immediately removed, cleaned and returned it.

But then a short while later, a gift bag with a phallic sex toy and a derogatory note was found on her desk, and she filed an additional complaint with HR.

"It's pretty sad that in today's day and age this occurs," said Samantha.

"I agree," said Betty. "We tried to find out who wrote on your nameplate. And we had everyone give us a handwriting sample to see if we could figure out who wrote the note found in your office. We also held a special meeting on our zero-tolerance bullying policy. And we interviewed everyone to see if we could uncover the culprit, but, again, we didn't have any luck."

"Not to mention the fact that we moved you to a new office until we could install new locks and cameras around your office."

"I appreciate everything the company has done," said Samantha. "But I don't think it's enough to guarantee my safety."

"Now, you want me to move back downstairs to my office because you put on locks and added cameras?"

"It's the best we can do without solid proof," said Betty.

"And what are you going to do about my supervisor?" asked Samantha. "His attitude toward me is getting

worse. He says I can't go on vacation next month because I'm not doing my job properly. That vacation has been scheduled for months."

"You'll be happy to know that he handed in his resignation this morning," said Betty.

Samantha applied for her supervisor's job but didn't get it. She claimed the new supervisor also gave her a hard time. And she also said she was more qualified for the job, but didn't get it because of her harassment complaints.

Frustrated, Samantha sued the company, alleging an unlawful hostile work environment and retaliation under Title VII and state law.

The company filed a motion for summary judgment, arguing that it responded reasonably to the harassment and did not illegally retaliate against Samantha.

Did the company win the case?

The Decision

Yes, the trial court granted the company's motion, but Samantha appealed. Despite her appeal, the Sixth Circuit affirmed the lower court's decision and ruled in favor of the company.

The appeals court explained that to win on her Title VII hostile

environment claim, Samantha had to show:

- she was a member of a protected class
- she was subjected to unwelcome sexual harassment
- the harassment was based on sex, and

- the harassment created a hostile work environment.

Samantha alleged that the company's response to the harassment was "completely inadequate." But, according to the appeals court, the steps the company took were reasonable.

You Be The Judge

Did company do enough in response to alleged harassment? (Continued)

Action was swift

As to the nameplate incident, the company immediately removed, cleaned and replaced the defaced nameplate. And after the gift bag incident, it acted reasonably by collecting handwriting samples and conducting an investigation that included employee interviews. The fact that the company was unable to identify a harasser didn't mean its response was unreasonable, the appeals court said.

Samantha insisted that the company's investigation should have been more thorough and that the company was "trying to keep it a secret" by declining to involve the police or building security. But her dissatisfaction didn't show unreasonableness, the appeals court explained.

With respect to the threatening note, the appeals court noted that the company contacted the police three days after Samantha received it. Four days after that, it submitted a work request to have a lock installed on the door to Samantha's office. Those time frames didn't show undue delay, the court said.

The appeals court also upheld the lower court's decision to rule for the company on Samantha's retaliation claims.

Specifically, Samantha alleged that the company didn't promote her to the supervisor position she sought because she complained about a hostile work environment.

To support this claim, Samantha relied on a statement made by her outgoing supervisor. That supervisor allegedly said that if Samantha didn't get the promotion, it would be because she complained about harassment. The problem with that argument, the appeals court explained, was that someone other than the outgoing supervisor was solely responsible for selecting the new one.

In addition, the person that the outgoing supervisor recommended for the job didn't get it, the court noted.

Belief is not enough

Samantha's asserted belief that she was denied the job because she complained wasn't enough to prevail on her retaliation claims, the appeals court said.

Moreover, more than five months passed between the time that Samantha filed her last complaint and the time that a new supervisor was appointed, the court added.

Samantha didn't show an inadequate response or illegal retaliation, the court said. The lower court's ruling for the company was affirmed.

Doe v. City of Detroit, No. 20-2029, 2021 WL 2673137 (6th Cir. 6/30/21).

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

4 ways to ease HR's excessive workload and avoid burnout



by Michele McGovern

Employees complain all the time about excessive workloads and burnout. But what about you, the HR professional? Who listens – and cares – when you and your team are buried in work and overstressed?

We do. We get it. HR pros need relief from excessive workloads, too. And you likely need ways to bounce back from – or outrun – burnout.

You and your people are more overwhelmed than ever: Employee stress levels just hit another all-time high, surpassing the last peak when COVID-19 hit, according to research from Gallup. Almost 45% of employees feel a lot of daily stress.

You know this stress isn't good for your head (it aches, right?) But how about your heart? Not much better. Long-term stress – and two years of upheaval is long term – can increase the risks of hypertension, heart attack or stroke, the American Psychological Association found.

Where the work has spiked

More than half of all HR professionals spend more time now on strategic work – such as developing company culture, improving engagement, crafting the employee experience and driving organizational agility – according to research from Sage People. Plus, most HR pros spend extra time now on administrative tasks – such as handling flexible work policies, providing workplace safety guidance and processing time-off requests.



"It's been harder for (HR pros) to keep up with the day-to-day, to focus on new configurations even within their own system. Things that they had originally planned to take place have been put on hold, and they have other things that are taking their attention," said Heather Rykowski, Customer Success Manager at Sage People in the HRMorning/Sage People

webinar "How To Address Excessive Workloads in Your Teams."

Here are four ways to regain control of the excessive workload and curb the stress:

Look at your metrics

If you and your team feel overwhelmed, you'll want a

4 ways to ease HR's excessive workload and avoid burnout

baseline on what's being done (and perhaps, more specifically, how it's getting done).

You likely keep some type of performance analysis already – anything from project management and workforce software to simple Excel documents and time sheets. Yes, it'll pull you from other demands, but you'll want to look closer at how much time and resources are spent on each project, task and strategic moves.

For example, assess the workload for your recruiting team: How many open positions is each recruiter working on? How long has each been open? How does it compare to your organization historically? How does it compare to the industry average? Are you expecting too much from each recruiter? Is it an excessive workload or is the workload mismanaged?

"You really want to look at various parts of your HR team," said Sarah Andresen, Principal, People Science at Sage in the webinar. "And look at how things have changed over time."

You can get a data baseline with this, but it won't give you the nuances – such as how employees feel about the work, and how the work makes them feel.

Do a health check

Numbers can't tell the whole story behind excessive workloads and how they affect HR. People can – and will.

"Let's do HR for HR," said Andresen. "Use pulse surveys to dig in to find out what's really going on with HR. They're just as susceptible to burnout and low engagement as other teams. Think about being on a plane and putting on an oxygen mask. You need to put on yours first before you can help others."

Gauge your teams engagement levels just like you would for other employees. Ask about their experiences. You probably don't want to do this anonymously. Let the team know you need to understand how they feel so you can address issues directly and with haste.

Some questions to ask:

- How often do you feel stressed or frustrated at work?
- What's your top priority?
- What's your top stressor?
- What's a manual task you think should be automated?
- How often do you skip a meal because you're too busy or stressed?
- What's something positive that's happened at work recently?

Talk about the results

Once you have data and personal results, let your team – and ideally, your executive team – know what you've found.

Then have an open forum with your team. Remind them: It's not a venting session. It's a time to assess what you're doing, what must continue to be done and how to do everything with effectiveness, efficiency and purpose.

One exercise that can help everyone is to ask them to create a Stop, Start, Continue List.

- **Stop** – What can you take off your plate or delegate?
- **Start** – What are things you hadn't taken on and you want or need to?
- **Continue** – What are you doing that you want to continue going forward?

From there, create a plan that aligns the Stop, Start and Continue List with department priorities to get the excessive workload in check.

Stay ahead of stress

Excessive workloads lead to stress and burnout. But it's more than cause and effect. It's cyclical. When employees or whole teams are stressed, they will likely mismanage time and tasks – and workloads will become, or feel, excessive.

So HR leaders and their teams want to stay ahead of stress just as much as you want all employees to do it. Cesar Carvalho, Founder of Gympass, shared a couple of unique stress reducers – and they aren't about going to the gym – with his followers on LinkedIn and MITSloan Management Review. Try to:

- Synchronize breaks. We know, it sounds a bit unrealistic to get everyone to step away at the same time. But when the pandemic hit, and his team worked from home, it was one way they were sure everyone 1) took breaks, 2) was less likely to be interrupted at inopportune times, and 3) was able to stay more focused and collaborate at the same time.
- Lead like a non-profit would. Numbers, results and goals are important. But they can be stressful. So try to open meetings and projects with a focus on the impact your work has on the company's purpose, customers or community. You might share employee success stories, positive customer feedback or examples of positive impacts in your communities.

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Case Study

Helped employees pay down their student debt and save for retirement



Many of our employees have invested in themselves by furthering their education. But the burden of that student loan debt has prevented them from participating in our 401(k) program.

Younger employees don't always see the importance of participating in a 401(k) program, because for them retirement is decades away. But it's still important, and we wanted to help everyone who was carrying around student debt.

That's when we expanded our benefits package to include student loan repayment. It's rooted in both the feedback from our employees and our desire to set them up for success all the way through retirement.

We teamed up with [Tuition.io](#) to offer our 300 employees a student loan repayment benefit. The program is set up so employees can pay down their loans while still saving for retirement.

To be eligible, employees must be participating in our 401(k) program, which we match up to 4%. Once they contribute to their 401(k), the company matches it and also pays \$50 toward their student debt each month.


Unique approach

This unique approach encourages employees to save for retirement and eliminate one of their biggest financial burdens, providing much-needed debt and stress relief.

More than 10% of our employees have registered for receipt of the monthly benefit.

We believe benefits should take care of the whole person. By offering benefits that help our employees be successful, we're cultivating a culture of care that both our employees and our healthcare clients benefit from.

(Jason Anderson, CEO, VRI, Franklin, OH)

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6 biggest jerks at work – and how to tactfully handle them



by Michele McGovern



HR and employee issues

We probably don't have to tell you this, but we'll at least validate it: You work with some jerks!

And you aren't alone. Because there are a variety of jerks, nearly every company and team has one (or some).

"No matter how educated you are or what your job title is, you can fall victim to a jerk at work," says Tessa West, author of *Jerks at Work: Toxic Coworkers and What to Do About Them*. "Spending time in the workplace does not necessarily translate to having better conflict management skills."

West, a social psychologist, is as much a victim to jerks as the rest of us. She once changed her work hours to avoid sharing a bathroom with one!

So, with professional and practical authority, West defines the six jerks and gives tips on how to handle them.

Bulldozers

They're well-connected and aren't afraid to flex muscles. They use those muscles to take over how things are done and decided within their groups. They also use

fear and intimidation to get what they want from colleagues, bosses and direct reports.

Handle them: Practice "holding the floor" when dealing with Bulldozers. Get input and opinions from everyone involved in the project on the team to signal that you work with a variety of views. Encourage everyone to voice their thoughts throughout a project or process.

Kisser/Kicker

The Kiss Up/Kick Downer wants to climb to the top, treating colleagues as the competition. They aim to gain the approval

6 biggest jerks at work – and how to tactfully handle them

from higher-ups at any cost. That includes tossing co-workers and allies to the side as they climb.

Handle them: Find other victims to confirm the problem is widespread, especially if this kind of behavior is reported to management. Then either use the evidence – incidents, dates, places and how the behavior affects others – to address the situation with the employee.

Credit Stealers

These jerks act like a friend, but betray and steal credit for everything good – such as ideas, work and contributions – to better themselves. Even worse, they cover their tracks well. So they'll hide their bad behaviors and the actual good work colleagues do.

Handle them: When it's a colleague, use your voice and track record to highlight your individual contributions. You don't have to brag. Say what you've done or will do before your thunder is stolen.

Free Riders

They're experts at doing the minimum – or nothing – and getting rewarded for it. They step up for important work that requires more oversight and less effort. Their secret to the ruse: They're well-liked and

friendly, making it difficult for others to call them out.

Handle them: Do a regular fairness check for workflows – for your teams and yourself. Encourage managers to do this, too. When you make workflows public, Free Riders will be outed.

Micromanagers

This could be your boss or a manipulative colleague or employee. They're impatient and disrespect your time and space. They monitor time and behavior that's none of their business.

Handle them: If it's your boss, you'll need to confront it. Talk about aligning big picture goals with your duties. For colleagues or employees, put up physical barriers – such as Do Not Disturb signs – and electronic barriers – do not disturb on communication apps. Offer limited – or no – status updates.

Gaslighters

They're grand scale liars. They might isolate their victims and slowly build the altered reality they want believed. They might use the victim's vulnerabilities to help them steal or cheat. In HR, you want to keep an eye out for these jerks who do this to vulnerable employees because

those are the people who would not likely bring it to anyone's attention.

Handle them: Find and rely on new allies. Help employees who are victims to align with better co-workers, too. The Gaslighter tries to socially isolate victims so they believe the altered reality. Check in with others you trust to decide what's good and true. And check in on apparent victims to be sure they stay away from Gaslighters.

[Read this article online](#) 



\$100K

Applebee's forks over \$100K to end anti-gay and racial harassment claims

Who was involved: A Florida Applebee's Neighborhood Bar & Grill restaurant and a former employee who is Black and gay.

What happened: The EEOC filed a Title VII discrimination and retaliation lawsuit on behalf of the alleged victim. The suit claimed he was regularly harassed by two co-workers who repeatedly used gay slurs and racial slurs in his presence. And one of the harassers wore Confederate flag apparel to work. As the harassment continued, the victim reported the problem to management – but “no action was taken by the employer,” according to the EEOC. Instead, he was allegedly told to “ignore it.” After he reported his complaint to managers, his work hours were cut and he was forced to quit, the EEOC said.

Result: Applebee's has agreed to pay \$100,000 to settle the lawsuit. Under the consent decree, the company must also:

- provide specialized training on sexual orientation and race-based discrimination to HR officers and managers to ensure they're aware of their obligations to: 1) help prevent workplace discrimination, and 2) properly address employee complaints
- appoint an internal consent decree monitor to review complaints of sexual orientation and race-based harassment, and
- provide the EEOC with reports of harassment complaints as well as the action steps that the company took in response to the complaints..

Info: [Applebee's to Pay \\$100,000 to Settle EEOC Lawsuit Over Sexual Orientation and Race Discrimination, Retaliation for Complaining](#)

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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.



Renee 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.



Alison Roller

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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