

The leading service to keep benefits managers up to date

June 1, 2021

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HRMORNING

Keep Up To Date with the Latest HR News

With **HRMorning** arriving in your inbox, you will never miss critical stories on labor laws, benefits, retention and onboarding strategies.

HRMorning, part of the SuccessFuel Network, provides the latest HR and benefits and employment law news for HR professionals in the trenches of small-to-medium-sized businesses. Rather than simply regurgitating the day's headlines, **HRMorning** delivers actionable insights, helping HR execs understand what HR trends mean to their business.

Employees still fear COVID-19: Perks to get them back in office

■ *Work will likely never 'return to normal'*

Now that the CDC has expanded eligibility of the COVID-19 vaccines to everyone in the U.S. aged 16 years and older, your employees are probably feeling less stressed about coming back to the office, right?

Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case.

When FlexJobs surveyed 2,118 people and asked, "What are your main concerns if you're required to return to the office full or part time?" 49% said COVID-19 exposure/infection.

Other concerns that ranked high on FlexJobs' survey were: less work

flexibility (46%), less worklife balance (43%), office politics and distractions (34%), and lack of health and safety measures (32%).

The fear is real

The fear of contracting COVID-19 hasn't subsided. In fact, it's making the majority of people in the survey reconsider where they work: 58% said they would definitely look for a new job if they weren't allowed to continue working remotely.

It looks like the respondents value the worklife balance remote work

(Please turn to Fear ... Page 2)

ONBOARDING

Top 3 areas to focus on when returning to office

While many of us are starting to move back to the office slowly, only 1% of 258 HR leaders, said all of their employees will be in the office full time, according to a new Gartner poll conducted on March 16, 2021.

It's been a while since many of us have been in an office. "It will be critical for employers to focus on building social and emotional connections with, and between, their employees again," said Brian Kropp, chief of research for Gartner HR practice.

Three areas to focus on

One way to do that is treat your return as a "re-onboarding" opportunity for all employees.

Gartner recommends focusing on three areas:

- **Develop and share your philosophy on flexibility.** Top HR departments aren't creating static flexible work policies. Rather, they're creating a philosophy on flexibility and sharing that with employees.
- **Determine and communicate the role of your physical office space.** Is it a team/company meeting place, a secure workspace or a social gathering space? Figure it out and let your workforce know.
- **Train managers.** Make sure your managers know how to support employees in different locations.

Info: bit.ly/GartnerPoll627

Fear ...

(continued from Page 1)

gives them, and the safety it provides.

Another 31% weren't sure what they'd do if called back to the office, and only 11% said it wasn't a big deal to them.

So, how many people want to go back to the office full time?

Only 2% according to the survey. The rest of the breakdown is 65%

Find out why employees don't want to return.

would prefer to work remotely full-time post-pandemic and 33% would like a hybrid work arrangement.

"I'm not surprised to see that more than half of people working remotely during the pandemic, ... appreciate

its benefits to such a strong degree that they would leave their current jobs," Sara Sutton, founder and CEO of FlexJobs, said in a statement. "The landscape of remote work has permanently changed as a result of COVID-19 and its impact will be felt in the job market and the workplace well into the foreseeable future."

Steps you can take

So what can you do to retain talent if they're required to be in the office?

1. Rethink in-office work. Do employees really need to be in the office 100% of the time? If not, consider a flex schedule.

Some people want to be in the office. So let them, as long as they're being safe. The ones who don't want to be in the office, allow them to continue at home. It should balance itself out and help with social distancing in the office.

2. Listen to employees. Find out why they don't want to return. Are they concerned about commuting costs, children in school (or not for the summer). Maybe offer a small stipend to help with public transit, gas or summer camp costs. Or are they truly scared about contracting COVID-19?

3. Offer employees perks that show the company trusts and cares about them. Unlimited vacation time is becoming a popular perk to get people back in the office because it offers a better work-life balance. If employees are working hard and getting their work done on time, why does it matter how much time off they take?

Paid volunteer days is another great perk. Supporting causes they're passionate about without losing vacation days or pay make for happy employees.

And after spending so much time at home with their pets, employees are worried about leaving them alone again. Since pets are known to boost people's moods and lower stress, consider having a pet-friendly workplace. Everyday might be hard, but consider allowing your employees to bring their pets to work two days a week.

SHARPEN YOUR BENEFITS JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

■ Employee fired: Was it due to ageism or absentee issues?

"Hi, Glenda. Thanks for calling me back," said Benefits Manager Betty Murphy.

"No problem," said Glenda, a branch supervisor at Betty's company. "Let me guess. You're calling about Pam."

"Yes," said Betty. "Did you make a remark about wanting to get rid of older employees?"

"No that's not what I said," answered Glenda. "I was annoyed with Pam for not showing up for her shift and leaving us short staffed, again. So, I made a crack to a co-worker about Pam's age catching up with her since she's sick all the time, but I never said that."

Younger workers got preference

"That may be a problem," said Betty. "She's suing us. She says you fired her because of her age and she can prove it because you gave more hours to the younger workers."

"What? She's got nerve. I give more hours to the people I can depend on," said Glenda. "She missed work six times in two months and never let me know once."

"You mean she didn't call out before her shift?" asked Betty.

"No. I mean she just didn't show up," said Glenda. "I've had to scramble so many times to get the store covered, I just got sick of it."

"Well, our attendance policy requires employees to personally speak with their manager if they're going to be late or absent," said Betty. "I think we'll be OK."

Did Betty's company win?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.*

HRMORNING'S
What's New in **BENEFITS & COMPENSATION**

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What's New in Benefits & Compensation
(ISSN 1076-0466), June 1, 2021, Vol. 28 No. 627,
is published semi-monthly except once in December
(23 times a year).

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Companies ran afoul of sexual orientation bias, ADA, OT, ageism

This regular feature highlights recent case settlements, court awards and fines against companies. It serves as a reminder to keep benefits policies in order.

Sexual orientation bias costs company \$40,000

What happened: Family Tree Farms, located in Fresno, CA, was sued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for sex discrimination. According to the lawsuit, two employees were singled out and disciplined more harshly because of their sexual orientation. These employees were also separated from co-workers and harassed on a regular basis. This is a violation of the Civil Rights Act.

What people did: Family Tree Farms settled the suit – but without admitting liability.

Result: It'll pay \$40,000 in compensatory damages to the employees, as well as provide its workforce with antiharassment training. The EEOC will continue to monitor the company for compliance.

Info: bit.ly/SexualBias627

50 home health workers cheated out of OT pay

What happened: Servant's Quest, a home healthcare service provider in Oliver Springs, TN, misclassified 50 workers as independent contractors rather than employees.

What people did: During an investigation, the DOL's Wage and Hour division uncovered violations of FLSA requirements since the employer failed to pay overtime to the misclassified caregivers. Servant's Quest then paid the misclassified workers straight-time wages for the hours they worked in excess of 40 in a workweek.

Result: The 50 workers will received a total of \$358,675 in back wages.

Info: bit.ly/Overtime627

Company refused to accommodate worker

What happened: Valley Tool Inc. in Water Valley, MS, was sued by the EEOC after firing a disabled employee who needed an accommodation. The worker had sickle cell disease and sought an accommodation – intermittent leave on the days when she was too sick to work. But her request was denied. Instead, she was removed from the schedule and placed on temporary leave and eventually fired, according to the lawsuit – a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

What people did: The EEOC filed suit after attempting to reach a prelitigation settlement through its conciliation process.

Result: Valley Tool Inc. will pay \$32,500 to settle the lawsuit and must train its staff on proper ADA protocols.

Info: bit.ly/Discrimination627

Hospital discriminated against older job applicant

What happened: Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital in Michigan discriminated against an older job applicant. A 56-year-old applicant was highly qualified and the unanimous choice amongst the hiring panel at the facility. However, the head of the panel overturned this decision and went with a much younger, less experienced candidate, saying she preferred to hire young people – a violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA).

What people did: The EEOC sued the facility for age discrimination.

Result: The hospital will pay \$115,000 to settle the lawsuit and must train its employees on the ADEA.

Info: bit.ly/AgeDiscrimination627

Updated CDC guidelines on returning to work safely

As many offices begin to reopen, health and safety is going to be top of mind for both employers and employees.

Some workers may be anxious about sitting near their colleagues again after a year at home, and business leaders are doing everything they can to make workers feel more comfortable.

But according to scientists, a lot of widely adopted COVID safety precautions might not really be doing much good.

Here's the CDC's updated guidance on the most effective safety measures, and the ones that might not be worth the effort.

Focus on ventilation

Scientists have agreed that the biggest culprit to COVID-19 spread is airborne transmission. This means it's critical for your workspace to have good ventilation and air filtration. Ask yourself how often the air is changing in your space.

COVID isn't spread through large droplets – it happens when small particles linger in the air for hours. In poorly ventilated spaces, these can build up and increase the risk of infection. Being outdoors helps these particles disperse more quickly.

One precaution a lot of employers are wasting their time with? Sanitizing surfaces, the CDC says. Scientists have determined the risk of transmission by touching infected surfaces is very low. Employers should put that money and effort into ventilation improvement.

Many companies have installed plastic dividers between employees' desks, but the CDC thinks those are of "questionable" benefit. A study showed that the coronavirus can actually build up on these dividers if they aren't disinfected regularly.

As more get vaccinated, COVID cases will go down, but these precautions can still be invaluable to fight colds and the flu.

Cite: bit.ly/precautions627

4 ways to contain and reduce benefits costs in 2021

You would think most employers base their benefits decisions on quality of care, but recent research by HealthEquity says nearly a quarter base it on budget.

And costs continue to rise. In 2019, the average family healthcare premium was \$20,500 – an increase of more than 50% in 10 years. Problem is, benefits are a critical factor for talent acquisition and retention:

- more than 50% of employees say they're the biggest factor in job satisfaction, and
- 78% say benefits influence their productivity.

Strategies for cost reduction

With COVID-19 escalating healthcare claims, costs aren't going to decrease soon. To save money in 2021:

1. **Add a flexible spending account** – An FSA provides employers and employees with tax savings. Some employees avoid them because of the use-it-or-lose-it issue. But you can add a carryover option allowing them to roll over up to \$500 into next year's plan.

2. **Offer health savings account** – Why? Because HSA-qualified health plan premiums are cheaper than other plans. On average, they cost 13% less than traditional PPOs and increase about 2% as opposed to 6%.

3. **Switch to active open enrollment** – To do this you have to make employee education a top priority and provide them with tools that help them navigate their benefit options. Active open enrollment helps with HSA adoption, and the more employees who choose HSA-qualified health plans, the more you can suppress overall healthcare costs.

4. **Offer contribution matching** – Employer contribution matching is a big influencer on employee participation. With an HSA match, you can make them a percentage or dollar-for-dollar match. The more employees contribute the better off their long-term financial wellbeing will be, and it benefits employers' bottom line, too.

Go to bit.ly/BenefitsCosts627 to download a free copy of *Six Strategies to Drive Down Benefits Costs in 2021*.

■ Gotta Zoom? Avoid disasters to communicate effectively

Zoom – and all of its pros, cons and potential disasters – is here to stay in the benefits world.

Whether you meet regularly with your team on Zoom or talk to employees, you want to avoid the mishaps that get in the way of communicating effectively.

Online meetings are our lifelines right now, so you want to take steps that minimize the potential for disasters – or quickly bounce back if one happens.

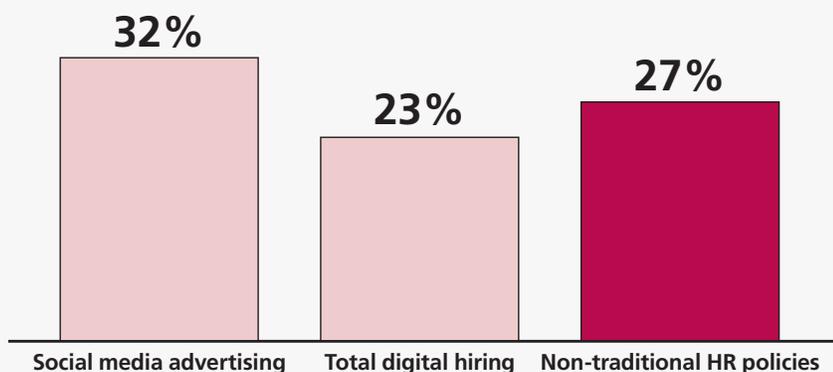
Angela DeFinis, a speech coach and presentation/virtual video trainer, offers these tips:

- **Plan for the worst.** Don't ever wing it. Create a meeting agenda with goals, so you can at least go back to it if there's a major distraction. If it's an impromptu meeting, jot down the purpose as soon as you recognize it so you're sure it gets covered if things go south.
- **Double down on what you can control.** That includes your appearance (wear solid colors), lighting (in front of you), setup (computer camera stable and at eye level) and time (be early).
- **Distinguish between distraction and disaster.** Only the latter needs to draw attention from the meeting. Otherwise, stay on task until you're done meeting.
- **Leave it at the door.** When you work from home, the stress of home life can easily creep into meetings. Leave it behind before you get on a Zoom meeting using this technique: Imagine a famous person you admire is sitting next to you in the meeting. Act as if she or he actually is there – in ways you'd want to gain that person's respect and admiration.
- **Have a backup.** If there's potential for a disaster – technical, child or otherwise – ask a trusted colleague to be ready to take over your role in the meeting if it strikes.

Source: bit.ly/Zoom627

Pandemic inspired successes

What new strategies did you implement in 2020 and will continue in 2021?



Businesses need to remember how they survived the pandemic and continue to use that same creativity to foster stronger relationships for future growth.

Our readers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular section, three of them share success stories you can adapt to fit your needs.

1 **Preparing for long-term effects of the pandemic**

We were concerned that our scattered remote workforce could be experiencing anxiety, depression and loneliness.

To help keep our employees engaged, we held virtual water cooler chats where people can join in whenever they like and casually talk to one another like they would in a common area at the office.

The conversations often turned to things they were struggling with, like caring for a family member

on top of their work duties.

We anticipate there'll be lingering mental health effects from COVID-19 that will require us to prioritize employee wellness.

Someone may still need support a year from now for an issue they're going through.

Help is available

We started sending a series of companywide "Wellness Wednesday" emails. They encourage people to:

- be aware of signs and symptoms of mental health risks

- share success stories that reduce the stigma of mental health care
- join peer support groups
- use our EAP resources, and
- have a crisis support hotline programmed into their phone.

The emails have been well received by our people and are an important reminder that we'll get through this together.

(Dr. Keita Franklin, chief clinical officer, Loyal Source Government Services, as presented during the NSC State of Response and Future World of Work Virtual Summit)

**REAL
PROBLEMS
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 **Collaboration reduced employee pay errors**

The biggest challenges of my job involve recordkeeping. One pain point in particular was correctly paying our employees that were resident aliens.

The type of visa they had affected the amounts they were taxed.

However, if HR didn't let payroll know about an employee's resident alien status, the tax withholdings would get set up wrong in our system.

A lot of times it wasn't caught until much later, when somebody would

call us and say: "Hey, I used to work there, and I'm trying to find my tax info."

These errors became costly to correct when we had to start cutting checks because we took out too much of someone's pay.

Improved communication

Our HR and payroll teams got together to identify workflows and processes that led to compensation inaccuracies and to reinforce how crucial it is to communicate any

employee data that affects tax withholding.

Sharing important data, such as non-taxable resident alien status, is an ongoing project involving occasional reminders to HR.

But there's no denying HR-payroll communication is getting better. Errors are decreasing and we're not writing out nearly as many reimbursement checks.

(Allen Abiva, HR and payroll supervisor, Progress Foundation, San Francisco)

3 **Double-checking data as if an audit is coming**

Making sure employee attendance data is accurately entered into our payroll system is important for several reasons.

Besides ensuring that our people are getting compensated correctly, having the different types of time off balances – from vacation to bereavement leave to COVID-19 quarantine – loaded in the system right matters.

For example, what if someone on maternity leave needs extended

time off and they don't have much paid sick time? The coding can get complicated.

Regardless, everything needs to be precise. The accounting firm we work with performs an annual audit, plus there are state- and county-run retirement systems that run periodic quick audits.

Two sets of eyes

While inputting attendance and time off data, I stay mindful that these audits are coming. If a discrepancy is found, such as an unpaid day off that

maybe should've been a paid day off, we'd have to provide an explanation.

I recruit someone in the office – usually from accounting – to regularly review this data and ask questions before final payroll approval. That catches just about every error before it becomes a problem.

Although corrections are easy to make, even if over-withholding is involved, staying in compliance is the best way to save our firm money.

(Heidi Alibozeck, payroll manager, Berkshire Hills Regional School District, Stockbridge, MA)

RECRUITING

Adapt onboarding for a remote world

When the pandemic first hit, companies were forced to adapt to remote work on the fly. Odds are, you were so busy with the transition, updating policies fell by the wayside.

But with a lot of remote work sticking around long-term, it's past time to make the necessary changes to your policies.

And one area that may need a major overhaul is onboarding.

Update the process

With a scattered workforce, connection is more important than ever. It's hard for co-workers to maintain relationships when they aren't seeing each other every day.

It's even harder for a new employee to make connections right now.

Here are some onboarding changes you'll want to make ASAP to accommodate remote employees, according to employment law attorney Katie Palumbo of the firm Levenfeld Pearlstein LLC.

Expedite connections

Communication is key to flawlessly integrating a new remote employee into your company – but that can be

tricky to do virtually.

Your first step should be to examine the sequence of your onboarding, and make sure the meet and greets, and other social interactions come first. Once your new hire meets all their co-workers, then you can move on to their basic training and other standard information.

It's also crucial that you have digital communication tools. Your employees can't connect if you don't have the right tech.

Make sure your new hire is shown how to use Teams, Zoom, Slack and whatever other platforms you use the most immediately. Inform them what channels are used for what tasks, too, to avoid miscommunications.

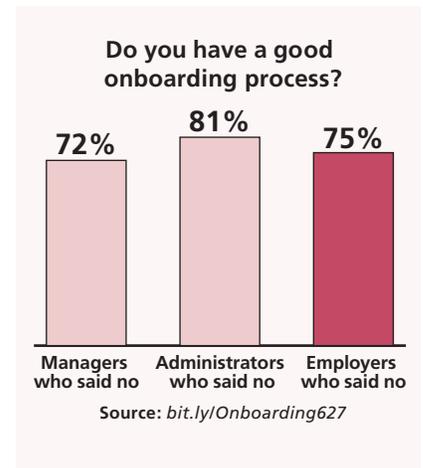
Other things to consider

Once you've got the very interactive first day down, it's important to carry on that collaboration.

Assign several key team members to assist in the new hire's onboarding – this isn't just a task for HR.

You can also consider implementing a buddy program, where the new hire has an assigned peer who can show them the ropes and answer any

WHAT BENEFITS EXECS SAID



Onboarding is such an important process that 98% who don't receive feedback during that time don't engage, and the sad truth is only 40% of companies set goals for this vital period to create loyal people.

(Each issue of WNB&C contains a current survey to give benefits officers insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.)

questions they may have.

Variety in interactions during a new hire's first week is key, too.

Maybe during week one, there can be a virtual welcome lunch with the employee's team. Set one-on-one meetings with core co-workers and leaders, and then have a few spontaneous manager check-ins.

Info: bit.ly/onboard627

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(See case on Page 2.)

Yes. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) put the ultimate burden on Pam to show that she would not have been fired or retaliated against "but for" her age.

Pam argued the reason her company terminated her was a pretext for age discrimination. To this end, she said attendance records showed that 15 younger employees missed shifts without discipline.

The company, however, presented evidence that the store Supervisor fired 12 employees for absenteeism in the year she managed the store – nine were under 40.

With regard to the alleged ageist comment, even if it qualified as direct evidence of discrimination, at most it indicated that age may have been a motivating factor. But she still failed to show that "but for" her age, she would

have kept her job despite violating attendance rules.

To the contrary, she admitted she didn't notify the store manager of two consecutive absences and that she could be fired for violating the attendance policy. Her claim failed because between her complaint and her termination, an intervening event occurred: She incurred two consecutive absences that led to the termination.

Analysis: Keep discipline the same across the board

Derogatory remarks about an employee's age have no place in the workplace. They can be considered direct evidence of unlawful age discrimination, if the manager fires the employee a short time later.

On the other hand, employers have a right to enforce attendance policies and discipline employees – regardless of their age – for not following attendance rules.

Cite: *Cole v. Family Dollar Stores of Maryland Inc., No. 18-2043 (4th Cir. 4/27/20). Dramatized for effect.*

Increased participation in financial education benefit by 1,900%

■ Partnership reached diverse cross section of workforce

We got a sense that our employees weren't using what was being offered by our legacy financial wellness education provider.

The main option was to call a coach, but not all of our employees were ready to take that step.

Because of the diversity of our workforce – with various age groups, backgrounds and income levels – everybody's in a different place when it comes to their level of financial confidence and the life decisions they're facing.

The vendor expanded access via an information hub. However, it wasn't user-friendly because of the volume of content and a cluttered layout.

Search process

We believe financial wellbeing is an important element of overall employee wellbeing, and we needed a more holistic approach.

We researched and interviewed a number of new vendors. Then we viewed demos of each platform and our benefits team discussed the pros and cons of each vendor.

Key feature

Because of how much everybody's on their mobile devices, we selected a vendor that offers mobile-friendly accounts. Their platform allowed employees to easily get a financial checkup, set up a budget and educate themselves.

Anyone needing more support beyond what they can do on their own can email or chat online with a financial planner, or book a phone or video call for more in-depth help.

To make appointments that fit our employees' schedules, the planners made themselves available almost

any time, including weekends.

Employees that called an advisor told us they got customized guidance, and that the advisors are personable, non-judgmental and didn't try to sell them anything.

Big impact

Engagement spiked with a webinar about how to feel good about your finances. In a positive tone it covered how to set goals and make serious progress, while still enjoying life now.

It inspired our team so much that:

- engagement in our financial wellness benefit went up 1,900%
- 67% of our employees completed a financial checkup, and
- 25% completed on-demand money microlearning lessons.

Case Study:

WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T

Financial wellbeing is important to overall employee wellbeing.

This improved employee benefit has saved time for our HR team. They can better determine where to focus their resources and messaging.

And whether our people are building emergency savings, paying down debt or investing for retirement, they're more confident.

(Theresa Cappel, human resources director, Messer Construction Co., Cincinnati)

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

■ COVID-19 vaccine: Can worker be fired for refusing to get it?

You might think everyone and their brother will get the COVID-19 vaccine. After all, why wouldn't you?

People have their reasons. And as a Benefits pro, you have to know whether the reason is legit or if the employee can be fired – if your company requires the vaccination to return to work.

Test your knowledge: Decide whether the following statements are *True* or *False*. Then check your responses against the answers below.

1. You can't fire a worker under any circumstance for refusing to get the COVID-19 vaccine.
2. Employers can make the COVID-19 vaccine a mandatory condition of returning to work.
3. We're still under the vaccines' Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) period which could affect the legal outcome of a firing.

ANSWERS

- Answers to the quiz**
1. *False.* You can fire them, if it's a requirement. However, the issue isn't so black and white, because employer COVID-19 vaccination policies haven't been challenged in court yet. But you can apply current rules regarding vaccination requirements at work to COVID-19 vaccines.
 2. *True.* However, there are two exceptions to this based on the Civil Rights Act, the ADA and The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act. They are refusal based on sincerely held religious beliefs or a disability that could be exacerbated by the vaccine.
 3. *True.* The EUA statute contains language that states people have the right to refuse any vaccine during the EUA period. Your best bet is to consult an attorney.
Info: bit.ly/Refusal627
bit.ly/EUA627

Top tool for attracting and retaining talent few offer

Here's a benefit that's guaranteed to set you apart from the rest of the competition, and attract and retain some of the best talent in the industry – offering vehicle service coverage.

Think about it: Vehicle repairs cost a fortune and not many people can handle the cost of a major repair. But if you offer it as part of your benefits package, your helping employees solve a major problem.

Plus, if you help employees with vehicle repairs, it benefits them by alleviating financial and emotional stress, and you by enabling your employees to get to work with clear and focused minds.

Just make sure the benefit is affordable, easy to understand and transparent.

Info: bit.ly/CarRepair627

More important than ever to show appreciation

No one would've guessed we'd still be caught up in this pandemic a year later. But we are and it's more important than ever to show employees appreciation.

Here are some ways to do that:

- a simple “Thank you!” or “Great job!” privately or publicly can go a long way
- an extra day off can help a lot when it comes to dealing with stress
- everyone loves free stuff, like company t-shirts or baseball caps
- remember their birthday and send them a regular card or an e-card
- publicly announce their employment anniversary and thank them for their service
- give them a nice gift, something special like a massage or dinner out – not a trophy or plaque – on milestone work anniversaries
- offer online learning classes in whatever to help employees escape work and have fun, and
- hold virtual pride meetings and allow employees to share with their

peers things they're proud of.

Info: bit.ly/Appreciation627

Vacation guilt: Incentivize employees to disconnect

Vacation guilt is real. Employees often feel if they aren't doing their part, others will need to do more – and resent them for it. Or they might feel like they'll fall behind in work.

At this point, many companies find it's not enough to give employees vacation time. They need to encourage and incentivize employees to take it.

A few examples:

- PriceWaterhouseCooper offered employees \$250 for every full week of vacation scheduled, up to \$1,000 for the year
- LinkedIn gave its entire workforce a paid week off work, and
- Third Factor, CitiGroup and SAP added at least two companywide closings to their annual schedules.

Workplace rituals critical for engagement, satisfaction

If your rituals fell by the wayside, now's the time to re-initiate them. Or start some new rituals. They're critical for engagement and satisfaction.

That's based on Harvard research about couples. Those that had rituals – such as a date night or walks – were more satisfied, invested in and committed than couples who didn't.

The researchers took their finding to the business world and found, rituals help employees perform better and be more committed to work.

Researchers said rituals should be:

- Fun. Most rituals were fun. So try to create rituals at work that provide pleasure.
- Fulfilling. Make food and drink part of rituals. In nearly two-thirds of couples' rituals, they bought a good or service – and it was often a meal or drink. Your people can bond while breaking bread (or pizza, pretzels, beers, etc.).

Info: bit.ly/Rituals627

HOT WEBSITES

■ Managing workforce changes

Reductions in the workforce are never pleasant, but mismanagement can prove costly. This complimentary checklist will ensure you don't miss a step and the transition is smooth.

Click: bit.ly/RIFChecklist627

■ Emerging HCM technologies

Check out these six emerging Human Capital Management technologies that can or will help HR/Benefits pros with administrative tasks and talent management.

Click: bit.ly/CHMTechTrends627

■ 2021 best password managers

Benefits pros have access to a lot of confidential employee info. That means your passwords should be ironclad. PCMag compiled a list of their top-rated password managers.

Click: bit.ly/Password627

If you have a benefits-related question, email it to Renee Cocchi at: rcocchi@HRMorning.com

LIGHTER SIDE

■ Cover letters say a lot about a candidate, like don't hire me!

As an HR/Benefits pro, you probably would file these cover letters in the trash! Thing is, these job candidates probably thought they were being clever and original.

Some of the worst seen by executives at Coburg Bank:

- “Why should you employ me? I bring doughnuts on Fridays.”
- “Please disregard the attached resume; it's totally outdated.”
- “Please don't misconstrue my 14 jobs as ‘job-hopping.’ I have never quit a job.”
- “I'm not going to waste your time by lying. I have no skills, yet.”
- “Dear Sir/Modem.”
- “For the sake of my sanity, please hire me!”

Click: bit.ly/CoverLetters627