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Editor: Deborah Jeffries, SHRM-CP, PHR, CPC: **Advantage** is published monthly and is designed to provide information on regulations, HR practices, and management ideas and concerns. The intended audience is managers, supervisors, business owners, human resources professionals and labor relations professionals. If you have questions about the content, an opinion about the information, or questions about your subscription, please call us at 503-885-9815 or email us at info@hranswers.com

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HRA HAPPENINGS

HR Answers, Inc. is pleased to announce Laurie Grenya as the new company owner. Co-President of HRA for the last 4 years, she will be succeeding Judy Clark, the organization's founder and owner for the past 36 years. Laurie brings 20 years of broad experience in Human Resource system management, project planning, training, staffing and recruitment, compensation, and more, along with a deep understanding of the practical application to multiple sectors and industries. Ms. Clark will continue to work with HRA, focusing on expert witness work.



Ms. Clark is excited for what is next for the company she founded in 1985, saying: "Having had the privilege to work so closely with Laurie over the years, I am confident that her leadership will only strengthen the resources, knowledge, understanding, and years of experience that have made HRA an industry leader for decades, ensuring it will remain a leader for decades to come."

To celebrate the change in ownership, HRA has also launched a [new website](#), with an updated look and easy access to their full-service HR products, resources, and services.

Accompanying new ownership and refreshed brand is the same great service that has defined the organization as the HR consulting firm of choice in the Northwest. HRA will continue to approach HR with originality and expertise, building on the resources, knowledge, and decades of experience to find optimal solutions, minimize risk, and fully support the HR function for clients and partners.

It's a critical time in workforce history. With unprecedented questions around vaccination requirements, remote employee management and worker classification, human resources experts are needed more than ever before. HRA is staying abreast of the new employer requirements so that it can continue providing their clients with the strategic direction needed to navigate these continuously developing waters.

HR Answers is a premier HR consulting and staffing firm serving the American Northwest. They provide HR solutions, products, and services to support organizations of all industries, sectors, and any size of organization. Their expert team offers client-specific HR solutions to help organizations navigate roadblocks and build pathways to success.

AGILITY – A KEY COMPETENCY

The world of work is changing at an alarming pace and organizations are questioning how they can equip themselves for the shifts ahead.



Forces at play influencing the future of our work include healthcare, climate change, talent scarcity, wealth distribution and of course demographics. In a report earlier this year, Mercer found that one third of employees are seriously concerned about being replaced by automation. The same proportion claimed they do not trust their employers in managing their transition to the new world of work. If nothing else, COVID has certainly taught us that we must learn to adapt and be agile to these rapidly changing times and circumstances.

Agility was a word on many lips when the world went topsy turvy in 2020 but the truth is businesses were already being challenged to be more nimble. Agility is a business's ability to respond to changing conditions quickly, make change easier to manage, and turn change into opportunities to better connect with customers, clients, and employees. It really requires building a set of habits and skills that make you stronger over time, more deliberate about your actions, and therefore more likely to respond to the many variables that are outside of your immediate control. Which is why personal agility is needed too.

There are several key skills and attributes to help people take more positive control of their own path. These included:

Being purposeful – having an outlook, attitude, and bias for intention and action. Being clear about what you are about and why (which at its core is your personal values and beliefs) helps to bring focus and clarity for direction both short and long term. For many this could be resilience and it works like a rudder on a boat helping to navigate the changing circumstances.

Having a learning and growth mindset – an openness to learning and seeking out new perspectives, developing new skills, experimentation and looking for resources and new opportunities for creativity.

Open to change – Seeing change as normal and as a growth opportunity rather a threat and being resistant. Being a change master and being able to support new activities within the organization as well as being able to bounce back and deal with unwelcome situations and circumstances.

Being empowered – motivated towards taking action and responsibility, being accountable for your own actions and results as well as your own path around development and understand that we each make our own choices.

To engage and work with others – being prepared and capable of building relationships, collaborating, and willing to work with different and diverse perspectives and opinions.

Lighten your load – investing in yourself with a strong focus on your personal well-being and a clear mind. Being present and aware of your environment as well as being conscious of your

self-talk to help avoid anxiety and provide for greater clarity.

You can do this alone, but it is obvious and extremely helpful to have the right culture and leadership for all these skills to flourish and be reinforced. If you are interested in developing some skills, we have an upcoming webinar on September 21 at 8:30am entitled: *Change - You Must Be the Change Before You Can Expect Change*. [Register Here](#)

UPDATE – JOINT EMPLOYMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor announced a **final rule** to rescind an earlier rule, “Joint Employer Status under the Fair Labor Standards Act” that took effect in March 2020. By rescinding that rule, the Department will ensure more workers receive minimum wage and overtime protections of the [Fair Labor Standards Act](#).

The rescinded rule included a description of joint employment contrary to statutory language and Congressional intent. The rule also failed to take into account the department’s prior joint employment guidance. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York vacated most of the rule in 2020.

Under the FLSA, an employee can have more than one employer for the work they perform. Joint employment applies when – for the purposes of minimum wage and overtime requirements – the department considers two separate companies to be a worker’s employer for the same work. For example, a joint employer relationship could occur where a hotel contracts with a staffing agency to provide cleaning staff, which the hotel directly controls. If the agency and the hotel are joint

employers, they are both responsible for worker protections.

A strong joint employer standard is critical because FLSA responsibilities and liability for worker protections do not apply to a business that does not meet the definition of employer. The final rule becomes effective September 28, 2021.

YOU’VE MOVED? EMPLOYEE RELOCATION

Amid the pandemic, relocations have surged as the result of historic factors in the housing market. Existing home sales in 2020 reached their highest point since the housing bubble in 2006, while mortgage rates fell to their lowest level ever,

according to data from the National Association of Realtors and Freddie Mac.

The pandemic simply accelerated more people to relocating to smaller cities that offer lower costs of living, warmer temperatures, more space, or even all three. Employees took a close look at what was going on and what was best for them (we all had a lot of time on our hands to think). Employees are taking advantage of the shift to working remotely to relocate to more affordable cities and suburbs.

The top cities employees are flocking to:



Boise, Idaho leads the U.S. in growth, with three times more people moving in than moving out.



Tennessee boasts three of the top five growth cities.



Many are flocking to the Sunshine State – Florida makes the list with six of the top 20 growth cities.

The Southeast continues to attract more growth than other regions. More than half of the top 20 growth cities are in the Southeast, with 13 destination cities. This continues an ongoing trend of people looking for warmer climates and more affordability.

From a business standpoint there are many considerations and questions with this activity.

Here is a list of items we think could be on your list:

- Think about the culture you have now and what you want it to be in the future.
- Can the job function be effective working remotely?
- If employees have approval and can work remotely when or how will you assess the success of the change?
- Taxes can be complicated when employees work in other states. Tax considerations for temporary relocations of less than 12 months are different from tax issues related to permanent moves. Taxes vary by state and can be complicated by other factors, such as a home sale. Appropriate experts should review tax and legal issues to make certain that policies and practices are in line with your employer's legal obligations. After December 31, 2017, the [Tax Cut and Jobs Act](#) suspended both the business deduction and the exclusion from taxable income for recipients of employer-paid moving expenses for taxable years 2018 through 2025, except for certain active-duty members of the armed forces.
- Minimum wage and overtime exemptions differ from state to state, as well as many other employment laws.

Review your current relocation policy and see if you need to make any adjustments. Typical items included in a traditional policy include:

- ✓ Tax Liability Assistance
- ✓ Lump Sum Allowance
- ✓ Finding Home to Rent
- ✓ Finding Home to Purchase
- ✓ Temporary Housing
- ✓ Lease Cancellation
- ✓ Home Marketing/Home Sale Assistance
- ✓ Equity Advance
- ✓ Movement of Household Goods
- ✓ Final Travel
- ✓ Miscellaneous Allowance

Here is a moving checklist you might find useful:

<https://www.imoving.com/moving-checklist/>

THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT

"You can sometimes fool the fans, but you can never fool the players". – Jack Stack

"The customer is our employer". – Joe L. Griffith

"Quality will be accomplished project by project and in no other way". – Doctor Joseph M. Juran

"You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want". – Zig Ziglar

"My theory is, if you want to overcome anything, you have to be fully committed to it". – Louis Zamperini

WHERE TO START WITH EMPLOYEES' MENTAL HEALTH

Americans have been through a lot over the past twelve months, and it's not surprising to see the statistics about the impact on mental health.

- According to the National Center for Health Statistics 1 in 3 U.S. adults have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder during the pandemic, vs 1 in 10 pre-pandemic.
- In a June 2020 McKinsey & Company survey 9 out of 10 employers report that COVID-19 is affecting their workforce behavioral health and/or productivity.
- The American Psychological Association (October 2020) states 61% of adults say they could have used more emotional support than they received over the prior 12 months.

Many conversations are likely happening within HR teams across the country about what to do and how to support employees. But for some, they might not know where to start. Talking about mental health and wellbeing can feel intimidating, controversial, and personal—something that HR may have advised against in the past.

However, the past year has also shown that employers want to do the right thing and offer meaningful support to their employees. A report from Willis Towers Watson (May 2020) found that 77% of employers are offering or expanding employees' access to virtual behavioral health services in the wake of COVID-19.

So, where to start (or continue)? Tackling the topic of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace can't be done in one article, one meeting, or one

corporate initiative. There are three things that you can do now to evaluate your current strategies and readiness for additional strategies and resources to support your employees' mental health.

1. **Revisit your values and culture.** Does your organization values promote inclusion, authenticity, and wellbeing?
2. **Train and support your leaders.** Do your managers understand and practice vulnerable leadership? Do they help create and foster safe spaces for their teams to ask for help, be honest and authentic, and support each other? Do they know where to turn if they are concerned about a team member?
3. **Provide resources and support.** Do you have services within your health benefits or a stand-alone EAP that make it easy for employees to access mental health resources? These resources can offer therapy, chat-based coaching that helps employees with non-clinical issues like stress, sleep, or burnout and so much more.

While the past year has brought the issue of mental health in the workplace to the forefront, it's clear that more action is needed to properly address the variety of concerns and the growing demand. In a survey by McKinsey (April 2021), 71% of employers believe they support employee mental health well or very well. Unfortunately, only 27% of the employee respondents rated the offerings as good or very good.

There are numerous ways to have conversations with employees about mental health and wellbeing—and the most important thing is just to start.

HR LINK – HIRING EVENT



The City of Tigard and WorkSource Oregon are collaborating to host a Drive-Thru Hiring Event in Tigard on

Wednesday, September 15th at 14275 SW Milton Ct, Tigard, OR 97224. The Drive -Thru Hiring Event will be from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM with set-up for employers beginning at 9:00 AM. Employers must bring their own tables, chairs, and canopy (optional). This event will be advertised on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Eventbrite. WorkSource Oregon will also use a Fast Pass notification emailed to job seekers in the Portland Metro area and Yamhill County, covering over a thousand job seekers.

What is a Drive-Thru Hiring Event? Think of it as a pop-up career fair in a great outdoor space with social distancing to talk to job seekers. You will have space to set up your table, chairs, and a canopy with elbow-room and a chance to talk with job seekers. This is a great way to do a quick screening. You're also welcome to collect resumes. The main requirement for employers is that you post your open positions with WorkSource. Call 503-257-HIRE (4473) for assistance with posting your jobs. WorkSource will ask you for the names of job seekers you hire to help justify the expenditure of time and resources to produce the program. This is a First Come First Serve Event. Please respond ASAP if you want to reserve a spot. There is no charge, but capacity is limited.

Contact Barbee.A.Williams@oregon.gov to register. To logon to iMatchSkills click the iMatchSkills link on www.Employment.Oregon.gov. You may call your

local WorkSource Oregon Employment Department office at (503) 612-4200 for further assistance. TTY/TDD - dial 7-1-1 toll free relay service access free online relay service at: <https://www.sprintip.com>.

POOR SUPERVISORY SKILLS

Supervisors play one of the most important roles in our organizations. Inadequate supervision has far-reaching and remarkable effects on an organization. Research demonstrates that supervisors have a direct impact on the workplace in at least 10 substantial ways:

1. Rates of **employee retention** and turnover
2. **Employee morale** when jobs remain open and turnover rates are high
3. **Hidden costs** associated with poor hiring and high turnover (lost opportunities, training, recruitment, and selection expenses)
4. **Loss of productivity** due to high turnover, low morale, low levels of employee engagement
5. **Reduced levels of customer satisfaction** and increased levels of customer churn
6. **Decreased revenue** as employees who sell or produce goods are demotivated
7. **Inflated expenses** (overtime, investigating employee complaints, waste, etc.)
8. **Reduced profitability** due to inflated expenses and decreased top-line revenue
9. **Employer brand becomes impaired**, resulting in a need to increase hiring and retention efforts in a competitive job market
10. **Low emotional commitment** by employees detracts from the company's ability to achieve goals and attain its Mission and Vision

Every one of these has serious consequences for businesses if not addressed. Stagnating and underperforming business often improve when they take steps to develop supervisors in the most basic ways. A supervisory role is a frontline leadership role. Skill them correctly, and they become a foundation to succession and talent planning in your business.

Now is the time to get your to-be supervisors and your existing leaders some training on the hard-core skills they need to keep you out of the courtroom and reinforce the need for soft skills to continue building the connection and moral with in your organization. We encourage you to consider our program that has been running for over 20 years that cover many of these items and will give your supervisors a solid foundation. [Learn More.](#)



Q & A (DRESS CODE)

Q: My office is reopening, and I'm excited for human interaction after months and months of isolation. However, I've been wearing casual clothing for the past year. What are the odds my employer will revisit the office's dress code when we return?

A: It is good news to hear that your organization is reopening. The likelihood that your dress code will change will depend on your industry and the culture.

This last year has given employers an opportunity to take a step back and assess what they do, why they do it and how. In turn many have also looked to their workforce and asked more questions and

listened to the feedback when considering reopening and all that goes with that activity. As a result of the employee feedback, many employers have transitioned to more casual dress policies with employees working remotely or a hybrid approach. Overall, the requirement to wear more formal clothing like suits and ties are declining (Considerations include who are the clients we serve and what is appropriate and professional in that regard). While business casual is appropriate for many businesses, yoga pants and T-shirts will likely need to remain at home.

It would be wise to check with your manager or HR for further clarification before the official return to the office. If you cannot get a clear answer, the best choice would be to abide by pre-pandemic policy as you return to work. You can always make adjustments as time goes by. No one would want to show up for work and be sent home (and perhaps disciplined) for failing to adhere to the dress code. Please use good judgement as you return to the office.

PROFESSIONALISM

The workplace is changing in a variety of ways. Which in turn can impact how we interact with each other regardless of where we are doing the work. To discount the importance of professionalism would be a big mistake. It is vital! However, over the last two years it is easy to see where we have become more lackadaisical.

A lack of professionalism can impact how others see you, affect your chances for advancement or even the ability to keep your job. Characteristics of professionalism include Competence, Knowledge, Conscientiousness, Integrity, Respect, Emotional

Intelligence, Accountability, Appropriateness, and Confidence

We recently offered a webinar on Courtesy and Workplace Etiquette where professionalism was not only defined but the content covered things to



do and know around meetings, communication (including emails), working with clients, customers, co-workers, a supervisor and even the difference of in-person vs. working remotely.

How can you show your professionalism? Follow these dos and don'ts:

- Be on time
- Keep personal matters to a minimum - don't air dirty laundry
- Honor your commitments
- Be attentive, responsive, and proactive
- Find common ground with your colleagues
- Don't try to make others look bad
- Be mindful of your place in the larger company structure
- Prioritize company success over personal 'wins'
- Don't be a grump
- Don't lie or hide your mistakes
- Always give credit and compliments to everyone who deserves them

One other concept that may be helpful in your workplace is consider C.O.I.K. (Clear Only If Known). Often, we tend to communicate with others, and we assume they understand our terminology or jargon, or cultural considerations, the visuals we present, or has had exposure to issues, or even shared ethics. We need to be cautious; better to ensure than to assume.

If you think your employees may benefit from some reminders about civility, customer service, workplace etiquette and the like then let us know. We would be happy to assemble some programming specific to your needs.

CALENDAR

Open your calendars. The following is a look at upcoming events and workshops, special days, and other diverse and fun activities you will want to be aware of and schedule.

HRA Webinar Schedule

[View Details](#)

September	
14	Managing Conflict
16	Job Search Webinar
16	Leaves – Protected, Discretionary, Paid or Unpaid
21	You Must Be the Change Before You Can Expect Change
22	Positivity (No More Negativity)
23	Success for Beginning Supervisors (a series from 9/23 to 11/11)
October	
5	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
6	HR Lunch Bunch: Consultant's Corner FREE
13	Interviewing for Culture
14	Job Search Webinar FREE
27	Soft Skills: Teamwork
November	
2	Prevention of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
2	Performance Management – Part 1
3	HR Lunch Bunch: Year in Review and Planning Ahead FREE
9	Performance Management – Part 2
10	Personal Improvement: Building Rapport
11	Job Search Webinar FREE
17	Soft Skills: The Art of Negotiation
18	Foundations of Leadership

CALENDAR

Conferences and Events

September 14th – 15th Click [HERE](#) for event information.

Portland Human Resource Management Association Strategic Management Conference (virtual)

Sponsored Session: Making Change work is Critical to Your Business, Laurie Grenya & Deborah Jeffries

September 27th – 29th Click [HERE](#) for event information.

National Human Resources Management Association 83rd Annual Conference (in-person)

Sponsored Session: Pre-Conference Q&A on Common and Emergent HR Topics – What Should Your Questions Be, and Why?, Laurie Grenya & Deborah Jeffries

Sponsored Session: Advanced Communication Skills for Today's HR Professional, Deborah Jeffries

Sponsored Session: Self-Care for HR – Your Deserve It, Deborah Jeffries

National Day Calendar

September: National Hispanic Heritage, Intergeneration, Courtesy, Suicide Prevention, Childhood Cancer Awareness, Library Card Sign-up, Classical Music, Preparedness, International People Skills, and Self-Improvement Month. Want to learn about other September and October National Days? Here is a resource:

<https://nationaldaycalendar.com/september/> and <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/october/>

Sep 12	National Chocolate Milkshake, Day of Encouragement and Grandparents Day
Sep 18	National Cleanup Day
Sep 26	National Pancake Day
Oct 1	National Homemade Cookie Day
Oct 5	National Do Something Nice Day
Oct 11	National Coming Out Day
Oct 13	National Stop Bullying Day
Oct 15	National Bosses Day
Oct 23	National Make a Difference Day
Oct 31	Halloween

ON MY SOAPBOX

Guest spot: Laurie Grenya, Owner and President

It seems that all we talk about these days are the “what ifs?” surrounding COVID. I recently had an experience that I can't shake and yes, it's COVID related and reminded me, not everything is. Several weeks ago, I was sharing at a staff meeting about an interaction I had with a local restaurant manager. I had noticed most of the restaurant staff were working in pairs which was not typical. Curiosity took over when the manager dropped by for what I'm sure she thought would be a quick “How's Everything?” exchange. I asked her why

everyone was in pairs and shared my assumption that it must be training related. She shared that was only part of the reason. Employee safety was the primary reason.

In the prior weeks, two employees have been physically harmed by patrons who were unhappy with their wait time and/or perceived lack of service. I was astonished. Needless to say, I found myself disappointed in the humans. The restaurant manager and I continued to discuss the difficulty the restaurant is having in recruiting, the steps they have taken to be open, provide stable work, train staff, provide a good experience, and her hopes for continued ability to do so. And all of this was shared with heart felt honesty.

There were three distinct things I took with me from this conversation. One, we are all experiencing our own version of the pandemic. Two, we need to have some grace for the people we encounter every day – we really have no idea what their version of the pandemic has been. And three, we can be thankful for what we have and what we will have. When the first indications of the seriousness of the pandemic became clear HR Answers shared two approaches for success: act in good faith and be consistent. This remains true. We all struggle from time to time. This is not a battle to be won by few, rather we each play a role in our overall success. While I don't see the course of the pandemic coming to a close, I see a continued path to success through a little grace and perseverance.

Information and advice offered through **Advantage** should not be construed as legal opinion. The material contained herein will not apply to all circumstances or to all organizations. Use it as a resource and reference. Should you feel legal advice is required, please consult with your legal counsel.