PERSPECTIVES

May 2020

PHRA

AFFILIATE OF SHRM SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

PERSPECTIVES

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PHRA President's Message

Dr. Peter Gabriel, ACC, President, PHRA

Dear PHRA Members,

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones healthy and well.

It is safe to say these past weeks have been among some of the most tumultuous and emotional that any of us can remember in our lifetimes. The impact of the coronavirus outbreak has been felt by individuals and families, companies and communities, across the United States and around the world.

The response to this crisis has been extraordinary; as much for what it has required from our profession as for what it has revealed of us as a people. Thank you for the long hours, difficult conversations and tough decisions you have made as HR and business leaders in our community.

Far from causing division and discord, this crisis and the social distancing it has required, has allowed us to witness something profound and moving about ourselves: our fond and deeply felt wish to be connected with one another. The role of connector is one PHRA is privileged to play.

PHRA and SHRM are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our staff, members, conference attendees and partners. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely, following guidance from the local authorities and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Click here to view the PHRA's COVID-19 Resources page.

Demand will come back. Like every other enterprise, we are evaluating our options for operating at a reduced cost basis in order to endure the climate in which we find ourselves. But like all climates, the weather will change. PHRA seeks to make the best decisions we can with our staff and members in mind. That being said we wanted to share **NEW DATES** for our **Signature Events**. **Engaging Pittsburgh will be held on August 27th** and our **Golf and Bocce Outing will be held on September 11th**.

While much remains uncertain right now, one thing is for sure: this crisis will pass, and I look forward to connecting at a future event. In the meantime, please keep connecting with our profession through our virtual programs.

Stay safe and be well,

Dr. Peter Gabriel, ACC
Leadership/Executive Coach, Leadership Consultant, and Team Facilitator
Key Leadership LLC

Thoughts from the Past President

Janet K. Manuel, PHRA Past President

I know you are thinking about my question - Will you serve in a Volunteer Leader role for the PHRA?

This year there will be five (5) board member roles/positions expiring and we will need to source candidates who have interest in serving in these roles. I am soliciting names now!

I want to provide a little more detail about the roles and if you are the selected leader how you can help lead the charge!

1. **VP – Membership**: Membership drives the mission of the PHRA. You will lead the committee members in seeking ways of how to retain members and attract people to become PHRA members. More importantly to show and help them realize the value of being a member of PHRA! Elected Committee Chair Leader will serve a two-year term with responsibilities that include attendance and participation in Committee meetings and PHRA events.
2. **VP – Secretary**: The PHRA history tells the story! Without having accurate PHRA records there is no story tell. It is very important for everyone to know what this organization has done! You will ensure that the minutes of the Executive Committee and General Board meetings are accurately documented for the story of the PHRA to be known for years to come. Elected Leader will serve a two-year term with responsibilities that include attendance and participation in meetings and PHRA events.
3. **Director (2 vacancies)**: You won't be "Bored of Director" as a PHRA Board of Director! In this role, you will attend bi-monthly board of director meetings where the direction of the PHRA is discussed/planned to make sure our members have the best experience. You will host a casual morning meet-up to give our members the opportunity to grab a coffee and network. You will also support one of our many active committees and help drive the PHRA Mission and Vision. Elected Leaders will serve a three-year term with responsibilities that include attendance and participate at PHRA events.
4. **Chair – Learning and Professional Development**: Learning never stops and that is what this committee helps our members understand! You will lead the committee members in creating and implementing creative and different mechanisms on various HR topics to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities. Elected Committee Chair Leader will serve a two-year term with responsibilities that include attendance and participation in meetings and PHRA events.

If you are looking to give back to the HR profession and want to help move the HR profession forward, I ask that you consider submission for consideration for one of the five vacancies.

Thanks

Janet K. Manuel, MS, SHRM-CP and PHR
Director, HR & Civil Service and EEO/D&I Officer
City of Pittsburgh

PHRA's Response to COVID-19

Human resources professionals are critical to companies and communities during times of crisis, and we at PHRA remain dedicated to supporting HR professionals in our region and beyond as the COVID-19 situation develops.

The health and safety of our members, volunteers, staff, colleagues, family, and friends is our top priority as we make decisions about how to best support our community in the coming weeks and months. All our decisions about in-person PHRA events will be based on guidance and recommendations from the CDC, WHO, state, and local officials. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, so too will our decisions.

As of March 20th, all in-person PHRA events are cancelled through the end of May and will be made virtual to the extent possible. We will continue to send updates about changes to our operations and the services we provide as new safety and health information becomes available.

While we have to make adjustments to our in-person events and content, our commitment to the success and development of HR professionals remains as strong as ever. We plan to provide content and programming on virtual platforms accessible to everyone. In the meantime, we will post general facts, resources, and company updates on the PHRA Resource Page.

We appreciate your patience during this stressful time as we do our best to serve our members and the HR community in Pittsburgh and our surrounding areas.

Complimentary career support for small business employees, sponsored by LHH.

DOL COVID Resources:

- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act Notice – Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Workplace Posters**
- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers**
- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights**
- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements**
- **COVID-19 and the Family and Medical Leave Act Questions and Answers**

SHRM Member Resources:

- **Coronavirus Resource Page**
- **How to Handle Communicable Diseases in the Workplace**
- **HR Q&A: Telework or leave**

SHRM Webinars:

- **Coronavirus: Legal and Workplace Implications**
- **A SHRM/CDC Update: How Business, Workers and Workplaces Should Respond to COVID-19**
- **COVID-19: The Next Round of Employer Challenges**

Stay tuned for additional events and resources from SHRM over the coming weeks. For continued monitoring and questions about affected areas in the U.S., please visit click here.

Educational Online Resources for parents with children out of school and at home:

Resources for learning from home

- Best educational YouTube Channels
- Best educational TV shows and movies on Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime
- Best podcasts for kids
- Best free online instructional materials

Age of Learning – Currently Free!

- ABC Mouse (preschool – 2nd grade)
- Adventure Academy (3rd grade – 8th grade)
- Reading IQ (preschool – 6th grade)

Scholastic Learn at Home
Day-to-day projects to keep kids reading, thinking and growing

Kids Podcasts

- **Story Pirates**
- **Smash Boom Best**
- **Finn Caspian Podcast**
- **Bedtime Explores**
- **Circle Round**
- **Story Nory**
- **Reading Bug Podcast**

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HR Musings in the Midst of COVID-19

By Kori Amos, SHRM-SCP, Flagger Force, Kori.Amos@FlaggerForce.com

If you work in HR (which is super likely since you're reading this publication), your life over the past 8 years, oh wait – I'm sorry, it just feels like it has been 8 years, let me try again... your life over the past few weeks or months has been completely overrun by the coronavirus AKA COVID-19 AKA the period in time in 2020 where we shut it down. We will be talking about this for decades to come; this moment in history that doesn't have a snappy hashtag yet, that I'm aware of. How about #WhatAmIDoing2020 or #WhatIsHappening2020? Never mind, those are garbage; I'll keep workshopping it.

The coronavirus has turned everything upside down; HR professionals all over the nation are trying to keep up with the lightning-speed changing landscape, policies, internal crisis management, layoffs, furloughs while doing their best to support employees while maybe homeschooling their kids and possibly trying to give themselves a home-haircut. It's a lot, people. It's. A. Lot.

Even at the onset of this national emergency, experts were making predictions all over the world wide web about how this was going to impact the future of work forever. And if you weren't all about scouring the web for expert predictions, the other side of the coin is the memes. There were some snarky memes skewering employers who had long said that remote work was "not possible at this organization", who had their hands forced by none other than Mr. COVID-19. Then there's the meme with a picture of the titanic and the musicians playing as the ship went down, labeled as "Human Resources."

But, listen, I'm sure you need another person's opinion like you need another CNN update notification on your phone. So, I'm here to provide some observations. Observations are a less aggressive form of opinions. Ok, maybe "observation" is just my way of PR-spinning that this is an article providing an opinion. Forgive me. It's been a long week.

I'd like to talk about 2 specific aspects of our work-world and how the coronavirus has brought to light the best and worst in us. Let's chat about technology and grace.

The easy one first – Technology.
I'm not exclusively talking about our HRIS's and ATS' and ESS' or any other alphabet-soup, specific-to-HR technologies. More than ever we have got to be motived to dig into the features of ALL the technology at our disposal with the same fervor with which we dive into policy changes to the FMLA. This moment in time has truly highlighted where technology deficits exist in individuals and teams. This global pandemic has forcefully highlighted how we must discipline ourselves to stay passionately curious about how we can leverage technology and then discipline ourselves and our teams to pursue and implement those opportunities.

Listen, maybe you're reading this standing in your choir robes saying, "Hey preacher, give it a rest." I hope so. However, my observation (again, nicer word for opinion) and experience is that there are many hiding out in the camp of "I don't know how to use this [insert name of any form of technology], get [insert name of technology savvy employee] in here or call IT." Now let's make one thing very clear; this technology-ostrich-syndrome knows no demographic bounds. Everyone, every year could create a goal to become more technologically proficient.

We are drivers and champions of change; as such, technology must be our BFF like none other. We cannot treat tech like the junk drawer in our kitchen – Eh, we'll get to it when we have a sec. Nope. We have got to make the time.

Now the warm and fuzzy one – Grace.
So many definitions for this, but I'm going to go with "the quality or state of being considerate or thoughtful". Monitoring HR social media groups and comments and the SHRM Connect threads, it's never been more apparent to me that HR pros all over the country are using grace, understanding, and compassion as their default mode when dealing with employees and making decisions related to COVID.

Every day it's a new set of circumstances and subsequent questions related to the coronavirus, where HR is wading through the murky, choppy waters making the best decisions with the information and resources they have but defaulting to thoughtful compassion. Employees are scared and anxious, and we are fielding those call, emails, and inquiries. The comment sections I've seen restore my faith in humanity (too dramatic?). I don't see the policy police AT ALL. I see people trying to take care of people.

So, HR, keep going and persevere! You're doing great. I keep saying that every day while dealing with this pandemic, it feels like an SAT question with no end. But the truth is, it will end. This will pass and then we can assess our new normal. Until then, take care of yourself, be kind to yourself, wash your hands and know that the care you demonstrated during this time means more to your teams than you can measure.

You're doing great. We're in this together.

Designing and Facilitating Efficient and Effective Collaborative Sessions

by Michael Couch

Designing and facilitating efficient and effective face-to-face collaboration sessions require diligent planning and skilled facilitation. Move the same session to a virtual setting and the requirements go on steroids. I've designed and facilitated hundreds of non-virtual sessions and am now doing more and more virtually. Here are six suggestions on how to make your next virtual collaboration a rousing success.

Design Design Design. I ape the old real estate adage of "location, location, location" when I describe the three secrets to any effective group collaboration. The success of virtual collaboration is the same if not more so. It all relies on thoroughly working through the design of the process. This is a lot more than the other old saw that "every meeting should have an agenda" (which it should). A virtual collaboration meeting design should be prepared and distributed to all participants in advance and should include the following.

- A meeting owner or lead (whose meeting is it; who is asking for the session output)
- A facilitator (not a participant or the owner but someone who can stay out of the content and shepherd the process)
- A clear and specific context (what is the background for the meeting; the current situation and the relevant facts as we know them)
- A defined purpose (what we expect to accomplish; what are we trying to achieve by collaborating)
- A non-purpose (on what we will not be spending time)
- The specific question(s) to be answered and the different ways we will approach the answers to the questions (in storyboard lingo, the headers and the kicker questions)
- Time requirements (the approximate amount of time we will take to answer the questions plus to plan communications and follow-up)
- The required participants (the people with the knowledge and skill who will collaborate and do work - not people who just need to know about the results)
- Depending on the complexity of the issue being addressed, it may also be valuable include these two additional items in the design.
- Keys to success (what we all need to keep in mind for the collaboration to be successful)
- Measures of success (how will we know when we've accomplished the purpose)

(Note: If you want more details on how to do top-notch facilitation design, check out the Compression Planning Institute.)

Build Virtual Collaboration Skills. If the participants are new to doing virtual collaboration then you need to realize that they may need to build new virtual skills and habits. Luckily, an effective facilitation design and facilitator will put the team members through the right experiences to learn new skills. However, the facilitator needs to make sure that the team members are acquiring the new skills. The best tool to help reinforce and lock-in new skills is to make time for regular reflection. This involves stopping throughout the team's work and reviewing how the process is going - what's working and why, what's not working, why and what could we change to improve. The reflection process may identify new keys to success or highlight an existing one that was established in the session design.

Check and Recheck. When a collaboration team is in a single room, it's easy to see facial expressions, to gauge reactions and to check levels of alertness. In a virtual meeting . . . not so much. Summarizing and confirming what's been decided or what's been covered is something I do at certain points in a face-to-face session. I increase the frequency of summarizing and doing check-ins during virtual sessions. If need be, I will also poll each participant – "Do you agree?", "Do you have any other thoughts?", "You with us on this?", etc. I also highly recommend that you use virtual tools that allow for the output of the process to be displayed to everyone. Without some interactive tool, the session is just a glorified conference call. And it is very difficult to be collaborative by phone. The tool should include video and everyone should be on camera even if a few are in a room together.

The Gum Chewing/Walking Phenomena. Even superhuman facilitators cannot oversee a collaboration event, ask relevant kicker questions and succinctly record the output at the same time. The facilitator should only, well, facilitate. Each session should have someone assigned to post ideas, decisions or plans the team has generated. However, this does not mean that every statement that gets uttered gets recorded. The facilitator must manage idea generation or analysis to assure that everything that is posted is a fully formed idea and that it's clearly written. The corollary to this recommendation is, "The multiple of 'I think . . .' is not 'we know'" meaning that plain old brainstorming doesn't work.

Manage the First 10 Minutes. In non-virtual meetings, I like to "manage the first 5 minutes" by reviewing the session design and any previous work that the team accomplished. In virtual settings, I upgrade this to at least the first 10 minutes or more. I take more time to review the design (and have it displayed for everyone to see).

And finally . . .

Make It Social. Non-virtual meetings usually have ragged starts where people kibitz before diving into the task at hand. Virtual meetings should not forget this important social component of work. I usually prepare a question that I ask and then call on everyone to respond. During the COVID crisis it has been, "What are you doing to stay safe and sane?"

Michael Couch, Consultant, High-Impact Facilitator, Organizational Psychologist, Author, Speaker

August 27, 2020

"Whether they are attracting talent, training tomorrow's leaders or rethinking the way they organize work. The nominees have all demonstrated that investing in people is a key component of business success."

Elizabeth Lamping, *Executive Director, Pittsburgh Human Resources Association*

2020 Engaging Pittsburgh

Leader of the Year Nominees!

EEOC Issues Guidelines on COVID-19 Testing of Employees

By Benjamin L. Shechtman, Cozen O, Connor

On April 23, 2020, the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published updates to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that it originally published on March 17, 2020, to address COVID-19 issues. These FAQs provide guidance to employers for compliance with federal laws in general and specifically as these laws pertain to the unique circumstances presented by COVID-19. Most significantly, the EEOC has clarified than an ADA-covered employer may administer a COVID-19 test to an employee prior to permitting the employee to enter the workplace, without running afoul of EEO laws.

With regard to the permissibility of COVID-19 testing, the EEOC has interpreted long-standing, pre-pandemic guidance and concluded that a COVID-19 test is "job related and consistent with business necessity" because of the direct threat posed to employee health by a co-worker, customer, or vendor who tests positive for COVID-19. The EEOC advises that employers should ensure that any such test is "accurate and reliable," and may consider the incidence of false-positives and false-negatives associated with a particular test. Cozen O'Connor has previously published guidance on COVID-19 testing, as well as the potential pitfalls of temperature testing. Employers should review this guidance and maintain stringent safety and privacy protocols in any COVID-19 testing.

The FAQs contain additional guidance for employers. The FAQs make it clear that the:

> EEO laws, including the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, continue to apply during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, but they do not interfere with or prevent employers from following the guidelines and suggestions made by the CDC or state/local public health authorities about steps employers should take regarding COVID-19.

In other words, employers may comply with guidance from CDC without running afoul of the ADA. For example, the EEOC advises that ADA-covered employers may take employees' temperatures and inquire as to whether employees have experienced symptoms of COVID-19 because of the risks of community spread acknowledged by the CDC and other health authorities.

Similarly, the EEOC has stated, the COVID-19 pandemic does not relieve ADA-covered employers of their obligation to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with pre-existing physical and mental disabilities. The EEOC notes that COVID-19 presents increased risks to individuals with certain pre-existing physical disabilities, who therefore may request accommodations to prevent them from potential exposure. "Even with the constraints imposed by a pandemic," the FAQs provide, "some accommodations may meet an employee's needs on a temporary basis without causing undue hardship on the employer." For example, the EEOC has said, employees with mental health diagnoses such as anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder may have more difficulty handling the disruption to daily life that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the EEOC FAQs explain that the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act continue to apply to critical and essential workers, and that employers should consider requests for future accommodations pertaining to a time after employees who are on leave or working from home return to work. As always, employers should evaluate requests for reasonable accommodations carefully and consult with counsel as appropriate.

3 Flexible Jobs for Seniors Who Want to Work During Retirement

By Sharon Wagner

Not all seniors can—or want—to retire completely. If you wish to keep busy or make extra cash, a flexible part-time job is ideal. From home or on the road, here are three flexible jobs ideal for seniors who want to keep working while enjoying their retirement.

Insurance Sales
Selling insurance is an excellent second-career option for seniors. Especially if you have a sales background, getting into insurance can feel like second nature. Sales jobs require soft skills like communication and the ability to relate to others. People with such skills—who are naturally creative and innovative, not to mention empathetic—can be a great fit for sales roles.

Plus, insurance agent jobs are flexible positions where you can set your own hours. Working remotely is often a possibility—including working from home or anywhere in the world with an internet connection. You might also have family and friends that are interested in purchasing coverage from you. If you think a job selling life insurance might be a good fit, investigate the best options for retirees to see what you would be working with.

Depending on whether you work for a company or go freelance, you may not have any overhead costs when you begin working. Plus, working for an organization means you receive ongoing training and support so that you can assist clients with every insurance need.

Before you start applying for jobs, research which insurance companies you might like to work for. For example, websites like Indeed offers reviews from people who work at various companies, along with other relevant company info. You can read up on companies like Lincoln Heritage insurance company and decide if that's right for you.

Freelance Writer
People from all types of backgrounds become successful freelance writers, and it's a job that's ideal for seniors since the hours and projects are variable. You can use connections from your previous career or start pitching clients from scratch. With industry knowledge in nearly any niche, you can find writing jobs that suit your skills and expertise.

For example, if your first career was in education, you can write for education blogs or curriculum companies. If your expertise lies in manufacturing, you can write guides for equipment or processes or even strategies for quality control and productivity.

3 Flexible Jobs for Seniors Who Want to Work During Retirement (Cont.)

Plus, you can always scale back to meet your income goals without exceeding tax limits for any government benefits or pensions. Then again, if your income exceeds past years, you might see a boost in your social security benefits, says the Social Security Administration.

Pet Sitting

Many people are passionate about pets—especially dogs and cats. If you like animals, you might consider pet sitting for extra income during retirement. You may offer daycare services for pets, drop in for walks during the day, or house sit while caring for the resident animals—making up to $25 for a 30-minute window.

Like other freelance gigs, becoming a pet sitter has a low overhead cost, too. And with apps that connect clients with professionally vetted pet and house sitters, you might be able to increase your income exponentially.

It's even possible to book pet care jobs and live a nomadic lifestyle, points out CNBC, as one woman did living in New York City without paying for an apartment. Wherever you go (or want to go), there are pets that need love and care while their owners are out of town or at work.

Getting started with pet sitting typically involves establishing a business name, at minimum. But you may also want to consider liability insurance in case of unforeseen issues with a job. Creating a website can also help you land clients without relying on a third-party app. You may want to add a free pet first aid app to your phone in case of emergencies, too.

Whether you want to work during retirement or need a secondary source of income, finding a new professional path is easier than you think. Consider adding insurance sales, writing, or pet sitting to your life experiences. Applying your existing skills or interests to a brand new career can mean a seamless transition into your new role—and your retirement.

Photo via Rawpixel

Practice Makes Proficient: Developing Business Acumen

Today's profession is not your father's HR

By Phyllis G. Hartman, SHRM-SCP

When I started in HR, opportunities for HR professionals to contribute to business were limited. In many companies, HR reported to Accounting, not to the CEO. Even the college where I got my master's degree in HR Management in 1990still called its department "Personnel," not HR. Employees and managers saw HR as a service function, limited to hiring, firing and administering benefits.

The HR world is very different today, as businesses realize that the factor that differentiates them from their competition is their people.

To be effective as people experts, however, HR professionals have to expand their understanding of and capabilities in business. This makes the SHRM-defined competency of Business Acumen, in my view, the most critical for us to develop. Unless HR understands an organization's business as well as people, we can't provide the leadership and support necessary for all to succeed.

When I talk to HR colleagues about Business Acumen, they usually agree that it is important, but they struggle with developing it in themselves and their staff. The C-suite often doesn't support or provide what is needed for HR growth in this competency. Managers outside HR may not want to share information or resources.

So, how can we as HR pros develop Business Acumen? As with all competency development, it takes activity and practice. To get opportunities in business, HR must use other competencies, including Relationship Management and Consultation, to work with executives and managers to learn about business functions.

Today's HR professional must understand how business works to participate fully in leading organizations forward. Only by having a high level of proficiency in Business Acumen can HR help the organization understand its people, and help its people understand their organization.

Approaches to Developing Proficiency in Business Acumen

On the job:

- Attend management meetings that discuss business planning and take notes; later, ask business leaders questions to gain understanding of business issues.
- Help your employees or co-workers understand how what they do affects the bottom line and organizational success.
- Set individual or department goals that are clearly aligned with the organization's strategic and business goals.
- Schedule meetings with managers in other departments to ask them about what their departments do and how HR can support their goals.
- Volunteer to be on an organizational task group set up to solve a significant business problem.
- Work with recruiting or IT to research, plan and initiate campaigns to recruit new employees using social media, including augmented reality and video branding.
- Start a business book discussion group with employees from across the organization.
- Participate in a temporary assignment in a department or workgroup outside HR.

- Research trends in your organization's industry, and evaluate how your business will be affected going forward; share your thoughts with managers outside HR, and ask for their thoughts.
- Focus on presenting ideas and solutions from a business perspective versus an HR perspective (e.g., citing results and return on investment, not personalities; making connections between employee behavior and business success).

Coaching and mentoring:

- Evaluate your weakest area in business, and seek a mentor who is an expert in that area to coach you.
- Pick your strongest area of business knowledge, and volunteer to coach someone in that discipline.
- Become a volunteer judge or advisor for organizations that help students network with local business leaders and develop business skills (e.g., DECA).

Professional and community activities:

- Join or attend events and meetings of chambers of commerce another business groups.
- Volunteer or join the board of a nonprofit to contribute your HR business knowledge and to learn from other business volunteers.
- Join and participate in groups relating to small business on social media sites such as LinkedIn.
- Network online with other HR professionals using the SHRM Connect platform.
- Volunteer to assist with student chapters of various business and HR organizations; see Rasmussen College's list of top professional associations for business students.
- Participate in external forums that discuss current government and regulatory issues and future trends, and think about how this information affects your work; get involved with organizations active in such matters in your industry (including HR, through the SHRM Policy Action Center).

Reading and research:

- Books:
  - *Developing Business Acumen (SHRM Competency Series: Making an Impact in Small Business) (SHRM, 2016)* by Jennifer Currence.
  - *Leading Your Business Forward: Aligning Goals, People, and Systems for Sustainable Success* (McGraw-Hill, 2013) by Shane A. Yount and John M. Pyecha, withAnna Versteeg, Seth Davies, and Linda Segall.
  - *Cracking the IT Code: Technology Management for Non-Technology Managers* (Indie Books International, 2015) by Anthony L. Butler.
  - *Predictive Analytics: The Power to Predict Who Will Click, Buy, Lie, or Die* (Wiley, 2013) by Eric Siegel.
  - *Business Literacy Survival Guide for HR Professionals* (SHRM, 2011) by Regan W. Garey.
  - *HBR's 10 Must Reads 2016: The Definitive Management Ideas of the Year from Harvard Business Review* (Harvard Business Review Press, 2016).

- Subscribe to magazines in areas related to your business or industry; see this list of free subscriptions.
- Listen to TED Talks on various business subjects.
- Attend business seminars and lectures outside of your organization, such as those hosted by chambers of commerce and business and trade associations.
- Read SHRM special reports and expert views to find out what thought leaders are saying about how to be successful in HR.

Educational activities:

Look for interactive opportunities in areas of business where your needs are greatest. Plan how you will apply what you learn.

- Pursue a formal degree in business or business subjects, offered by many colleges and universities.
- Consider a certificate (versus a degree) in financial management.
- Explore finance and accounting courses designed for nonfinancial managers (e.g., from Stanford and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton).
- Explore courses that help nontechnical managers understand technology (e.g., from companies such as Decoded).
- Check out courses in business operations, logistics and supply chain management (e.g., from associations such as APICS).
- Check out online courses in metrics, analytics and business indicators (e.g., from Duke).
- Attend American Management Association programs.
- Attend American Marketing Association programs.
- Check out free online marketing courses; see Word Stream's list.
- Attend SHRM conferences and events and online learning programs.

Phyllis Hartman, SHRM-SCP, is an HR consultant in Freedom, Pa. She is the author of several books for the profession, including A Manager's Guide to Developing Competencies in HR Staff (SHRM, 2017).

This article was previously published on August 8, 2019, in SHRM Certification Update.

COZEN O'CONNOR

Return to Work Post-Coronavirus Checklist

1. Planning and Communication

- ☐ **Decide the right time to reopen**
  - ☐ Monitor federal, state, and local closure orders, re-opening guidelines, industry practices, and geographic considerations (federal guidance)
  - ☐ If enrolled in the SBA Paycheck Protection Program, remember employers have until June 30, 2020 to restore full-time employment and salary levels for changes made between February 15 and April 16, 2020
- ☐ **Determine who should return to work first**
  - ☐ Identify essential business functions and essential employees
  - ☐ In determining essential employees, consider the nature of the job, the functions of the position and ability to return to work safely
  - ☐ Consider profitability of certain position to manage cash flow in the near term
  - ☐ Consider structuring a phased ramp-up to limit the spread of the coronavirus
  - ☐ Determine minimum staff necessary to sustain operations in the event of increased absenteeism
  - ☐ Evaluate whether seniority or recall rights are implicated, including furloughs
  - ☐ Remind all decision-makers in these decisions of nondiscrimination policies
- ☐ **Prepare communication to employees regarding return to work**
  - ☐ Establish a return to work timeline
  - ☐ Establish a plan for employees maintain communication with management
  - ☐ Identify and explain to employees steps taken to ensure safety
  - ☐ Review any applicable collective bargaining obligations to make changes to the workplace upon re-opening
- ☐ **Develop a written protocol for confirmed or suspected COVID cases**
  - ☐ Protocol should include at minimum:
    - ☐ Employees should not come into work if sick
    - ☐ Identify necessary notification procedure if symptomatic
    - ☐ Designate point(s) of contact for reporting and questions
    - ☐ Communicate with employees impacted by potential exposure
    - ☐ Identify remedial sanitization measures for impacted employee(s)
    - ☐ Identify triggering events for quarantine procedure
    - ☐ Establish the duration of quarantine and conditions for return
  - ☐ Assess reporting obligations under OSHA and state workers' comp. laws
- ☐ **Anticipate employee anxiety, rumors, misinformation, and plan accordingly**
  - ☐ Leaders should be visible
  - ☐ Communicate frequently with employees (low cost options may include anonymous surveys).
  - ☐ Respond to questions with the information currently available, even if the answer is "we do not know right now" in order to dispel myths and rumors
  - ☐ Remind employees of any existing Employee Assistance Programs
  - ☐ Consider providing additional alternative resources (*e.g.* counseling, working parent discussion groups, etc.) to help employees manage stress and anxiety
  - ☐ Prepare employer's response for possibility workers may refuse to work, simultaneously call in sick, strike or walkouts.
    - ☐ Train key management on protected concerted activity in a union and non-union setting

2. Workplace Safety

- ☐ **Review applicable OSHA and CDC standards**
  - ☐ Monitor local and federal guidance for best practices and requirements for employers (OSHA guidance, CDC guidance)
- ☐ **Take steps to make the workplace more safe**
  - ☐ To the extent possible, implement social distancing requirements, such as staggered shifts, breaks, spacing between desks and community areas
  - ☐ Limit in-person meetings in favor of virtual meetings where possible
  - ☐ Minimize physical contact (i.e. handshakes, cough etiquette, etc.)
  - ☐ Limit or close off gatherings in common areas (*e.g.* breakrooms or kitchens)
  - ☐ Intensify janitorial sanitation
  - ☐ Make efforts to increase air exchange in the building, if possible
  - ☐ Educate employees regarding best hygiene practices
  - ☐ Promptly respond to any safety related concerns
- ☐ **Consider whether face masks, gloves, or other protective equipment are mandatory or optional**
  - ☐ *If mandatory* - company must provide or reimburse employees for masks, gloves, and other protective equipment
  - ☐ *If optional* - determine whether employer will place any limitations or restrictions on employee created protective equipment or the type of masks, gloves, or protective equipment permitted
  - ☐ Ensure protective equipment does not otherwise pose a safety concern
- ☐ **Consider temperature checks and COVID testing for employees and/or visitors**
  - ☐ Results of temperature checks are a medical record and (if recorded) must be treated with appropriate confidentiality and recordkeeping
  - ☐ Consider whether screening time is compensable
  - ☐ Assess the feasibility and advisability of conducting employer paid Covid-19 testing for employees

- ☐ **Create a policy restricting non-essential employee travel**
  - ☐ Minimize non-essential travel for work
  - ☐ Consider how essential travel is defined
  - ☐ Consider mandatory notification of personal travel
  - ☐ Implement additional documentation requirements for employee movement to make contact tracing more effective and accurate
- ☐ **Assess changes to hiring and training processes required by social distancing obligations**
  - ☐ Train managers regarding "do's" and "don'ts" of pre-employment inquiries concerning medical conditions

3. Leaves of Absence and Workplace Accommodations

- ☐ **Teleworking issues**
  - ☐ Consider whether remote work is a necessary reasonable accommodation under the ADA or if a special accommodation is necessary for members of a vulnerable population.
    - ☐ For example, is there anything unique or special about the employee's concern for returning to the workplace?
    - ☐ Is the employee in a protected class or high-risk population because of age or underlying health condition?
    - ☐ Is the employee caring for an individual in a high-risk population?
  - ☐ Prepare a response to requests for continued remote work based upon the essential functions of the job
  - ☐ Protect data from cybersecurity breaches with a teleworking workforce
- ☐ **Train management team to ensure understanding of new leave options, eligibility and retaliation concerns**
  - ☐ Assess unused leave benefits available under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
  - ☐ Consider eligibility for additional leave available, including leave under the FMLA
  - ☐ Review applicable state or local paid sick leave laws and company vacation and sick leave policies
  - ☐ Ensure management understands any negative comments about use of FFCRA leave may support claims of retaliation
- ☐ **Flexibility in leave policies**
  - ☐ Consider new COVID policies relaxing preexisting leave policies that are explicitly intended to be temporary in duration
- ☐ **Openly communicate the company's policies and position on leaves of absence**
  - ☐ Create a clear process for requesting leave and identifying the amount of leave, if any, available

4. Employee Benefits and Compensation

- ☐ **Review whether any changes need to be made to health and welfare plans**
  - ☐ Determine whether employees returning to work will need to re-enroll or update prior plan elections
  - ☐ For cafeteria plans which may have offered individual spending accounts for a year, determine whether unused portions during an interim absence will be restored upon rehire
  - ☐ Determine whether any probationary periods apply during which a rehired employee will not be covered (for instance, Union benefit programs)
- ☐ **Evaluate whether returning employees owe any portion of health care premiums while furloughed**
  - ☐ Develop a reasonable plan for employee to pay back health care premiums, if necessary
  - ☐ Consider state and local laws regarding wage deductions
- ☐ **Consider potential issues relating to retirement / pension plans**
  - ☐ Determine whether employees returning to work will need to re-enroll or update prior plan pre-tax deferral elections
  - ☐ Review retirement plans and consider whether there has been a break in service and, if so, what the implications might be (vesting, for instance)
  - ☐ Evaluate the potential need for plan amendments to modify conditions for annual benefit allocations (*e.g.* minimum hours requirements)
  - ☐ Manage administration of plan loan program for returning workers (*e.g.* restart wage deductions for loan repayments)
- ☐ **Review employee compensation and bonus programs**
  - ☐ Determine if any changes to compensation must be made, and review applicable laws relating to notice of wage changes
  - ☐ Calculate the effect of closure on existing bonus or incentive plans

5. Employee Morale

- ☐ **Communicate Regularly**
  - ☐ Communicate the steps the company is taking to ensure safety
  - ☐ Remind employees of benefits offered
  - ☐ Request feedback and internalize it. Consider anonymous surveys as a low cost and effective mechanism to gauge what is working.
- ☐ **Address any health and safety concerns brought by employees promptly**
  - ☐ Aim to respond to specific employee concerns promptly
  - ☐ Establish a communication channels for employees to address concerns
- ☐ **Remind employees that discrimination and retaliation is strictly prohibited**
  - ☐ Review non-discrimination policies and recirculate, as needed
  - ☐ Train managers on how to respond to offensive or discriminatory comments regarding the coronavirus and certain groups of individuals

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On the Move

Congratulations to the following PHRA members on their recent achievements:

- **Shayna Robinson** has achieved her **SHRM-SCP certification**

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The Pittsburgh Human Resources Association offers many valuable networking and education programs throughout the year. Keep an eye on the PHRA online event calendar for a complete and up-to-date listing of all programs. Register for an upcoming event today!

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VIRTUAL Reopening the Workplace During & After COVID-19: Tackling Critical Legal Issues & Implement

May 19 | Learn
VIRTUAL The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Employment-Based Immigration & Compliance for Pittsburgh

May 20 | Network
VIRTUAL Lunch-Hour Networking Event!

May 22 | Learn
Attention Students & Soon-to-Be College Graduates! Learn to Navigate Job Searches in the COVID19 Era

May 27 | Learn
Mini-Virtual Conference

May 28 | Learn
VIRTUAL Negative Market Investing

June 2 | *Network
VIRTUAL Lunch-Hour Networking Event!

June 2 | Learn
People, Performance, and Data: Using Data Analytics to Improve Performance Management

June 3 | Network and Learn
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June 15 | *Network
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2020 Engaging Pittsburgh Awards Celebration

September 11 | Network
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Septemtber 15 | Learn
Creative Benefits to Attract Different Generations and Voluntary Benefits

October 6 | Learn
5 Qualities of Great Leaders

*Online Registration Coming Soon for this Event


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