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Dear HR Professionals,

The Pittsburgh Human Resources Association (PHRA) 72nd Annual Conference & Exhibition: The Power of the Past. Force of the Future! provides proven, comprehensive learning that will boost your professional and personal potential whether you are new to the HR profession, hoping to supplement your workplace experience with strategic and tactical education, or seeking to increase your competencies for career growth.

Change is happening all around us, and it is unstoppable. The role of HR will continue to evolve with a new set of challenges, a new market of tools, and an exciting new marketplace unlike anything we’ve seen in the past. Business Leaders will look to HR to help solve talent skill gaps and develop a strategic workforce strategy. Employees will rely on their HR Business Partners to create real-time development and growth opportunities.

Are you ready for these new challenges? Can you be uninhibited in your thinking, unconventional in your approach, unbiased in your implementation?

Absolutely – but that might mean getting out of your comfort zone. Get ready to think differently about Talent, Culture, Employee Reward and Wellness practices, Business Analytics and Metrics, Compliance, and Innovation.

With over 20 sessions that encompass the full scope of a well-rounded HR education, from business essentials to human resources innovations, you will be able to choose the sessions that provide you with the tools and resources you need to achieve your professional and personal goals.

Our exhibitors are industry experts and solution-providers who truly know what is happening in the world of HR and business. They have answers to many of your questions. As we all know, discovering innovative products and services is necessary to stay competitive in today’s business world.

The PHRA Annual Conference is a lot of learning packed into a short amount of time, so have fun, enjoy learning and let’s work together with the Power of the Past and the Force of the Future!

Regards,

Dr. Peter Gabriel, ACC
President, PHRA
CONFEREE HIGHLIGHTS

Live Interaction with Speakers & Attendees
Interact and ask questions to our speakers through a live chat experience. You’ll also be able to easily hop on video chat with other attendees and resource partners!

On-Demand Sessions
You’ll be able to watch all sessions on your own schedule, which means no having to pick and choose.

20+ Sessions
You’ll end up with pages and pages of notes with actionable tactics that you can apply immediately. Plus tons of strategies that you can share with your team!

Opening Keynote Day 1: Sabrina Saunders Mosby
Sabrina serves as President and Chief Executive Officer for Vibrant Pittsburgh, a premier economic development membership organization and the region’s central resource, spokesperson and convener on workforce diversity and inclusion issues for the past decade.

The Power of the Past. Force of the Future!
No matter how long you’ve been in HR or what position you hold, chances are that there is still something you want to learn.

Our comprehensive programs will help you overcome challenges or develop new solutions and help you make connections that will motivate and energize you.

Opening Keynote Day 2: Candi Castleberry Singleton
Candi is the Vice President of Diversity Partnership Strategy & Engagement at Twitter. She is also the founder of the award-winning Dignity & Respect Campaign, which has helped organizations create more inclusive work environments.
Most organizations have been doing some kind of harassment prevention training for more than 20 years with dismal results. Revelations of harassing and discriminatory behaviors kicked off by Harvey Weinstein and the MeToo movement and reports by the EEOC indicating continuing complaints filed are just the tip of the iceberg.

The training programs offered over the past did provide information to employees and managers about company policies and legal issues. They did tell people what not to do at work. They described negative consequences of perpetrators who got caught. But they failed to help employees understand about positive behaviors. Why?

In 1998 there were two Supreme Court Decisions, Faragher v. City of Boca Raton and Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth, that set the stage. These cases implied that organizations could mount an affirmative defense to protect them if they did training classes.

So training was developed based on a legal approach. It talked about victims and harassers as though employees could be labeled or categorized. As a result when people attended the training it was easy for them to avoid accepting that it applied to them. In addition, organizations not only didn’t change their cultures to support positive behaviors or reward people who spoke up, they didn’t charge all employees with responsibility for the workplace climate.

As HR professionals we need to find ways to make this training and development more effective. At a time when the business world is recognizing the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion to success, we need to make sure harassment and discrimination will not hamper our efforts.

A diverse workplace is one that includes a variety of different people, black, white, brown, young, old, and people with different gender identities and abilities all working together. Today cultural fit, means a culture open to helping many differences fit together rather than everyone thinking, looking or sounding the same. There is no room for negative, discriminatory or harassing behaviors.

In addition, research suggests that a lack of diversity and inclusion in the workplace can promote discriminatory behavior. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) concluded that harassment, which is a form of discrimination, is more likely to happen in the workplace with a lack of diversity. So these efforts need to be combined and we need to engage our employees in these activities.

Join me for It’s All About Respect – Influencing (not forcing) to Prevent Harassment at the PHRA, 72nd Annual Conference to discuss an approach that develops employees ability to better collaborate and communicate.
We will talk about helping employees understand that a respectful work environment will not just help the organization but will contribute to their personal success. We will consider how to encourage bystanders to stop and prevent harassment. And we will talk about rehabilitating employees whose personal unconscious bias has gotten them into trouble.

The key to a great inclusive workplace is one where ALL employees are valued, committed and engaged.

Phyllis G. Hartman, SHRM-SCP
President and Founder
PGHR Consulting, Inc.
pghr@pghrconsulting.com
At the PHRA conference in 2019, Aspirant presented on the emerging workforce trends that HR professionals should know to prepare for 2030. Little did we know that a global pandemic and a world-wide social movement would occur just six months later! While the future workforce trends have largely remained the same, the pandemic has accelerated our movement toward the workplace of 2030. Some of the largest shifts include:

- **Diversified Power** - The increasing power of people on the front lines who have access to the most up-to-date information on customers, suppliers, and community.

- **Omnipresent Workforce** - We leapt overnight from mandated office work to mandated work from home. This shift has accelerated the number of people who want, and can, work remotely. As this population increases, this workforce’s demands for freedom, flexibility, and autonomy will also increase and employers, having allowed freedom through the pandemic, will be hard pressed to justify a return to the old way of working.

- **Reputation Over Revenue** - How our organization shows up, and the reputation that we create with clients, customers, and partners is increasingly becoming a strong leading indicator of revenue and business success.

In addition, there is a renewed spotlight on the importance of the role of HR. Due to the dynamic nature of the pandemic and shifting policies, business leaders became reliant on their HR experts overnight. HR led the reaction and quickly became responsible for planning and preparation for what lies ahead. We provided unique insight into critical actions for the business, leading teams to implement practices immediately beneficial to the bottom line (e.g. safely opening the office).

Some might say that HR finally has a seat at the table; because there’s no way forward otherwise. Unless we actively work to secure this newfound positioning within the business, and continue to demonstrate the value of proactively engaging us as partners and utilizing our expertise, we run the risk of falling back into older patterns of behavior. The way we approach these trends moving forward may look different as new priorities and focus have risen to the top because of current events, and it is imperative that HR professionals are prepared to charge forward.

SHRM identified the nine competencies necessary for a successful HR professional. As part of our review of the research, we focused on how these competencies align with preparing for the workforce trends of the future. We are eager to present and align the competencies needed to position yourself best for the future. In addition, we will share practical and realistic ways for all HR practitioners to gauge where they are in regard to preparing for the future workforce, and provide next-day tools that can be put to use immediately following the session. We will differentiate strategies for both large and small businesses to ensure that every participant gathers relevant examples that they can immediately apply for success in the future. We hope that you will join us to learn, share, and build for the future!

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For years, organizations have spent billions of dollars on DE&I programs that have largely failed. But there’s something different going on now.

Disgusted and saddened by the May killing of George Floyd while in police custody, Jaime Irick wrote a letter about racism to his team of more than 6,000 employees at PPG. The executive explained how he learned about the subject from his Black father, who protested segregation in the 1960s, and how he would lead the unit in conversations about recent events.

As a result, discussions about the typically taboo subject sprung up all over at the Pittsburgh-based maker of paints and specialty materials.

“What surprised me was how many people wanted to tell their stories,” says Irick, PPG vice president, architectural coatings, U.S. and Canada. “There’s just a lot of people who are unaware [about racism].”

Tatiana Berardinelli was shocked when she heard Black colleagues describe being gripped by fear after being pulled over by police while driving, and others explain how they worried about their children’s safety when they left the house.

“These things never came to my mind,” says Berardinelli, PPG human resources director, global architectural coatings.

PPG already has a variety of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives, though it doesn’t break out statistics on people of color. Berardinelli says these conversations are different from PPG’s other DE&I endeavors.

“What we haven’t done before is have these open discussions and understanding of our colleagues’ experiences,” Berardinelli says.

It’s an emerging phenomenon in corporate America. “We’re talking about racism,” Berardinelli says. “We never talked about this before.”

**Empathy and Inclusion**

The formerly verboten topic is starting to be more openly and broadly discussed at companies all over the U.S. The hope is that by understanding what people of color endure, white people will become more empathetic and that understanding will eventually lead to more inclusion. Such honesty has been largely missing from failed diversity efforts that have cost billions of dollars. Companies are still pumping money into traditional exercises like unconscious bias training as part of their response to Floyd’s killing, which also included ubiquitous statements proclaiming that Black Lives Matter, donations to social justice organizations and promises of more diverse hiring.

But experts say the brutal and public nature of Floyd’s death has caused a reckoning that can lead to advances in
diversity if companies build on the moment with frank conversations about race. Companies are supplementing these dialogues with expert guest speakers, book clubs and websites with tools to help employees learn more about racism.

“People would say, ‘Black people exaggerated the race card’ because they couldn’t see it,” says Eric Ellis, president and chief executive officer of Integrity Development Corp., a West Chester, Ohio-based consulting firm. “Most people couldn’t believe the [George Floyd video] because it was so vicious. Now they can’t unsee it.”

Fostering productive conversations won’t be easy. Forty-three percent of American workers believe discussions about race are inappropriate at work, according to data from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

**The Right Response**

It’s crucial for leaders to discuss what happened to Floyd and others because their deaths remain on employees’ minds. “Silence is perceived as a lack of solidarity,” says Tina Shah Paikeday, global head of D&I advisory services at Russell Reynolds Associates, a New York City-based executive search and consulting firm. Shah Paikeday acknowledges that some executives may find it difficult to broach such sensitive topics. She advises them “to lead with vulnerability” and concede that unease.

The chief executive of Choice Hotels, Pat Pacious, asked his employees for their grace when he addressed them about Floyd’s death. “He didn’t know what to say, but he knew he had to say something,” says Corinne Abramson, the company’s national inclusion director. “It was more about listening.”

It’s unclear whether recent corporate efforts to shine a light on injustice are having any positive impact. While more than 80 percent of organizations have released or will release a statement to employees about racial injustice and protests, more than two-thirds of organizations (67 percent) have not gathered the thoughts of their workforce on those issues, according to SHRM data.

Some company pronouncements about racism sparked negative reactions that highlighted corporate America’s failure to create equitable workplaces. For example, after Floyd’s death, Morgan Stanley’s chief executive, James Gorman, promoted two Black women to senior roles and pledged $25 million to create a diversity institute at the investment bank. A few days later, Marilyn Booker, a former head of D&I and longtime executive at the bank, sued for systemic racial discrimination, alleging her budget was consistently cut and her efforts blocked. Only 2 percent of the bank’s senior executives are Black. The firm has pledged to fight the charges.

Meanwhile, JPMorgan Chase chief executive, Jamie Dimon, was photographed with several staffers taking a knee in front of a bank vault, prompting ridicule on social media that pointed out that the bank paid $24 million in 2018 to settle a racial bias suit brought by current and former Black employees. Only 4.4 percent of the bank’s executives are Black, the firm reports.
Executives at AssetMark Financial Holdings Inc. have been thinking about how to bolster the company’s commitment to DE&I and don’t want to make a knee-jerk decision, says Esi Minta-Jacobs, vice president of human resources at the Concord, Calif.-based money management firm.

“We want to make sure it’s impactful,” she explains. The firm is considering using its expertise in money management to start a financial literacy program for underserved communities, for example.

One initiative already in the works: a book club centered on racism to help white colleagues better identify with their co-workers of color.

“You can mandate diversity, but you can’t mandate inclusion,” Minta-Jacobs says. “Inclusion is about behavior, relationships. You have to change hearts and minds.”

**Disappointing Results**

Companies spend $8 billion a year on diversity training, according to consulting company McKinsey & Co. But experts say these organizations have little to show for it. Many have policies dictating that a certain number of women and people of color must be considered for all job openings and that interviewer panels must be diverse. Some employers have increased those numbers.

Overall, companies are better at hiring people of color than they are at promoting them, but hiring is still poor. White people make up 65 percent of entry-level jobs in corporate America while people of color represent 32 percent of those posts, according to a study by McKinsey and nonprofit LeanIn.org. The inequity increases with the power: White people account for 81 percent of vice president posts compared with 19 percent for people of color. Only 14 percent of C-suite positions are held by people of color, with women of color holding only 4 percent. White men hold 68 percent of C-suite positions, with white women accounting for 18 percent. There are only three Black CEOs in the Fortune 500.

The social unrest has been a powerful incentive for companies to bolster their diversity efforts, though there’s another powerful force sweeping America that could undermine those intentions: the recession brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of people have lost their jobs, and the downturn has taken an especially devastating toll on people of color. Many companies are struggling to stay afloat and may not have the financial or management bandwidth to dedicate to diversity programs. Others didn’t prioritize diversity even in good times. Less than half—47 percent—of companies in the S&P 500 had a chief diversity officer or similar post at the end of 2018, according to a study by Russell Reynolds.

There’s another potentially complicating factor: Vast amounts of employees are now working from home because of the pandemic, and it’s unclear whether that will impact the reinvigorated diversity efforts. Some suggest delicate conversations about race lose their impact in a virtual setting. Distance also makes it more challenging to forge meaningful mentoring and sponsorship bonds.
Shah Paikeday says companies have been more proactive about reaching out to employees and keeping them engaged while working at home. That mindset could help diversity efforts, she says.

Companies also are using more technology in their diversity efforts. For example, Comcast Corp. has been broadcasting talks with racism experts, including best-selling author Ibram X. Kendi (How to Be an Antiracist; One World, 2019), to its entire staff.

The bigger obstacle to achieving more diversity in the workplace is that companies are overthinking their approaches, says Pamela Newkirk, author of Diversity, Inc.: The Failed Promise of a Billion-Dollar Business (Bold Type Books, 2019).

“We treat diversity like we’re trying to hire diverse people from another planet,” Newkirk says. “If the boss says you have to do better, people will do better. You have to know your success is riding on it.”

**A Lack of Power**

The commitment must come from senior levels, and those leaders must ensure that it’s taken seriously. Having DE&I leaders isn’t enough unless they’re empowered by the C-suite to bring real organizational change.

Typically, however, DE&I leaders lack influence. “It’s often a marginalized role with high turnover,” Newkirk says.

Only 35 percent of chief diversity officers say they have employee demographic data, leaving the majority without necessary information to support their work, according to the Russell Reynolds report. It also found that DE&I often isn’t an integrated part of companies’ business strategy.

That runs counter to what’s good for profits. A 2018 McKinsey & Co. report found that organizations with diverse boards and executive teams were up to 35 percent more likely to financially outperform their less-diverse competitors.

“People just don’t believe it,” Ellis says. He maintains that executives’ tendency to put short-term gains in front of long-term strategy blocks them from prioritizing diversity. He also believes that unconscious bias plays a role in excluding people of color from the workplace.

Ellis is a fan of unconscious bias training, though detractors say that it can make white employees feel uncomfortable.

“You can’t solve it if you can’t admit it,” Ellis says.

Ellis adds that corporate America must prepare for difficult conversations if it’s truly serious about creating an equitable workplace.

Irick agrees and will be instituting unconscious bias training in his division.
“The majority of people doing the hiring aren’t minorities,” Irick says. “People in the majority may not be aware of their unconscious bias.”

**Transparency Is Key**

More companies are publicly disclosing their DE&I results to hold themselves accountable for change, even though the statistics advertise the homogeneity of the C-suite. In an open letter, Chip Bergh, president and chief executive of Levi Strauss & Co., wrote, “We pride ourselves on being a progressive company that takes bold stances to promote equity, justice and inclusivity all around the world—but the hard truth is that we have not always lived up to these principles internally.”

While 38 percent of the San Francisco-based clothing company’s total U.S. workforce is non-white, there are no Black individuals on its corporate board or among its executive leadership team. Only 2 percent of its top 250 executives are Black, while 16 percent are Asian and 6 percent are Latino.

Levi Strauss announced several ways in which it planned to bolster its diversity, including conducting anti-racism and racial equity training and launching a career path program next year for retail/distribution center employees who aspire to join the corporate team.

“Transparency is a good first step, though it has to be backed up with action,” says Tracy Layney, Levi Strauss’ senior vice president and chief human resources officer. “Programs don’t change unless there’s accountability.”

Many companies have what are commonly called employee resource groups as part of their DE&I efforts. They’re designed for groups of colleagues with similar backgrounds to come together, share experiences and support one another. At many companies, the groups created for Black employees are proving instrumental in trying to push DE&I efforts forward.

At a VMware Inc. event, LaTreece Butler-Morton shared how her husband didn’t want her and their teenage son to attend a Black Lives Matter protest because he feared for their safety. She says her husband, who has experienced police violence firsthand, only acquiesced when white family friends vowed to protect them if anything happened. “We had to plead with him,” says Butler-Morton, VMware’s director of product lifecycle operations management. “I wanted to support my son.”

Butler-Morton says she thinks that her white colleagues separate the Black people who have violently died in racist incidents as being somehow different from their co-workers. “By sharing, I wanted them to see that it’s all Black people that have fear, not just ‘those Black people,’ “ says Butler-Morton, who is a member of the African American POD, or “power of diversity,” community at the Palo Alto, Calif.-based software company.

A significant part of VMware’s effort in the aftermath of Floyd’s death was designed to ensure that its Black colleagues felt secure. The company created an intranet page that used the hashtag #wehearyou for them to share their feelings and concerns.
“We wanted to say, ‘We understand that you’re not OK,’ “ Butler-Morton says.

As part of the campaign, VMware has contributed to social justice organizations and will match employees’ donations. It has also instituted more training on inclusion for its managers, and now both a woman and a minority must be considered for any open position. Previously, only one or the other had to be included.

Only 3.2 percent of the company’s employees are Black. Tech companies are notoriously white and male, a homogeneity that stems from the white and male venture capital firms that finance them.

Shanis Windland, VMware’s vice president of diversity and inclusion, acknowledges the company’s need to improve its record.

“Black Lives Matter and coronavirus made people really think about how we’re not doing enough about diversity and inclusion,” Windland says. She adds that the company is committed to learning more about racism and will move to make more changes as it progresses. “This isn’t going to be one and done,” she says.

Consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is relaunching its version of employee resource groups, called Inclusion Networks, this year to give them a more formal structure so they can play a greater role in preparing diverse individuals to ascend the company ranks. The groups will now be a vehicle for training programs, including Path to Partnership, which is a three-year program that pairs promising executives with mentors and other forms of support to prepare them to become partners. However, this year PwC opted to double the time in the program for women and other minorities to ensure they get all the attention they need.

“We want to make sure they know they’re on the road to partnership,” says Shannon Schuyler, chief purpose and inclusion officer at PwC US. “We’re calling out where we want our diversity to be. We’re saying, ‘This is what your partnership class is going to look like.’ “

Theresa Agovino is the workplace editor for SHRM.
Worker classification issues surrounding gig workers came to the forefront with the passage of AB5 in California and the current pandemic situation. On the one hand, AB5 forces many California companies to classify gig workers as employees and provide them with the full array of benefits. Then on the other hand, the recent economic situation highlighted the vulnerability gig workers, who normally as independent contractors would be ineligible for unemployment compensation. However, the multitude of gig workers created the recognition of this exposure and the pandemic rescue legislation (CARES Act) gave them eligibility. As such, this issue is not just limited to California as other states are pursuing similar approaches.

So far, this issue has focused on an all-or-nothing situation. Is there a possibility for another alternate structure?

What is AB5?
This law created a new framework that results in many California gig workers no longer being classified as independent contractors. Companies conducting business in California protested and indicated that without the gig workers and their special status, they would not be able to compete and stay in business. The law is facing a November 2020 ballot challenge and many bills were introduced in California to either repeal or soften the impact of AB 5. Other states have enacted or are considering enacting similar laws.

Is there a workable third way of classifying workers in the gig sector that is appealing to employers?
Employers that use gig workers must be sufficiently agile to adapt to a new classification—one that could cause additional administrative duties but at the same time would save resources and create efficiencies. With change likely to come, employers should be reviewing their practices regarding independent contractors to ensure they are in line with AB5 now and preparing for legislative change. Employers must also be ready to adapt to a potential third way of classifying workers.

One possibility is legislation in California (SB 1039) that is intended to create a policy framework that facilitates independent work for those who voluntarily choose it by creating a third classification of workers with basic rights and protections relative to work opportunities. The rationale under this proposal is that an all-or-nothing answer does not work, is outdated, and is in stark contrast to the realities of the current labor market and the opportunities of the gig economy being a workable solution for all. This bill has not been widely accepted by most as a potential solution.

A potential structure would be a hybrid model that offers some protection for gig workers without creating employer issues with higher costs and compliance headaches. Consider the following concepts/structures:

- **Minimum wage** – What is the proper balance of hours worked and minimum pay to protect gig workers while not being overly costly for employers? Why not set the hours worked for a particular month at a
minimum threshold and once met, the contract value must be equal to a stated level of pay? This way, a gig worker would be entitled to some protections but not as far as a regular minimum wage.

- **Unemployment insurance** – If gig workers are going to become mainstream, then some type of funded program should be created that is triggered in the event that work is no longer available because of economic hardship. It does not have to be similar to a state or federal program as far as benefit level and length. Gig workers cannot have the same benefit levels as full-time employees. They also should share in the cost of funding this benefit in a manner similar to self-employment taxes – but at a state level.

- **Paid sick leave** – Similar to unemployment insurance, some level of protection can be provided for certain type of leave—such as care for spouse, child, parent, etc. This can also be funded as part of a gig worker contract. Under this scenario, the gig workers can pay for a part of the cost toward paid sick leave and if not used, can be paid out after a certain period of time. The employer could provide some seed funding or annual payment toward the fund. It does not have to mimic what a full-time employee is provided, as the goal is not to be 100% equivalent but to provide some level of safeguard protection.

- **Workers’ compensation** – A person injured on the job should be provided some level of protection. A similar type of program to paid sick leave can be created. However, for this benefit, an employer should pay the larger share of the cost. It does not have to mimic what a full-time employee is provided as the goal is not to be 100% equivalent but to provide some level of safeguard protection.

- **Medical/Rx benefits** – An employer could create an HRA type arrangement with designated dollars available that a gig worker could then use as he/she wanted. Employers do not want to provide all benefits that are readily available to full-time employees. The HRA could be accessed by a gig worker to pay for exchange level benefits – if the use of the HRA funding is better than a federal credit already in place.

- **Access to voluntary benefits** – Permit gig workers access to company provided voluntary benefits with direct billing options or similar pay arrangements. This way gig workers could access favorable rates and terms that otherwise would not be available.

- **Non-piracy agreements and other similar arrangements** – Gig worker contracts should contain employer rights provisions that protect a company and that is already in place for employees.
The 16th century philosopher Francis Bacon once observed that on many occasions “the remedy is worse than the disease.” And this would seem to be the case, at least when it comes to prescribing narcotics to treat workplace injuries, only to discover that the “cure” has surpassed the pain it was supposed to treat and becomes a major problem unto itself.

According to a survey by CompPharma, an industry group that seeks to control workers’ compensation spending, more than $1.5 billion was spent on opioids by workers’ compensation insurers in 2015, with prescriptions for injured workers’ accounting for 13% of total opioid pharmacy costs in the U.S. that year. Survey respondents cited opioids and addiction as their most pressing concern.

A separate study of 337,000 workers’ compensation claims in 25 states published last year by the independent Workers Compensation Research Institute found that 55-85% of injured workers who missed seven days or more of work received at least one opioid prescription. The report cited that one in 10 injured workers in Pennsylvania were prescribed opioids as treatment.

According to Dr. Leonard J. Paulozzi, a medical epidemiologist with the CDC’s National Center for Injury Prevention & Control, many work-related injuries occur to the back, for which doctors are increasingly prescribing opioids both short-term and long-term to address pain, despite broad medical recommendations against long-term use of such painkillers in back cases, according to Paulozzi.

Paulozzi backed his statements by citing guidelines from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and guidelines about to be approved by Washington’s Department of Labor & Industries, which address when opioids should be used, and how long they should be used for. “They notice in their past histories that 42% of workers with back injuries got an opioid prescription in the first year after injury – most of the time after the first medical visit,” Paulozzi said. “But one year after the injury, 16% of those workers were still getting opioids.”

He added, “In fact the recommendations really are just for use in more short-term situations with back pain. Opioids might be good for use in the acute phase, say within six weeks after injury. But if it doesn’t improve the situation in the short term, continuation is not really indicated.”

Most treatment guidelines in workers’ compensation now recommend opioids only for acute, post-surgical pain relief for three to seven days, ideally. They are not recommended for chronic, musculoskeletal pain, e.g., for pain lasting longer than three months. Providers must take responsibility for engaging their injured workers in an active pain-management process. It doesn’t have to be a formal program; it can be an agreement between doctor and patient. Doctors have to be ready for this responsibility if they prescribe opioids; it’s poor practice — and violates the physician’s imperative to “do no harm” — to prescribe something addictive if you are not able to assist the injured worker with the weaning process.

So what other steps can we take to corral this growing problem? Doctors following “Best Medical Practices” are the key. For each diagnosis there is a diagnosis code – ICD-10 – that medical providers must use to get reimbursed for services. For each diagnosis code, the American College of Environmental and Orthopedic
“Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.” — Marie Curie

As HR professionals, we know the unknown causes fear, doing something different causes fear, implementing change causes fear and fighting fear with FEAR (Facts, Education, Awareness and Resources) is what we do daily in our profession.

Attend this session to continue to fight fear with FEAR (Facts, Education, Awareness and Resources) and assist hiring managers, supervisors and leaders in our workplaces to learn and understand the truth (Facts), learn and understand the benefit (Education), learn and understand the insight (Awareness) and learn and understand the assistance (Resources) to hiring formerly incarcerated, people with disabilities and veterans.

“The FEAR Factor will help eliminate the false evidence that hiring managers, supervisors and leaders in our workplace have heard or were told that has caused them to not consider and hire people from this untapped resource.

The FEAR Factor will also help eliminate the false evidence about the impact in the workplace, the employee and consumer perception.

As HR professionals, let’s continue to fight fear with FEAR (Facts, Education, Awareness and Resources) and I look forward to seeing you in this session!

Janet K. Manuel, MS, SHRM-CP and PHR
2019 PHRA Past President – 2019
Director, HR & Civil Service and EEO/D&I Officer for the City of
Medicine has a best practices care plan. There are doctors that may not follow these guidelines. For example, for a severe sprain the guide states treatment should be an anti-inflammatory and three days of pain medicine. But some physicians will prescribe separate drugs for both parts, including an opioid, and dole out the medicine for a week rather than the three days. And a week may be all it takes for a worker to be addicted.

It is important to know that an alternative may be to use a heavier dose of Ibuprofen, which is actually both a pain relief and anti-inflammatory, and not addictive. Unfortunately, a doctor can make more money getting reimbursed for prescribing opioids than handing out a bottle of Ibuprofen.

About five years ago, I consulted for the SMC Business Councils, Independent Blues (a Philadelphia health insurance carrier) and several state legislators to help pass a bill to close a loophole in Pennsylvania’s Work Comp law that allowed doctors to be reimbursed at a much higher rate when dispensing from their office rather than a pharmacy. Today they are now capped at the same 113% of Medicare reimbursement rates.

Another step on the road to battling a cure that may not be working is to get claims adjusters involved. Claims adjusters have the responsibility to be on the lookout for opioid prescriptions and to make sure that providers are prescribing them within guidelines. Some claims adjusters have suggested the best approach to the opioid problem is to have a claims management system that alerted managers every time a new claim has an opioid prescribed. From there a plan could be put into place to make sure there was an understanding of the opioid treatment guidelines, including weaning the injured worker off the drugs at the appropriate time.

Still, there’s a long road to go before the problem of opioids in the workplace is alleviated. And a good chunk of the solution needs to start with the employer, starting with educating workers about how opioids work and the dangers of addiction. If a worker is injured, provide a strong social network ranging from co-workers right up to the top of the corporate ladder. Social networks can be extremely helpful in combating drug problems. And if the problem accelerates and treatment is necessary, it is important to educate the worker on options, including counseling and pharmaceutical treatment.

But in the end, the best way to help alleviate the problem of opioid addiction in the workplace, and by doing so prevent this ever-growing serpent from devouring the work comp system, is to start by cutting off the head. And in this case the head is nothing more than workplace safety. If you, as an employer, focus on doing what it takes to create a culture that stresses safety on the job, then you have automatically eliminated the first step in making sure your workers, should they be injured, return to work as happy and healthy as they were before the incident occurred. Because in doing so, you may not have only brought a productive worker back into the workplace, but you may have also saved a life.

The best approach to the opioid crisis is a team approach: providers, claims adjusters and injured workers working together to avoid opioid dependence and maximize recovery, restoration of function and lasting relief from pain.

David R. Leng, CPCU, CIC, CBWA, CRM, CWCA, is author of “The 10 Laws of Insurance Attraction,” “Turning Premiums Into Profits,” and “Stop Being Frustrated & Overcharged.” He is executive vice president of the Duncan Financial Group in Irwin, Pa., as well as an instructor for the Institute of WorkComp Professionals (IWCP) and can be contacted at david@davidleng.com.
How to Create a Change-Friendly Work Environment
By Coach Monique DeMonaco - Change Management Expert

During the best of times, in today’s globalized marketplace, investing in the development of your employees is critical to staying competitive. However, during the “new normal” with employees often working remotely, the increased uncertainty and the “new normal” actually changing daily, the need to create an environment that supports your employees is more important than ever!

Yet many business leaders have found that the investment in training and development was often wasted because employees failed to retain the new concepts, skills, and targeted behaviors. In fact, studies have shown that employees can lose up to 75% of the information they receive through traditional approaches to training and development.

However, when training and development programs are well designed, based in brain science, and use innovative approaches to adult learning (which is different from how children learn), they have a positive impact that ripples throughout the organization. This allows employees to adapt, innovate, and perform in ways that meet or exceed the company’s goals.

It’s one thing to understand how to achieve sustainable behavior change, but if you don’t create an environment that supports the change, it will not be sustainable. You’ll find your employees slipping back into undesirable behaviors, and your investment in their development will not achieve the desired results.

Think of this change-friendly environment as a foundation. You need it to support the subsequent phases in the behavioral change process.

The creation of a change-friendly environment begins with fostering a positive workplace, whether that is in the physical office or has shifted to an online format. One of the best ways to create a positive workplace is by empowering your employees. This is because empowered employees tend to be more committed learners, and committed learners are more willing to participate in training and absorb information. There are a few ways you can go about empowering your employees.

First, always remember to check your ego. If you can’t meet your employees where they are and earn their trust, you’ll never make it very far in your efforts to create change. Your employees should feel comfortable enough to come to you with any issues they might be having.

Next, try not to micromanage. When you micromanage your employees, you’re creating a negative environment full of stress, anxiety, and resentment. When your employees feel that you’re confident in them and their skills, they’re likely to perform better.

My third tip for empowering your employees is to delegate strategically. When you’re busy managing a team and trying to focus on all the tasks at hand, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. Your natural instinct is to pass items off to free up some of your own time. But by delegating without a strategy, you’re missing the opportunity to provide value to your employees. Challenge your direct reports by delegating tasks with thoughtful intention. If there’s a specific
employee that could benefit by completing a certain task, pass it to them, rather than handing it off mindlessly.

Lastly, don’t be afraid to encourage growth opportunities. It’s easy to get attached to employees, especially if they’re good ones. When you have favorites, it’s normal to want to keep them! You probably already treat them well and do everything listed above, but do you encourage them to go after growth opportunities? The last thing you want is for your employees to feel trapped in their job or believe their career growth has stalled.

All of these strategies will make your employees feel more empowered, engaged, and motivated to perform at their best. It can also increase their motivation to learn.

Another critical step in creating a change-friendly work environment is to ensure that the employee learning environment mimics the performance environment. Research shows when this is the case, employees are more likely to retain the new information they receive during training. Habits are acquired by incrementally strengthening the association between a situation (which functions as a cue to behavior) and a behavior.

Never underestimate the importance of harnessing organizational, peer, and supervisory support when it comes to creating a change-friendly environment. Employees who have the support of their colleagues and supervisors are almost always going to be more committed to developing and fostering new behaviors. If you ensure that the other supervisors within your organization are committed to reinforcing new behaviors and skills, the change is more likely to be sustainable.

Coach Monique’s innovative approaches and experience in providing high-quality Brain-Science and Emotional Intelligence based training and development allows her clients to experience rapid results to Unlock Bold Change™ within their organizations. You can find her online at www.coachmmonique.com or follow her on social media.

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This summer has been one filled with personal growth and learning not only for me but also for my family.

The murder of George Floyd, the “Karens,” the protests, watching “Just Mercy,” and reading Ibram X. Kendi’s book “How to Be An Antiracist” are just some of the things that have played a part in opening my mind and encouraging me to consider what my privilege as a white woman actually means.

I used to avoid conversations about race. In fact, I thought having those conversations was being racist. It made me uncomfortable, and I thought it would make others uncomfortable, so in my attempt to be inclusive, I was actually exclusive.

It wasn’t until I started reading “How to Be an Antiracist” that I realized I was doing just the opposite by not speaking up about and out against racism. By avoiding the topic of race, I was actually promoting racism. This realization sparked a change in my behavior and made me feel ashamed; however, it also made me take action. I took to my personal social media accounts to call out racism, address, and acknowledge my white privilege. I also donated financial resources for multiple social equality efforts.

According to a New York Times article published on January 20, 2020, (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/racism-african-americans-quiz.html), over 101 black teens reported more than 5,600 experiences of racism in just two weeks. In this same study, these teens experienced higher bouts of depression and anxiety than their white peers.

A research study conducted by the Urban Institute a few years ago sent actors with similar financial credentials to the same real estate offices to inquire about buying or renting a home or apartment. In the end, no matter their financial position, the actors of color were shown fewer homes than their white counterparts. (https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/06/17/192730233/for-people-of-color-a-housing-market-partially-hidden-from-view).

It can be hard for many people to see the role they play in statistics like these and in the hold racism has on our society.

“I have black friends/family members.” (This is me, spot-on, I have two nephews who are bi-racial)

“I voted for Obama.”

“I donate money to (fill in the blank).”

Much of the reason racism is so culturally pervasive and normalized is that people do not acknowledge their implicit bias—the assumptions and attitudes they subconsciously hold—and instead focus on what’s more comfortable, like the statements above. Often, we don’t see our actions or comments as being offensive, negatively impactful, or, quite simply, a “big deal.” Not understanding or wanting to understand microaggressions is a root cause of perpetuating racism.
Many white people can’t appreciate how many times a day, a person of color experiences a microaggression. For example, when was the last time a white person was followed by a security guard in a mall? Or as a white woman, have you ever clutched your purse or crossed the street when you saw a black man approaching you? Did you ever suggest that a black person was good at dancing or basketball because of the color of their skin? Growing up, did any of your teachers expect you to not be as smart as or to behave more poorly than the other kids in your class because of your skin color?

A former white colleague of mine used to do something many of you have probably witnessed. He would call black men who waited on him in restaurants “brother.” I would cringe every time I heard him say it, yet, I never spoke up to explain to him why it was offensive.

His actions were wrong, but my lack of action was another important part of the puzzle. It’s essential to not only understand what a microaggression is but also to be willing to call them out when you see or hear them happen.

So, what have I learned to do differently since becoming more aware of my white privilege?

My six learning lessons this summer as a white woman are:

1. **Be deliberate about actions and words.** What you are not saying is as equally as important as to what you are saying. Not speaking out against racism is as bad as keeping silent. Stop being afraid to talk about racism.

2. **Question your inner thoughts and built-in stereotypes.** Admit that you have carried around biases and racism without realizing it. Don’t be afraid to admit that you may have thought or said racists things—it doesn’t make you a bad person; it just means you weren’t educated.

3. **Reflect on your own privilege and where this has gotten you in life.** Don’t use the excuse that hard work is all you need to be successful and ignore the fact that people of color have to work twice as hard to prove they are just as intelligent and hardworking as their white counterparts. Understand that “white privilege” doesn’t mean you’re guaranteed life of privilege. It means that being white is a privilege. Your skin color isn’t something you have to overcome.

4. **Be the change.** If you see injustice, step up, and figure out how you can be an advocate for change. Can you donate your time or financial resources to help promote social justice and equality in your community?

5. **Educate yourself so you can educate the next generation and others.** Research racism in the United States. Read books, watch documentaries, listen to podcasts, or watch movies that will help to educate you on why racism still exists and how to stop it in the future. Become familiar with terms such as “unconscious bias and microaggression” and then think about how they apply to you.

6. **If you hear something, say something.** If you hear a colleague, friend, neighbor, or anyone in your community say something racist or state a microaggression, point out why it is racist or how it could be perceived. Correct your
children if you hear something—kids pick up racism at school and through social media. Make sure you take every opportunity to educate the next generation.

References


We recently had the opportunity to interview 11 CEO’s from a variety of organizations and industries as part of our new webcast series, The Leadership Café. We were interviewing these “extraordinary people leading remarkable businesses” to discover how business and community leaders are addressing the disruptions of the global pandemic and racial justice and equity while creating new opportunities for their enterprises. Beyond having a blast, we learned a lot.

Concurrently, we are also collaborating with our colleagues at Denison Consulting to conduct research on employees’ reactions to their company’s responses to the pandemic. We currently have results from 36 organizations from around the world, in 18 different industries, with over 15,000 respondents. The overall results were surprisingly positive and offer some valuable lessons into organizational culture and its impact on an organization’s ability to bounce back, bounce forward and pivot quickly.

Both experiences provided an in-depth picture of how the world of work is dramatically shifting . . . and specifically what the change means for leaders at all levels. Here’s a summary of some of the biggest take-aways and what they mean for talent management professionals.

**Strategy-critical leadership competencies are changing.** Some leaders handled the pandemic challenges with aplomb. Others floundered to find their footing or froze in place. The difference was having the critical skills that allow leaders to be flexible and adaptable, to handle complex situations and decisions, and to create the new and different. One CEO commented that she was glad that she had spent the years prior to the pandemic and George Floyd’s murder working on building these capabilities in her team. Otherwise, they may not have responded as effectively. Talent Management needs to identify the skills that are drivers of organizational change and resilience and integrate the skills into selection, promotion and development processes.

**Learning Agility is the new growth hormone.** No matter their skill level prior to the crisis, some leaders that made a difference were able to navigate these never-before-seen challenges, learn new skills on-the-fly from the experience and then apply the new skills to a new event. This ability to effectively learn from experience is called Learning Agility and has been shown to be the best predictor of future potential. Talent Management should add Learning Agility to their repertoire of tools by assessing agility in hiring, evaluating learning agility in talent reviews and helping leaders to intentionally learn from everyday work experiences and assignments.

**It's time for a talent review.** If you haven’t done a review of your organization’s talent recently, now’s the time. If you’ve never done talent reviews before, your leadership team will be amazed and grateful for the strategic insights it provides. Challenges facing leaders have changed and, as we’ve noted above, the skills leaders need for the future have changed. As part of workforce planning, Talent Management should facilitate robust talent discussions based on a new set of leadership competencies and an upgraded definition of potential (see Learning Agility above) to assure that the organization has the talent needed for the new decade of
Focus on Self-Directed Leadership Development. Leaders may not go the way of bank tellers in the new economy but our old methods of developing leaders need to adapt quickly. Leadership Development retreats, workshops and classes have disappeared during the pandemic . . . but leaders continued to learn new skills. That’s because critical leadership skills are not acquired from instructor-lead learning and development. The skills are developed through intentional development that is self-directed. Talent Management needs to shift the investment away from event-based development, to build processes that are mass-customized for individual leader’s specific needs and to build development into day-to-day work or assignments supported by regular feedback, coaching and reflection. In other words, focus on Self-Directed Leadership Development.

Much of work life will never be the same after 2020. HR is going to have to adjust almost every talent management process to match the changing world of work. Successful leaders’ thirst to learn and Human Resource professionals should be at the center of ensuring that this best talent is getting all they need to drive business success.

Richard Citrin and Michael Couch are co-authors of *Strategy-Driven Leadership: Your Playbook for Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* published by Taylor & Francis in 2020.
The 9 Faces of HR: A Disruptor’s Guide to Mastering Innovation and Driving Real Change by Kris Dunn is a guide to hiring the ideal HR professional for your organizational needs. Dunn is currently chief human resources officer for Kinetix, a national RPO/recruiting firm based in Atlanta. As an HR professional, Dunn is a master of thinking outside-the-box in terms of solving modern day HR problems and has been at the helm of such blogs as the HR Capitalist and Fistful of Talent as their founder and editor-in-chief.

By combining the consulting world’s 9-box grid and HR’s performance management model, illustrating how to analyze performance vs. potential, this book defines nine “faces” of HR on an individual’s abilities and aptitudes in four distinct areas – cognitive ability/processing speed, assertiveness, rules orientation, and detail orientation. By analyzing an individual’s abilities in these four areas, it is suggested that you will be able to assess an HR professional’s ability and willingness to innovate, drive change, and add incremental value to any organization.

Dunn is notoriously candid in his praise and criticism of HR. This book is no different. A humorous, entertaining and often self-deprecating read, each chapter begins with a quippy quote. These quotes range from modern literature to song lyrics and set the tone for each chapter. What follows is not only a useful tool to assist in hiring the best HR person for your needs, but a mirror – a way to take a long hard look at yourself in how you fit into your organization, often providing insight into your strengths and weaknesses with a harsh light.

Before finally introducing us to the nine “faces”, Dunn discusses how modern HR requires a marketing mindset in terms of recruiting marketing, culture branding, recognition and corporate social responsibility. If you want to attract innovative and suitable talent for your organization, you need to market what you do effectively and suggest that, if you don’t like the answer, then you must change the questions.

The book divides each of the nine “faces” into three general career levels – senior level, mid-career, and early career. The top right box or “The Natural” is the ideal location on this grid, suggesting both stellar leadership abilities and a strong ability to innovate and drive change. “The Natural” is a unique and beautiful snowflake, a unicorn, if you will and often does not rise through the ranks of HR but is plopped into the position by the powers that be, and thrives. “The Mentor” and “The Judge” also reside in these top ranks. While suggesting some personas might be more effective than others, Dunn makes it clear that no one face is good or bad. Each of the nine “faces” has its rightful place in the ranks and balance is the key to an effective HR department.

As HR professionals, we are aware that job titles can be ambiguous. This book can serve as a guide to creating proper job postings, attracting the ideal HR person by providing an accurate portrayal of the work needed. It could be adapted to serve other departments in assessing their strengths and weakness. And, most importantly, can serve as a tool to provide insight into your own career. Which box do you fit in? The answer might surprise you.

The 9 Faces of HR: A Disruptor’s Guide to Mastering Innovation and Driving Real Change
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Congratulations to the following PHRA members on their recent achievements:

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- Maritza Cox has achieved her SHRM-SCP certification
- Natasha Molina has achieved her SHRM-SCP certification
- Valerie Nance has achieved her SHRM-SCP certification
- Cassandra Olivio has achieved her SHRM-CP certification
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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