



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

### Don't Bring Me Down!

Every workplace has its fair share of slackers and goof-offs, but it's what an employer does with those employees that solidifies its corporate culture as one of high or low performance.

Employers that ignore low-performing employees risk more than just productivity. In an article titled, "[Study: Beware 'Toxic' Influence of Low-Performers](#)" on the *Society For Human Resource Management's* website, research found that low-performing employees hurt overall morale and increased their co-workers' workload. Furthermore, innovation and motivation are stifled and mediocrity is deemed acceptable.



What may be of most concern is that a mere 60% of survey respondents looked at their co-workers and would rehire them. Their motto should have been: we may hire the best, but we keep the rest.

Successful companies know how to weed out their weakest links, while rewarding and retaining high-performing employees. They know that employees who perform poorly can cause high-performing employees to seek jobs elsewhere. Successful companies are able to identify their best employees, then they establish incentives, opportunities, or other ways of ensuring they stay.

So, how do you identify the best, or even the best of the best? It's not as easy as it may seem. These are the top 10% to 15% of the organization. A company must first determine a set of guidelines that mark an employee as a high performer. Once the guidelines are in place, observation of these employee traits should be done in order to ensure uniformity and that the guidelines were set correctly.

Now that a company knows what it expects in its employees, it's time



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## EMPLOYER WEBINAR

**Dollars & Sense: Health Plan Affordability for Applicable Large Employers**

to announce that to everyone so that they either know they're doing the right things, or can make a plan for improvement. At the same time, employers should conduct surveys on employee satisfaction. Their focus should be on their top performers and what makes them happy.

Plenty of data should be collected regarding the criteria that not only make an employee a top performer at the company, but also what he or she prefers in terms of job satisfaction. Going forward, this data should be matched to potential recruiting candidates for new positions. In addition, surveys that measure the quality of a new hire (i.e., whether the recruiter hired the right candidate) should be completed at predetermined intervals of three, six, nine, or 12 months.

In jobs where there is high demand and lots of attrition, correctly recruiting and retaining the best performers could be the key difference in a company's success.

Applicable large employers (ALEs) are required to provide affordable health coverage to their full time employees. Affordability is considered to be no more than 9.66% of an employee's household income. In addition to multiple safe harbors that an employer can use to make its affordability calculations, affordability can be impacted by wellness programs, opt-outs or cash waivers, flex credits, and health reimbursement arrangements (HRAs). Employees that are offered affordable health coverage are ineligible for an advance premium tax credit or subsidy in the Marketplace. This webinar will discuss all the factors that impact affordability, how employers can calculate affordability, and best practices on selecting an affordability safe harbor.

This webinar will:

- Explain what is considered "affordable" and how affordability is calculated
- Discuss the three affordability safe harbors (W-2, federal poverty level, and rate of pay) and how they are calculated
- Explain when certain affordability safe harbors cannot or should not be used for a particular employee population and discuss best practices for selecting and documenting affordability safe harbors
- Explain how wellness program incentives and penalties impact affordability
- Explain how HRAs may impact affordability, depending on their design
- Provide information on the difference between a conditional opt-out waiver and an unconditional opt-out waiver, and how they impact affordability
- Discuss flex credits and

## TECHNOLOGY

### Top Talent Prefers Being Recruited Via Their Mobile Device

If you haven't noticed, newspapers are shrinking in size. Fewer people, especially the younger demographic of 18- to 40-year-olds, read them and this especially applies to when they're searching for jobs. Employers who continue to use only the older methods of recruitment -- classified ads and job boards -- may not attract the most coveted applicants due to them not seeing the posting, or worse, feeling that the company looking to fill the position is old-fashioned and not technologically up to date.

According to an article on the website of *Society For Human Resource Management* titled, "[The Most Sought-After Talent Prefer Mobile Recruitment](#),"

almost 70% of applicants labeled as "high-potentials" were attracted more to companies with mobile recruiting options versus just over 50% of other applicants. Another comparison of high-potentials shows that about 75% use mobile devices when searching for jobs while only 40% of other potential employees do.



Because most people tend to do everything on their tablets or smartphones, it makes sense that searching for a job would just be another addition to that list. The article bears that out, noting that convenience is one of the primary reasons that high-potentials do this. Besides convenience, another benefit noted is that information can be obtained quickly via mobile device and high-potentials can respond faster to job postings.

The article states that everyone, at some point, will use a mobile device when job hunting, but those who are high-potentials take it to the next level. Everything from researching companies, receiving job

alerts, filling out job applications, and even taking assessments was more likely to be done by a high-potential candidate on a mobile device. Furthermore, high-potentials were nearly two times as likely to prefer text messages and communication through social media (e.g., LinkedIn).

So, what's the message to employers? If you want to attract top talent, then you must utilize mobile recruiting. Employers can build such a program by integrating all their job search functions, such as listings, applications, assessment tests, etc. on a mobile platform. They also need to make it simple and streamlined. As the article states, you don't want a candidate who's a high-potential to skip through your job recruiting process due to frustration.

## WELLNESS

### Business Travel Is Seldom Done Leisurely

To quote singer Warren Zevon, "I've been to Paris and it ain't that pretty at all." Many people often think of business travel as a "free vacation" or that it's all champagne and caviar (and if it is for you, I want to know where you work), but the reality is that it's often very stressful. An article titled "[Six Tips to Reduce Stress While Traveling for Business](#)" on *Forbes'* website details the common causes of travel-related stress and what you can do about them.

Basically, according to the article, there are three main areas that can cause stress -- lost time, unforeseen events, and a new routine. The first one, lost time, is one that most likely affects people the most. I don't care how efficient you may be, whether you are the best multitasker in the world, or if you are constantly connected via mobile device, there is always work that needs to be caught up when you return from a business trip. Some things just can't be accomplished when you're away from the office.



The next stressor, unforeseen events, rarely happens, but when it does, it's definitely a major issue. You're trying to get somewhere and then a flight is delayed, your rental car breaks down, your luggage is lost, or you miss a connection. All these affect your well-planned schedule causing you to freak out.

Finally, there's a disruption from your normal day-to-day routine. If you're a creature of habit, then be prepared to have your world turned upside down. Obviously, your diet, exercise, and sleep regimens will be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. This added stress, combined with the potential lack of sleep and unhealthy diet, has now affected your immune system, making you more susceptible to the awful germs that are lurking in airplanes and hotel rooms.

Want to throw a wrench into these three main areas of stress? Travel internationally. Besides the added effect of jet lag, research has found that it takes anywhere from six to 11 days for a person's body to return completely back to the way it was before leaving on the trip. Oh, and

provide information on how they impact affordability

- Provide best practices on employee education of what "affordable" means and the impact on employee, their spouse, and dependents, in relation to subsidy eligibility

This 90-minute beginner to intermediate level webinar will help employers understand the requirements of offering affordable health coverage.

[Register here](#) for the webinar. The presentation slides will be posted on the [UBA website](#) the day before the webinar.

#### About the Presenter

[Kathleen R. Barrow](#) is a Principal in the Rapid City, South Dakota, office of Jackson Lewis P.C. She has designed welfare benefit plans and executive compensation arrangements, and has counseled sponsors and administrators of these types of plans, for 15 years.

Ms. Barrow has appeared on behalf of clients before the national offices of the United States Treasury and the Department of Labor Employee Benefit Security Administration.

Ms. Barrow actively participates in national coalitions of counsel that assist employers in defending audits of welfare and pension benefit plans. She advises clients and counsel across the country with regard to defined contribution arrangements that provide post-retirement health benefits to employees.

While attending law school, Ms. Barrow was a Managing Editor of the *Oklahoma Law Review*. After law school, Ms. Barrow clerked for the Honorable David L. Russell, Chief Judge for the United States District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.

you can also add the risk of deep vein thrombosis, which can develop from sitting for long amounts of time on those international flights.

Now that you know the most likely culprits that trigger stress on a business trip, what can you do about them? Like any good Boy Scout will tell you, be prepared. When you're running down your packing checklist (you do have a checklist, right?), make sure you include things that won't be at your destination. For example, computer files, mobile Wi-Fi access, phone chargers, batteries, etc.

Speaking of packing, try to pack smart. That means bringing only carry-on bags if you're able so you won't have lost luggage and wasted time hanging around the baggage claim area. Remember to check the weather and bring appropriate clothing. Travel light and efficient by packing travel-sized bathroom items and only the clothes you'll need, but your wardrobe should be versatile in case you get a stain or there's no iron at the hotel.

When you book your flight, rental car, hotel, etc., try and make your itinerary as stress-free as possible. That means to confirm the location of your hotel, fly into the best airport, which may or may not be the closest, and fly nonstop if possible to eliminate the possibility of missed connections and lost luggage. If you have to take a connecting flight, give yourself a reasonable amount of layover time. Nobody likes to wait longer than they have to at an airport, but would you rather schedule an extra hour of layover, or risk missing your next flight due to delays?

This almost goes without saying, but be comfortable when you travel. This includes clothing, bringing your favorite book, magazine, music, and snacks, and even taking a travel pillow if you're so inclined. Try to exercise by walking briskly and stretching, and eat sensibly. Finally, file that expense report immediately so you're not worried about any out-of-pocket costs.

Whew! You're back home, all is well, and you can relax and unwind. Time to take a vacation!

## Certification

This webinar event has been submitted to the [Human Resource Certification Institute](#) to qualify for 1.5 recertification credit hours.

## IN BRIEF

### Do You Need New Clothes?

When it comes to business fashion, my two favorite quotes are "Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society." by Mark Twain and "You cannot climb the ladder of success dressed in the costume of failure." by Zig Ziglar. But do clothes really make the man (or woman)?

In an article on *The Huffington Post's* website titled, "[How Clothing Choices Affect and Reflect Your Self-Image](#)," there's a phenomenon scientists call "enclothed cognition," which means that the style of what you choose to wear can both reflect and affect your mood, health, and overall confidence. In other words, you're not just presenting an appearance to others, but you're also getting some of the characteristics of what you wear whether you realize it or not.

Take, for example, a simple doctor's lab coat. In a study, researchers found that people wearing that coat, versus a painter's coat or no coat at all, had increased attention and sustained it longer. Another example is that when people put on casual clothes, they tend to feel more relaxed. In today's world of a corporate casual environment, this is important to note.

Does that mean you need wear a fancy dress or a suit and tie? No, but it does mean that what you wear should still look professional and stylish. Apple's co-founder, the late Steve Jobs, accomplished this by often wearing a black turtleneck and jeans. It was casual, yet made

a statement.

The right clothes can be empowering. Think of the uniforms that are often worn for a particular profession and the effect it has on the person wearing it as well as those around him or her. This same principle applies to the general workforce -- even if people work from home. While you could sit around in a bathrobe or yoga pants, or come to the office in a T-shirt and baggy jeans, it's more effective to raise your game. You'll not only elevate your status in the workplace, but you'll also elevate your confidence.

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