



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

### Money Can't Buy Happiness, But A Promotion Can

The O'Jays had a song "For the Love of Money," which was popularized as the theme song to the TV show "The Apprentice" and its spinoffs, and Pink Floyd sang, "Get a good job with more pay and you're OK" in their song "Money." Yet, according to a recent survey in the article titled, "[Employees prefer promotions to raises](#)," in *Employee Benefit News*, almost two-thirds of people prefer a



job promotion over an increase in their salary. Wait, what?!

As difficult as it may be to believe, money isn't as important as getting recognition. In fact, when you consider that an employee's salary is just compensation, a promotion is just as much a compensatory action as receiving a raise. This begs the question, what makes you come to work every day? Is it that you get paid, or that you get satisfaction from a job well done and are acknowledged by your peers?

Also, while an employee might receive an annual raise, it takes a few years to earn a promotion. This makes the promotion more valuable and, therefore, more desirable. Consequently, if an employee is passed over for a promotion, he or she would be motivated to determine why that happened. Whereas, if that same employee didn't receive an increase in their pay, they may or may not care as much.

Another benefit of a promotion over a pay raise is what you can do with it. Let's say that an employee is making \$50,000 at their job. A raise of two percent would yield an additional \$1,000 before taxes take a bite out of it. That money could be spent on a new TV, a vacation, or even add to a retirement fund, but a promotion can provide much more job



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satisfaction in return depending on what it entails regarding responsibilities and any increases in corporate power or influence.

When all is said and done, employees need to weigh all the potential benefits of being recognized and compensated for doing their job well. Depending on their situation, both in work and home life, a promotion may be just what's needed to make a good employee stay rather than look for elsewhere to be appreciated.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Technology Isn't Always the Solution

If you're a fan of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," then you know it has both technology and a captain who says, "engage" a lot. However, technology and engagement in the workforce don't always mix. Technology, no matter how useful, can't actually do something. It's just a tool, albeit a good one, that employees can use to foster improved engagement.



Since employee engagement is the latest trend in corporate culture, many companies are searching for ways to boost it, and are turning to technology as the wonder drug that will fix everything. In an article titled, "[Why technology isn't making employees more engaged](#)," on the website of *Employee Benefit News*, it notes that the problem with that type of thinking is that employee engagement occurs due to a multitude of factors such as corporate culture, the relationships employees have with their managers and peers, salary, benefits, opportunities for advancement, etc.

Technology enables employees to be more productive in what they do and can certainly help them to be more engaged. What it can't do is motivate employees to be more engaged. That's up to real human beings who know what incentives drive their employees to action. If you force something on employees, no matter how good it may be, if the employees don't want to do it, then they won't or they'll do it in such a way that the company won't get the best results.

An excellent way to get employees active is to start from the top down. If senior management is engaged, then most employees will follow their lead versus if one of their peers was engaged in the same thing. For example, you want to implement company-wide fitness trackers. Your peer comes to you wearing one and says it's the greatest thing. You might be excited, but you may also be apathetic. Now, imagine the same scenario, but it's the CEO or your immediate supervisor who says this while proudly wearing their device. You would most likely rush to HR and ask how you can get yours immediately.

Another way to get employees active is to make it convenient. With regard to technology, that means making it mobile rather than tying the product or software to someone's workstation. The more mobile-

## EMPLOYER WEBINAR

### What Employers Need to Know about the Medicare Secondary Payer Rules and the CMS Data Match Program

Tuesday, February 14, 2017  
2:00 p.m. ET / 11:00 a.m. PT

Medicare Secondary Payer (MSP) describes the situation when the Medicare program does not have primary payment responsibility for paying a claim. Employers with group health plans are greatly impacted by the MSP rules depending on their size. This webinar will help employers understand their responsibilities under the MSP provisions and best practices when completing the CMS Data Match report.

This webinar will:

- Review the basics of Medicare Secondary Payer
- Provide information on the penalties for violating MSP rules or for failing to complete the CMS Data Match questionnaire
- Discuss the requirements under MSP for employers with fewer than 20 and with 20 or more employees, including how to count employees and determine employer size
- Discuss who is primary or secondary payer in common situations when Medicare and other health insurance or coverage may be present
- Describe how to identify those individuals to whom the MSP requirement applies
- Discuss the choices an employee is free to make when deciding between Medicare and a group health plan

friendly the technology, the more employee engagement it's likely to garner. And for remote employees or ones who travel most of the time, mobile-friendly technology is an absolute must if you even want a chance for them to be engaged.

Remember that technology is just one step on the way to getting employees fully engaged and there are many other methods, both high-tech and low-tech, of accomplishing this. Technology is the easy, go-to solution and the bright shiny model that might initially attract employees, but it's not a cure-all.

## WELLNESS

### Get Serious About Fitness and Weight Loss

Are you into fitness? Yeah, fit'n dis slice of pizza into my mouth. If your New Year's resolution was to get fit and lose weight, then I've got some news for you. If it were easy, everyone would do it. The problem is that everyone *tries* to do it, especially right after the holidays, but fails miserably. If you've gone to the gym recently, then you know everyone and their cousin is crammed into the aerobics area, spin class, or waiting to use the treadmills, ellipticals, bicycles, etc. So, what's a person to do who's truly serious about getting fit and losing weight?



An article on CNN's website titled, "[How to keep your New Year's fitness resolution from failing](#)," reveals that a study has shown nearly one out of four people has made a resolution to increase fitness and activity, yet 67 percent of people in their 20s and a whopping 84 percent over 50 didn't meet their fitness goals. Don't be one of those people! Make fitness social, assign deadlines to your goals and commit to them, have fun, and, like an ad for Nike says, "Just do it!"

Not everyone works out the same way, has the same goals, or uses the same motivation to stay committed. That means you're free to choose what works best for you. One potential way to stay engaged is to join a group, class, or club. That way, if you don't show up to work out, then you may feel that you're letting down the rest of the team. Another way is to pay in advance, or even hire a personal trainer. By not using those workout sessions, then you may feel you're wasting money. Once you determine the best solution to keep you active, it's time to quantify results.

Goals are nice, but if I were to say that my goal was to spend 30 minutes in the gym three days a week, I could accomplish that, but hardly do any activity at all other than talking to people there. What you need are measurable numbers such as losing a certain amount of weight, running so many miles, or slimming down to a specific size of clothing. Once you've determined a number, specify a difficult, but attainable, deadline. Losing 10 pounds is easy if you have an entire year in which to do it. To help you measure your progress, you can

- Discuss the limited circumstances in which certain employers can reimburse Medicare supplements for employees
- Discuss best practices to ensure that a plan does not discriminate against employees and employees' spouses age 65 or over, people who have permanent kidney failure, and disabled Medicare beneficiaries for whom Medicare is secondary payer
- Discuss best practices regarding information needed to accurately complete and timely submit Data Match reports on identified employees

This 60-minute intermediate level webinar will help employers understand Medicare Secondary Payer rules and CMS Data Match reporting.

#### Registration

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

#### About the Presenter

**Tabatha George** is an associate in the New Orleans office of Fisher Phillips. She specializes in employee benefits, including retirement and welfare plans and healthcare reform. She has particular expertise in Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, data breaches involving health information, and the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

#### Certification

This webinar event has been submitted to the [Human Resource Certification Institute](#) and the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) to qualify for one recertification credit hour.

keep a log, enter data in an app, or purchase a FitBit or other wearable device that keeps track of your activity.

All of this may still not be enough to keep you from quitting early. A comedian once said that she doesn't run because, "have you ever seen a runner with a smile on her face?" If the exercise or diet routine you're doing isn't fun, then stop doing it and find something that is. With the plethora of options available these days, there's no reason not to find something that makes you happy while you're doing it while on your way to keeping that New Year's resolution.

So, you're having fun and you're making progress, but watch out for injuries. If you're just dieting, make sure you're still getting all the nutrients your body needs. Starving yourself or using a fad diet that neglects essential vitamins can cause more harm than good. If you're exercising, there will always be aches and pains associated with it as long as you're pushing your limits. The problem is when mild discomfort turns into a serious injury. If the pain causes you to alter normal day-to-day activities, or doesn't go away after a few days, then it may be time to scale back your workout routine or even see a doctor depending on the severity of the pain.

Finally, remember that you're probably not going to win any medals or even be at the top of your fitness class, but it's important not to stop. Again, don't be one of those people who quit! Find what works, what makes you happy, and then stick with it. Good luck!

## IN BRIEF

### Same Job? Same Pay!

We're already well into the 21st century and I'm still baffled that pay gaps still exist between men and women for the same job. Obviously, an employee's experience, seniority, or other factors could adjust their pay, but the employee's gender should never be one of those factors.



According to an article on *Human Resource Executive Online* titled, "[Committing to Gender Pay Equity](#)," just a little over 100 employers have signed on to the [White House's Equal Pay Pledge](#) launched in the summer of 2016. This pledge is an acknowledgement by companies that they play a critical role in reducing the current gender pay gap, they will annually analyze their wages, hiring, and promotions as they relate gender, and take steps to identify best practices that ensure fairness for all workers.

Wow. Did it really take this type of pledge to get companies to recognize and actually do something about providing equal pay for equal work? And why isn't every company in the U.S. on board with this? Maybe, just maybe, I'm making too much out of something that's not an issue. So, just how big are gender gaps right now?

The same article in *Human Resource Executive Online* says that when it comes to controlled pay gaps, the worst industry in the U.S. is oil and gas, where men make 7.4 percent more than women in the same job. The worst state with controlled pay gaps is Louisiana where the pay gap is seven percent. These gaps don't sound too bad as they're just single digits, but what happens when you look at states with uncontrolled pay gaps? The worst offender is Wyoming with a 29 percent gap! The smallest uncontrolled gender pay gap is in Vermont, where men only make 15 percent more than women. I say "only," but a double-digit difference is fairly (or, more appropriately unfairly) significant in my book.

The next question you may ask is are there any states where women earn more than men for the same job? The answer is yes in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia.

What happens going forward is anyone's guess, but it appears that the issue of gender pay is gaining some traction and will be top-of-mind with companies, hiring managers, and almost certainly women. All we can hope for is that common sense prevails and everyone in the workforce is treated equally and fairly as long as they're doing a good job.

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