



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Performance Reviews – Did You Get a Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

Most people love reading reviews. Whether someone is buying a product on Amazon.com, a new car, or watching a movie, they probably read the reviews first. So why is it that when it comes time for performance reviews at work, nobody wants to read theirs?



If you ask a random employee at any company, the odds are that he or she will say they work hard and give 100 percent. So, if that's true, then they should have nothing to fear when it comes time for that annual review.

Yet, according to an article titled, "[Conducting Performance Reviews? Get Out the Tissues](#)," in *Society for Human Resource Management*, almost 34 percent of Millennials said they've cried during a performance review. One possible reason is expectations. An employee who is new to the workforce may not realize that a small bump in pay is the norm and no matter how hard you work, or how many hours you stay at the office, you're not likely to get a huge raise even if you think it's deserved.

The flipside of that is if an employee doesn't deserve a raise, and in fact, deserves harsh criticism. Employees who cry, or display any type of non-hostile emotion, should be left alone until they are able to compose themselves, according to the article. But that doesn't mean the emotional outburst should be ignored. On the contrary, a corporate culture may be highly competitive, or the employee may have been surprised by the negative review. In any case, discussing the review is crucial to a mutual understanding between the employee and his or her supervisor.



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Lately, performance reviews have become more conversational and focused on experiences that highlight the employee as a person. The employee's performance, accomplishments, and areas that need improvement are also brought up, but as a separate issue.

Regardless of whether an employee received two thumbs up, two thumbs down, or a mixed review, he or she should feel confident and comfortable that the review was an honest appraisal along with constructive ways to improve performance.

TECHNOLOGY

The Keys to the Castle

When it comes to security, the more layers you have, and the better each layer is, the more successful you'll be in deterring most thieves. However, no matter how good the security is on your home or car, if a thief really wants something, then he or she is going to do whatever it takes to get it.



But what if the thief is someone who is already trusted? For those who have teenage children, do you leave money on top of your dresser, keep the liquor cabinet unlocked, or provide easy access to the car keys? You might think, "my child would never break the rules because of the consequences." And then, you get into a fight, or take away privileges, and all that goes out the window when the teenager, in a fit of rage and emotion, does the unthinkable. It's the same with corporate cyber security.

The IT department in most companies has the "keys to the castle" and each IT employee needs to be trusted more than most because of the damage they can do. In an article titled "[Is Your Company Protected From Insider Cyber Threats?](#)" on the website of *Workforce Magazine*, it notes that, when it comes to data breaches, employees are often a company's weakest link. Three types of employees are listed as the greatest threats to cyber security – negligent, disgruntled, and malicious.

A negligent employee can be anyone in any department who is ignorant or not trained in practicing good cyber security. A disgruntled employee can also be anyone, but is angry toward the company and is either apathetic about whether cyber damage occurs, or worse, actively attempts to cause damage. Finally, there's the malicious employee. This is, by far, the most dangerous because their sole purpose is to steal.

Whether an employee is recruited by an outside force to steal from the company where he or she works, or an employee intentionally gets a job with a company so that they can steal from them, makes no difference. The danger is that they do steal and it may not just be data.

WISDOM WORKPLACE WEBINAR

Communication Works: A Case Study on Why Matters™

Tuesday, February 21, 2017
2:00 p.m. ET / 11:00 a.m. PT

The Dilemma

Hanna Global Solutions was ready to flip the switch on a passive enrollment for a large client with employee work locations all across the country. The plans and pricing were in place, along with the Benefits Passport enrollment system, a Touchpoints portal, the Pocketpal mobile app and supporting communication. The benefits desk was trained and ready. And then the phone rang. Orders came down that this group's medical plans, rate structure and rates needed to match the corporate offering--which was drastically different (HDHPs instead of familiar copays) and significantly more expensive. The employer also wanted enrollment in the HDHPs to go from five percent to 30 percent, and enrollment would be active.

The Response

Hanna Global Solutions convinced the employer to push enrollment back two weeks. Communication about the new enrollment began immediately. Articles on the portal were shifted to focus on HDHPs: how they work, the benefits of an HSA, how to take control of your health care expenses, how to find low-cost quality care. The Obeo Health Cost Comparison Tool was configured to the new plans. Benefits Passport was reprogrammed. Presentations were created to share what/why/how/when and give employees confidence and easy-to-use tools to choose the right plans. Webinars and a strategic, steady flow of information helped employees shift their expectations and prepare. The team monitored hits to specific pages on the portal

It could be equipment, prototypes, or anything the company would like to keep secret.

There are a few things companies can do to help prevent insider threats, but these measures can be expensive and possibly too costly for small businesses. High-risk employees should be monitored. High-risk examples would be senior-level executives, IT employees with access to everything, low-level employees who have been previously warned about cyber security negligence, and any employee who HR believes might become disgruntled. Another deterrent to theft is a thorough inventory of all hardware. The easy items are laptops and mobile devices, but don't forget about USB or "thumb" drives and external hard drives. Finally, make sure you have a process in place to protect whistleblowers. The phrase, "if you see something, say something" doesn't just apply to terrorism.

There will always be cyberattacks and data breaches. The question is how well a company is prepared in advance to stem these attacks and mitigate the damage if it happens.

WELLNESS

Eat Your Fruits and Veggies

You know that eating fruits and vegetables is good for you, so what's stopping you from actually including them into your daily meals instead of the processed junk that you usually eat? Is it the fear of pesticides? If it is, or if it wasn't before, but it is now that I've mentioned it, have you looked at the list of ingredients in the food you cram into your mouth? I'll bet that list is a nutritionist's nightmare of unpronounceable chemicals.



But what about organics, you may ask? Naturally (no pun intended), organic fruits and vegetables are great, but that's only if your family can afford them on a regular basis because oh my gosh are they expensive. What's a person to do if their family can't afford organic fruits and vegetables? Do they go without, or take a chance on pesticide-laden produce? The takeaway from this is that no matter what pesticides are used on fruits and vegetables for sale in the U.S., fruits and vegetables are still darn good for you.

An article on *The Washington Post's* website titled, "[A diet rich in fruits and vegetables outweighs the risks of pesticides](#)," reveals that people may not be buying fruits and vegetables because of this fear of pesticides. This is a major problem. Fruits and vegetables don't have many calories, but are full of vitamins and antioxidants. They're just plain healthy and the benefit of eating them far outweighs the fear of pesticide residue.

There are lists that define the "dirtiest" and "cleanest" fruits and vegetables, and you can find links to those lists in the *Washington Post*

and adjusted content to make the right information easy to find. A series of emails reinforced key messages and answered common questions the benefits desk received.

Great Results

- 96.5 percent of employees actively enrolled
- At least 30 percent attended a webinar
- 35 percent linked to information on Obeo Health from the Touchpoints portal
- Over 85 percent enrolled in the medical plan recommended by Obeo Health
- 68 percent of employees enrolled in an HDHP, surpassing the employer's goal by 200 percent
- Hanna Global kept the client apprised of all moves along the way, which not only kept the client happy, but also kept the business

Registration

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

About the Presenters

Chip Abernathy
CEO of Touchpoints

Chip has more than 15 years of marketing, technology, employee communication and senior-level sales experience.

He is the co-founder and CEO of Touchpoints, an employee communications provider that enables benefits advisors to deliver the tools employees use to easily access the benefit information they need, when they need it. Chip is also the creator of Why Matters™, a unique process that helps agency owners and advisors increase the value their clients receive from the benefits they pay for.

article. However, something that's not mentioned on those lists is that, while a particular fruit or vegetable might have a higher concentration of pesticide residue, that concentration is still small and has little potential for harm. Furthermore, a smaller concentration of a particularly bad pesticide could be worse than a large concentration of a relatively harmless pesticide. Again, any food sold in the U.S. is thoroughly regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as being safe to eat. There is no reason to avoid any produce and, in fact, the reverse is true. People should eat *more* fruits and vegetables!

Particularly disturbing is that one piece of misinformation (e.g., strawberries are dangerous) causes people, especially those with low incomes, to avoid any fruit altogether. Sort of a guilt by association. The key message should be clear: Everyone's diet, regardless of income, should be full of fruits and vegetables whether conventionally grown or organic.

IN BRIEF

Oh, s-NAP!

Have you ever taken a quick 10-minute nap at work? Did you feel guilty about it or worry that you'd get caught? Or are you lucky enough to have an employer that encourages these small breaks in order to invigorate and recharge your body?



According to an article on *The Huffington Post* titled, "[Sleeping At Work And Nap Rooms Go Hand-In-Hand](#)," the author says that employees who walk around looking tired and drained should be looked down on rather than those who take an occasional nap.

Of course, in an ideal world we'd all get plenty of sleep before starting the day. In the real world, however, that simply doesn't happen. Add in the pressures of work and naps can become a necessity. Employees often use their lunch hour to grab a few quick Z's, yet that may not be the best time to take a nap depending on what a person's body is feeling.

Any manager can tell you that an employee who's tired will not produce the best work. And any employee can tell you that by not producing his or her best work will often result in more sleepless nights worrying about what their supervisor will think.

A "power nap," as they're often called, has been shown to boost memory and productivity. This is why several large companies, including Google, Zappos, Ben & Jerry's and The Huffington Post, provide employee nap rooms and encourage their use.

Employers should be flexible enough to consider the benefits of workday naps and may even want to institute a nap room program on a trial basis. Employees shouldn't feel pressured to avoid these rooms, but they should also not misuse the perk.

Mathew Augustine
CEO of Hanna Global Solutions
A UBA Partner Firm for over 13 years

Mathew is responsible for setting the strategy and vision for the company, and leading the transformation of the company from being a traditional broker, to a firm that also provides benefits technology and administration services to other broker partners. When UBA launched its proprietary solution, Benefits Passport, they chose Hanna Global Solutions as the technology and service partner to power the solution. Mathew combines his knowledge and experience in the technology industry, where he started in India, with experience of the U.S. insurance industry processes, to develop innovative solutions integrating technology, processes and people. He is an experienced operations architect, working with complex human, cost and operations issues, to bring simple solutions for use by brokers and their clients. He holds a master's degree in physics, an MBA, and also insurance and HR credentials such as REBC and GPHR.

Certification

This webinar event will be submitted to the [Human Resource Certification Institute](#) to qualify for 1.25 recertification credit hours.

This webinar is brought to you by UBA Strategic Partner Touchpoints.

UBA Partner Firms count on Touchpoints to develop and deliver employee communication programs that increase the value of the benefits they provide the employers they serve. Their clients are agency owners and advisors who seek new ways to increase the return employers receive from every dollar invested in employee benefits. Their clients know the employee's perception of the benefits offered is usually significantly different from the employer's. For more

information, visit the [Touchpoints website](#).

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