



Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter delivering insights about timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

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Dear HR Manager,

I have a new supervisor, and he is a grade “A” micromanager. He proofs every single one of my client emails, tracks my arrival and departure times, and doesn’t let me make even minor decisions on my projects. I am starting to second-guess whether this is the right job for me. I loved my job before and want to get the spring back in my step. What should I do?

– Under a Microscope

Dear Under a Microscope,

I hear your frustration and applaud you for reaching out for help. I think your best step is to [share feedback with this new manager](#). This will allow you to share your perspective and see how you can work together to better your relationship. You will want to be thoughtful so take some time to prepare.

I recommend these three tips:

1. Prioritize your areas of concern.

Instead of approaching with a laundry list of complaints, I recommend considering the top three areas you would like to discuss. One strategy? Choose the issues that have the most significant impact on your day-to-day work.

2. Use “I” statements.

Instead of pointing out flaws, tell your manager how situations negatively affect your work. Use *impact* language, such as “I am more productive when...” or “The environment I need to be successful is...”. Ask for what you need. It sounds like autonomy on your projects is at the top of your list.

3. Set your boundaries.

Your experience thus far shows that your manager *wants* to be involved. Use your burgeoning leadership skills to set regular check-ins and proactively “invite” him into your work ahead of time. Managing up in this format gives you control over the timing and frequency of his involvement.

I hope this conversation is the start of a new working relationship. Remember, it is easy to fall back on old habits. So, you may need to reinforce your concerns in a future conversation. Work relationships take time and commitment to build, just like personal connections.

– HR Manager

Workplace Culture | The Business Case for Pet Insurance

Gym reimbursements, hotel discounts, mental health resources, and more options in today’s competitive benefits packages offer more than yesteryear’s standard health insurance package. Cutting-edge companies understand that their employees are unique and that they need to provide various benefits to meet their interests and needs. One such interest to consider is the animals that patiently wait at home.

Almost 70% of American households have a pet. Yet, research shows that less than 15% of companies currently offer pet insurance as a benefit, although it aligns with many of employees’ top values, including family and financial health.

If pet insurance has not made it to your slate of voluntary offerings, this is your opportunity to rethink the proposition.

Three reasons you should add pet insurance to your company benefits package.

1. Pets are family, too.

Pet adoption rates have risen dramatically as many employees spent more time at home over the last few years. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals noted that 20% of American households added a pet to their home during COVID-19. And a whopping 78% of owners consider their pets to be a member of

their family. Employees devote time, attention, and money on their loyal companions. Companies are missing the mark if they are not considering how they can support this important member of the family.

2. Employees are concerned about finances.

[MetLife's U.S. Employee Benefits Trends Study](#) identified finances as the *top* employee concern, surpassing mental and social health worries. The increased cost of living in many locales and inflation have ignited the fire. Employees are in dire need of a financial break and medical expenses for pets can be expensive. A [recent study](#) by LendEDU uncovered that almost half of pet owners expect their animal's healthcare costs to be the same or more as their own. Sudden, unplanned expenses – for humans and for pets – can be crippling. Pet insurance can also [provide peace of mind](#), decreasing the mental anguish of unexpected expenses.

3. Pet insurance is a low-cost voluntary benefit.

[Adding a new benefit](#) may sound like it would blow up your budget. The good news is that pet insurance comes in a variety of offerings, ranging in monthly cost and coverage. Employers can determine how much of the monthly premium (if any) they want to pay, and employees get access to discounted coverage.

Offering pet insurance to your employees is a kind gesture that acknowledges who and what is important to them. If your company has not jumped on the pet insurance bandwagon yet, this may be your cue to build that business case.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Pay Transparency: More than Dollars and Cents for Women and People of Color

Pay transparency is a hot topic in the employment world. [WorldAtWork describes pay transparency](#) as the “degree to which employers are open about what, why, how and how much employees are compensated — and to what degree they allow employees to share that information with others.” This topic is especially controversial because many companies have kept their pay practices under lock and key. However, withholding pay information puts women and people of color at a disadvantage in the workplace. Pay transparency encourages a fairer approach to determining pay and supports a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive population.

Underrepresented groups are most at risk when salary information is not disclosed during the hiring process.

The National Women's Law Center reports that women are less likely than white men to negotiate their job offers. This leaves money on the table and may also mean that they are paid below market levels. When women do negotiate, they tend to ask for less than their equally qualified white male peers. Providing access to the salary range for a role enables women to evaluate their options and make data-driven decisions. Additionally, employees who accept a new job can be confident that their offer is fair.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) [reported](#) that almost 25% of workers discovered that they were paid less than a colleague of a different gender in the same job with the same experience.

Research shows that white women and women of color are disproportionately hurt by “pay secrecy,” the practice of keeping pay confidential. As a result, women and people of color may be promoted, take on new responsibilities, and outperform their colleagues, yet are paid significantly less than similarly qualified male peers. A strong salary transparency policy includes educating employees how positions, departments, and levels influence pay and the expectations that can increase their earning potential. And pay visibility increases employees’ confidence in their workplace — 91% of employees who work at companies with a transparent pay policy believe that their company pays equally regardless of gender, ethnicity, or race. Transparent pay policies offer employees peace of mind that their company has their best interest in mind.

A flurry of [state pay transparency laws](#) have been enacted over the last few years, and some companies are proactively sharing salary data. Colorado was the first state to require that companies include salary ranges on all job advertisements beginning in 2021. And adding those numbers to a job description pays off. Textio conducted a [study](#) using data from this trendsetting state to see if transparent pay attracted a more diverse candidate pool. Textio concluded that including salary data resulted in more female applicants. This information may be particularly helpful in male-dominated industries looking to attract more women applicants.

Transparent pay practices may be a big change if your organization has not openly shared compensation and total rewards strategy in the past. Clearly communicating how pay decisions are made contributes to motivation and retention of current employees and is a key component for building a [more diverse](#), equitable, and inclusive employee population.

Leadership Tip: Power of the Pause

Great leaders know how to use the “power of the pause.” Adding a space between your thoughts and actions can unlock new approaches and fresh ideas.