# HR ELEMENTS®

## HR & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

## 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.

### HR Elements | August 2022

*Dear HR Manager,*

My team worked overtime during the pandemic to meet production goals and did not complain about the extra hours. However, now that we are back to "normal," I noticed that a few of them will respond to emails outside of business hours and stay late at the office. I worry they haven't slowed down and will get burned out. How can I encourage my team to disconnect from work after hours?

*– Work-Life Balance Advocate*

*Dear Advocate,*

Kudos for looking out for your team. Work-life balance is an essential part of employee wellness. Everyone needs time to recharge.

A few tips to educate your team on the importance of work-life balance:

### 1. Set clear expectations.

Tell your team know that work-life balance is integral to being a good team member. For example, "We just finished a busy period at work, and you all gave 150%. Now that we are back to normal timelines, we do not need to be online after hours or on weekends unless there is a specific urgent request."

## 2. Provide resources.

It is vital to provide your team with resources that enable them to "log off" confidently. Two tools to consider are using out-of-office email messages and silencing notifications. Automated email messages can inform clients or colleagues of expected response times. ("You can expect to hear back from me during regular business hours.") On the other hand, a notification app removes the temptation to respond after hours. Setting a specific time can be your team's best practice if they need to check in at night.

## 3. Encourage paid time off.

More than half of American employees don't use all their paid time off. This is an excellent opportunity to share this stat and include a plug for vacation time. Remind your employees that stepping away from work for personal time is essential to keep them sharp and well-rested.

Changing any habit can be difficult, no matter how good it sounds. The key to establishing new work boundaries is to set expectations, lead by example, and stick to the plan. I am sure your team will appreciate your support.

*– HR Manager*

## Workplace Culture | Bringing Purpose to Your People

Your individual purpose is a driving force that brings value to your life. It may influence your decisions and motivate you in certain situations. McKinsey research shows that 70% of employees believe their jobs express their individual purpose. This is good news because employees with a clear *purpose* are happier, healthier, and stay at their jobs longer. Additionally, *organizational purpose* is elevated when employees are aware of their individual purpose. As you look at upcoming people initiatives, consider what your company and people managers can do to help employees find their purpose.

Try this three-step plan to roll out at your organization:

## 1. Introduce purpose.

Some employees may not be familiar with the idea of individual "purpose." It can feel vague or fuzzy. Managers can provide their interpretation and ask employees for feedback on what it means to them. Leaders can provide space to explore this topic through ice breakers, articles, and reflection. This is a chance for leaders to be vulnerable and share their purpose, too. Charting time on the schedule for purpose tells the team that this is valuable.

## 2. Share purpose prototypes.

Finding your "guiding light" may feel like a heavy task without some guiding material and examples. Leaders can provide templates, tools, and assessments to inspire their teams. Plenty of free resources are available, so don't let the budget hold you back! Managers can pose questions to get the group thinking about options. ("What is important in your community? What skills do you use for the greater good?")

### 3. Apply purpose.

Identifying individual purpose is not the last step. Leaders can challenge employees to apply their purpose at work. Could their purpose influence *how* they do their job? ("I am using my purpose to care for others when supporting our clients.") Or could it affect the interest groups they join at the company? It may be helpful to show how leaders within the organization use their purpose as an example.

Chances are your team will embrace "purpose." Additionally, candidates are attracted to purpose-driven organizations, which gives you an edge in a hot employee market.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Reorganizing Your Hiring Process to Avoid Groupthink

Humans have an innate drive to "fit in," and it shows up in all shapes and sizes. The cognitive bias, groupthink, is influenced by the desire to conform and may result in a poor or irrational group decision. Subconsciously, individuals may be swayed by popular opinion or status and fear others will not accept their ideas.

Groupthink can wreak havoc on hiring decisions. Guiding your internal hiring process using these best practices can support fair and equitable hiring decisions.

- Structure the interview process where each hiring team member "owns" a specific part of the interview. Questions on leadership skills, prior work experience, and culture should be pre-defined. This format encourages unique feedback since no two interviewers will be asking the same question.

- Create individual scorecard entries to create a rubric. Discuss with the hiring team so they know how to rate competencies and understand what constitutes a "high" or "low" score so that interviewers are not biased.

- Schedule a debrief with the hiring team after completing all candidate interviews. The hiring team should not share notes or opinions before this meeting. They need to understand that confidentiality is vital in hiring to avoid bias and give candidates a fair chance.

Finally, create a recruitment process that provides clear structure to candidates as well. Your hiring team is then on their way to finding their next great hire.

## Leadership Tip

Empathetic leaders show a genuine interest in how other people think. They ask questions, withhold judgement, and see the value in acknowledging others' feelings prior to identifying a solution.