

To:

The HR Specialist

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Get in compliance
and have a blast!
March 25-27 in Vegas! pg. 8

From: Business Management Daily

Subject: Practical HR strategies to boost your career

In The News ...

Federal workers win paid leave ... is private sector next?

Under a new law, federal workers will be able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave each year for the birth or adoption of a child (starting Oct. 1). To be eligible, employees must have worked in the job for at least a year and stay at least 12 weeks after the time off. Supporters say this law will help encourage passage of a similar law for the private sector. Eight states now require paid leave for private-sector workers. Learn more at www.tinyurl.com/PLlaws.

Half want something other than biweekly pay.

While 50% of workers prefer to be paid biweekly, 26% say they'd rather be paid weekly, 10% monthly and 10% semimonthly (twice per month), according to a Paychex survey. Only 4% prefer a same-day pay option, but that number jumps to 25% among independent contractors. New apps like DailyPay and PayActiv are making on-demand pay more popular.

More qualified than your boss?

While only 21.7% of U.S. workers believe that they're more qualified than their managers, that jumped to nearly one-third when remote employees were asked that question in a ResumeLab survey. When looking at gender and generation, men and millennials most often say that they're more qualified than the boss.

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Hiring: Can you (& should you) quit smokers?

Some of your employees may be a month into their New Year's resolution to quit smoking. But what if you, as an organization, wanted to kick the habit in a different way—by refusing to hire employees that smoke?

It's a trend among organizations that want to inject a healthier culture and reduce health costs. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death, says the CDC, yet nearly 14% of Americans still smoke.

But a tough no-nicotine hiring stance isn't available for every employer. In fact, you can set such a policy in only 21 states (*see box at right*). That's because 29 states have laws that protect smokers from being discriminated against by employers because of their nicotine use. (Find links to those laws at www.tinyurl.com/smokelaw.)

And even if you *can* ban smokers from your staff, you may still want to consider less-drastic options that

States that allow you to ban smokers



While 29 states have smoker-protection laws, these 21 states allow employers to lawfully refuse to hire nicotine users:

Alabama	Hawaii	Nebraska
Alaska	Idaho	Pennsylvania
Arizona	Iowa	Texas
Arkansas	Kansas	Utah
Delaware	Maryland	Vermont
Florida	Massachusetts	Virginia
Georgia	Michigan	Washington

incentivize, not punish, workers.

U-Haul's new ban. The most recent example is U-Haul, who starting Feb. 1 will no longer hire nicotine users in the 21 states where that is legal. Applicants at U-Haul will now be told of the policy and, in states where testing is allowed, candidates must consent to submit to future nicotine screenings to be considered.

Continued on page 2

New ruling gives power to restrict staff email

In a landmark ruling, the National Labor Relations Board has reestablished the right of employers—both unionized and nonunionized alike—to bar their employees from using company-owned email for nonbusiness purposes, including union organizing.



The NLRB said employers now have the right to block workers from using company-owned email for nonbusiness purposes, including union organizing.

This has been a hot labor-law issue for years. Unions like being able to use work email to communicate with employees—it's free and can reach all employees. But employers would rather not have their own resources used against them.

In 2014, the NLRB ruled that employees who have been given access to their employer's email sys-

tem for work-related purposes have a presumptive right to use that system (on nonworking time) to discuss their working conditions with co-workers or try to form a union. (*Purple Communications Inc.*)

But this new 2020 NLRB ruling overturns that Obama-era decision. It says employees have no statutory right to use employers' email

Continued on page 2

Restrict employee email

(Cont. from page 1)

and other IT systems to engage in nonwork-related communications. (Caesars Entertainment Corp.)

The decision carved out one exception for “those rare cases where an employer’s email system furnishes the only reasonable means for employees to communicate with one another.”

This renewed power to limit employees’ use of email for non-business purposes extends to *all* workplaces, not just those with unionized employees.

Key point: Make sure your policy to restrict email usage is worded (and enforced) neutrally. That’s because this ruling says employers can restrict email use as long as they don’t discriminate against union communications. For example, employers can’t allow employees’ messages to solicit members for community or religious groups while banning messages about union membership or activities.

Also, this new restriction doesn’t mean you can block all “concerted activity” among employees. You still must let workers discuss their wages, working conditions and potential union activity during nonworking time and in nonworking areas.

Bottom line: Many employers rewrote their policies and employee handbooks as a result of the 2014 NLRB ruling. With this new decision—and a handful of other pro-employer NLRB rulings lately—employers should consider revising their handbooks.

If you do add a new work rule banning employees from using company email for such activities, make sure it’s implemented in a neutral manner. That means “business use only” email usage should be communicated and enforced across the board.

Online resource For a list of what employers can legally do (and can’t do) to prevent union organizing, go to www.theHRSpecialist.com/unions.

New federal law brings changes to your retirement plan options

The big federal appropriations law enacted at the end of 2019 included the most important retirement-plan legislation in nearly 15 years. Here are some pieces of the so-called SECURE Act that will affect employers that offer 401(k) retirement benefits to their employees:

Higher age for required distributions.

Previously, required minimum distributions had to begin by the later of the date when employees turned 70½ or April 1 following the year they retire. The new law raised the age to 72 years old. This is effective for distributions required to be made after Dec. 31, 2019, but doesn’t apply to employees who turned 70½ before Jan. 1, 2020.

New penalty-free distributions.

401(k) plans can now allow employees to take qualified distributions to cover birth or adoption expenses within a year after the birth or adoption. Maximum distribution: \$5,000.



Higher limit in auto-enrollment plans.

Employers can have auto-enrollment plans under which employees must affirmatively *opt out* of the plan, instead of opting in. The maximum default pretax contribution rate had been 10%. The act raises that to 15%.

Easier eligibility for part-time employees. Long-term part-time employees (i.e., those who worked at least 500 hours a year for at least three consecutive years and who are at least 21 years old) must be allowed to make 401(k) contributions.

New disclosure requirements.

At least annually, 401(k) plans must include a disclosure document (as part of their benefit statements) that describes the lifetime income stream equivalent of the employee’s account balance. Model notices will be available.

Bigger tax credit for 401(k) start-up costs. Small employers can take a tax credit for their 401(k) start-up costs of between \$500 to \$5,000, depending on the number of employees.

Just say ‘no’ to smokers?

(Cont. from page 1)

How far can you go? On the federal level, no law directly tackles such employer bans on smokers. But some laws restrict how you enforce such a ban, so it’s important to enforce them uniformly. Targeting women, minorities, disabled people or workers over age 40 could turn your smoking ban into a smoking gun by running afoul of federal anti-discrimination laws. Also be able to show that your ban is being instituted for business necessity.

So while a no-smokers policy may be legal in 21 states, it’s still not popular among employers. And you’d need to weigh the impact on recruitment, retention and public relations.

Advice: Until the “no smokers” movement becomes more mainstream, it may be best to weigh these points:

Consider your industry and locality.

If you work for a healthcare com-

pany or an education institution, for example, a no-smokers policy may make sense. It may be unrealistic in other industries or locations. Also, workplaces covered by collective-bargaining agreements may face other restrictions.

Don’t single out employees. Refusing to hire new workers who smoke is one thing, but be wary of terminating current staff because they smoke, even if your state allows it. That may still spark a lawsuit based on invasion of privacy or other state law. Even if you win, the case would be costly.

Offer financial carrots (and sticks).

To encourage quitting, 16% of employers offer discounts on health premiums to workers who don’t smoke, says a SHRM survey. On the flip side, 18% charge higher premiums for workers who do smoke.



'Territory bias' can be a \$1 million mistake

If your organization assigns sales or service territories to employees, never make assumptions about which employees should serve your customers on the basis of gender, race, national origin or other protected characteristics.

Instead, base territory assignments on request, seniority, past sales or other factors unrelated to the salesperson's personal features.

Recent case: The EEOC investigated an Illinois beverage distributor, claiming the company assigned territories to its sales reps based on race. For example, black sales reps were assigned to work in black neighborhoods. The



Make sure you distribute work without regard to the race of the employee—or the population being served.

EEOC said, “even when pay and benefits are the same, a divided workforce can lead to decreased employee morale and reduced promotional opportunities for minority applicants.”

Before the EEOC could file a lawsuit, the company agreed to pay a \$950,000 settlement and revise its policies to set assignments based on skills and experience. (*EEOC v. Breakthru Beverage*)

Part 2 of #MeToo: Backlash lawsuits by men?

For two years, the #MeToo movement has brought down many powerful men. But it's now sparked a backlash from men who say their claims of innocence are being ignored.

The message: Don't go into sexual harassment investigations with any preconceived notions. Interview all key witnesses and base your decision on facts, not presumptions.

Recent case: A university fired Jeffrey, the tennis coach, after a female player complained of sexual harassment. But Jeffrey sued, claiming sex

discrimination and anti-male prejudice.

He said the player cried harassment only after she was refused a full scholarship. Jeffrey said he gave HR the names of several students who could verify that some allegations were false, but HR never spoke with them.

The court sent the case to trial, noting that the school ignored its own investigative process. (*Menaker v. Hofstra University*, 2nd Cir.)

Online resource To help sort out he-said-she-said situations, go to www.theHRSpecialist.com/credibility.

Don't use overly broad background checks

To pass legal muster, background checks must be narrowly tailored to a job and tied to business necessity.

Any such screenings shouldn't disparately harm candidates based on a protected characteristic, such as race, sex or age. And in many states and cities, “Ban the Box” laws prevent any criminal check before a job offer is made.

Recent case: Dollar General ran criminal records checks on all applicants and staff. Several black female



employees were fired after their checks revealed past criminal convictions.

The EEOC said those background checks were evidence of discrimination because they had a disparate impact on African Americans. Dollar General settled the lawsuit for \$6 million. (*EEOC v. Dolgencorp*, ND IL)

Dollar General must now weigh these factors when reviewing criminal history: time passed since the conviction, number of offenses, nature of offense and risk of recidivism.

Legal Briefs

Facing FMLA suit? See if worker requested FMLA

After Desiree got a new boss, she feared he'd stop approving her medical intermittent FMLA leave, so she stopped requesting the leave. She later sued, alleging FMLA interference. But the court tossed out the case, saying she must first request leave if she wants to sue for its denial. (*DeFigueroa v. New York*, ED NY)

The lesson: While employees don't need to use the magic words “I need FMLA leave,” they must give enough information so that the manager or HR would figure it out. Teach managers how to listen for leave requests that could fall under FMLA.

Won in court? Don't expect a refund on your legal costs

After a company successfully defended an FMLA lawsuit, it asked the court to force the worker to pay the company's \$13,000 legal bill. The court refused, saying that would have a chilling effect on future workers who think about suing their employers. (*Brewer v. Leprino Foods*, ED CA)

The lesson: When employers win employment suits, courts sometimes award legal costs to the winning employer. But don't count on it—especially if the employee earns a small salary. Courts don't want to discourage workers from filing lawsuits.

'Put on big-girl panties': Not a wise harassment response

When a female Walmart employee complained about a co-worker's vulgar comments, the employee's boss told her to “put on her big girl panties” and “stand up” for herself. Instead, she quit and filed a harassment lawsuit. Now, Walmart faces two unappealing options: settle or explain the “panties” comment to a jury. (*EEOC v. Walmart Stores East*)

The lesson: Respond to every harassment complaint with an investigation, not a smug suggestion.



NLRB slows down 'quickie' union elections

If your employees are trying to organize a union, you'll soon have more time (at least three weeks) before an employee vote occurs. A new National Labor Relations Board ruling says most elections will take place no sooner than 20 days after being authorized by the NLRB. That's longer than the election schedule that's been possible since a 2014 NLRB decision dramatically compressed the timetable. The new rule takes effect April 16. Read it at www.tinyurl.com/NLRBquick.

Contractors: 'Ban the box' on criminal checks

A new federal law will make it unlawful for federal contractors to ask applicants applying to work in connection with federal contracts about their criminal histories until after the worker receives a conditional job offer. The law takes effect in December 2021. More than 13 states and 150 municipalities have enacted such ban-the-box laws that aim to give ex-offenders a second chance.

New DOL joint-employer rule cuts legal risk

The U.S. Department of Labor issued a new ruling on Jan. 12 that tightens the definition of what constitutes a "joint employer." This makes it less likely that more than one entity can be held liable for the same

wage violations, as long as the company avoids day-to-day oversight of their partners' hiring, firing, pay and employment decisions. The less a company engages in those activities, the less likely it will be considered a joint employer along with some other entity. Joint employment has traditionally included franchisor/franchisee arrangements, subcontractor status and staffing firms and clients. The rules take effect on March 16.

FMLA and WOTC tax credits extended

Check to see if your organization is eligible for two pro-business tax breaks that were recently extended by Congress. An employer tax credit for providing paid family leave to employees (created in 2017) was extended through the end of 2020. The credit equals 12.5% of wages paid to qualified workers. Also, Congress extended for 2020 the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, available for hiring workers from certain at-risk groups.

Supreme Court accepts another HR-law case

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal of a unique employment question: who is eligible for the "ministerial exception," which exempts certain religious employers from federal anti-discrimination laws. The doctrine is typically limited to religious ministry staff. In this case, a Catholic school teacher sued for discrimination, but the school is claiming the teacher shouldn't be able to sue because of this exemption.

HR Q&A

A new employee is often sick: Can we enforce a leave of absence?

Q. An employee has been out for medical reasons for a couple weeks—the second time in a few months. I'm recommending she take a 30-day leave of absence to fully recover before returning. She doesn't want to take the LOA for financial reasons but wants to return on modified duty. Can we insist she take the LOA? Her job is mostly sitting at a desk, so I'm not sure what "light duty" she could do. — *K.O., Pennsylvania*

A. The ADA requires you to make reasonable accommodations for workers that will allow them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, with or without accommodation. A reasonable accommodation may include leave from work, if that helps the person recuperate enough to return. But the point of the law is to require the employer to provide accommodations that allow the employee to perform his or her work.

Ask her to have her physician submit documentation supporting her need for an accommodation (i.e., that she is disabled) and suggested accommodations. It is helpful to provide the doctor with the job requirements. The physician may suggest shorter hours, limiting tasks or additional leave. Whatever is suggested, you are entitled to reject any



that are not reasonable, and you're also able to suggest accommodations that are also reasonable but may differ.

Who has the right to know what is in an employee's personnel file?

Q. Do employees have a legal right to the information an employer keeps in its personnel records? Or should HR be the only department with access to this information (except for legal when required for compliance reasons)? — *Maren, Virginia*

A. Whether employees have the legal right to see what is in their personnel file varies by jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions require employers to make this information available to employees upon request in most circumstances. Others, like Virginia, do not require private sector employers to provide this information to employees. As you note, documents may also be obtained by third parties through the legal or compliance process. It is best to check the law of your jurisdiction whenever you are unsure.

Online resource For a description of state laws on access to personnel files, go to www.theHRSpecialist.com/personnel50.

Do you have a question? If so, you can email it to The HR Specialist at HRSEditor@BusinessManagementDaily.com.

Start the new decade with a personal career audit: 12 key questions to ask

Every year, you're involved with other people's performance reviews, but when was the last time you evaluated your own job and career path?

Consider the following questions and answer them truthfully. Don't just muse on your answers. Write them out by hand or type into a Word document. Come back to the questions a few times over the next couple weeks to dig into deeper thoughts and new ideas. If possible, reach out to a mentor to talk through your notes.

1. What three things do I really enjoy about my job?
2. What percentage of the total job do they represent?
3. Are they the kinds of things that really motivate me?
4. Will I have a chance to do more things like this in the future?
5. Is it worth staying in this job for these kinds of experiences?
6. Which are the parts of my job that I really dislike? What do I dislike about them?

7. Do they violate my beliefs or values?
8. What percentage of the total job do they represent?
9. Do I enjoy going to work? Or do I hear myself saying things like, "Well, it's a paycheck."
10. Do I find myself asking, "Do I want to be a part of this group?"
11. Do I often come home with negative stories about my workday?
12. How many new things did I learn last year? And will those things I learned make me more marketable and help me build my credibility and skills?



QUIZ Are you burned out?

The blues can quickly turn into full-blown job burnout if they're combined with overwork and underappreciation. To see where you're at on the burnout scale, take our 25-question self-assessment at www.theHRSpecialist.com/burnout.

Pulled in many directions? Set HR priorities

Establishing yourself as a key member of the strategic team requires you to make tough HR decisions and defend them to executives. That's easier to do after you systematically set priorities for your HR department. Use these guidelines to help separate real priorities from perfunctory tasks.

Track ongoing projects every day over a few weeks and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do they impact the organization's bottom line or productivity?
- Do they support the organization's goals?
- Do they help HR serve employees better?
- Are they truly crucial, or are they simply organizational habits that

nobody has questioned?

Find ways to cut back, eliminate or delegate ongoing projects and tasks that provide negative responses to the previous questions. Ask your HR staffers to do the same thing. Review results and devote the time saved to true priorities.

Rank every current project and task into three urgency levels. Make the top level true priorities.

Set a goal for each priority. Is it to increase retention, speed hiring, ramp up performance or something else?

Write down everything that needs to be done to accomplish each priority. Separate the items into urgent and nonurgent. Brace for resistance to some priorities and prepare counter-arguments.

To set your goals, look at past, present and future

by Kim Bassett

The start of each year is an opportunity to set goals and a timeline in which to accomplish them. How do you go about identifying your goals?

In *The Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by three spirits: Past, Present, and Yet to Come.

Much like old Ebenezer, the first thing I do is reflect on the previous year and try to identify projects and things that were not fully resolved, or could have been done better. Then I assess where we are presently. The last step is to determine where I'd like us to be by the end of the year.

The goal-setting process:

1. **Make a list of missed opportunities from the previous year.** Be specific and honest. This list is for your eyes only. It will help you to make an accurate assessment of where improvement is needed.
 2. **Determine whether those items on your list are still important** to your organization and will affect its success in the coming year. Those that you determine are still important remain on the list. Cross out the rest. They are history (or the Ghost of Christmas Past).
 3. **Next, think about new initiatives** that you would like to begin over the next 12 months. Put them on the same list. Think about how each of the items on your list would make your organization or business more successful.
 4. **Rate everything on your list on a scale of one to five**, with one being top priority and five being low priority. Those you rate as being low priority, cross them off your list.
- Congratulations! The items remaining on your list are your goals for 2020. The last step is to clean up your list, flesh each goal out with detail and get your leadership team excited and ready to lead the charge.

Kim Bassett is president of St. Joseph's Medical Center in Houston.

To: _____
From: _____

Date: February 2020
Re: Managing introverted employees

Communication

Low-key, high performance: 5 tips to manage introverts

Bill Gates ... Warren Buffett ... Condoleezza Rice. All great leaders. All introverts.

Introverts may be less noisy, but they actually outnumber extroverts in the workplace. A 2019 Myers-Briggs study says 57% of American adults identify as introverts, while 43% display an extrovert's personality. Even in the corner office, 39% of high-level executives describe themselves as introverts.

Introversion is not shyness. It's a hard-wired personality type. Introverts process information internally. They focus on depth, favor one-on-one interaction and seek solitude to gain perspective. They think first, talk later.

Introverts aren't necessarily living in fear of social interaction. Being introverted is simply a tendency to feel more energized by internal stimuli

than by loud and energy-laden interaction, which tends to fuel extroverts.

But in today's hyper-media world—where the boldest comments (in person and online) get the most attention—introverts can sometimes feel overlooked and misunderstood.

Supervisors can make a special effort to connect with introverted employees by following these five tips:

1. Slow down, listen up. In meetings, conversations, and even casual chats, slow down and give your introverts time to reflect and respond. Put space between your questions—counting “1...2...3” in your head if you have to—and avoid what

most introverts perceive as a cross-examination.

When introverts speak up, listen. They're usually not just voicing whatever popped into their heads—they likely spent time thinking about it. One extroverted manager posts a reminder next to his phone: “Shut up and listen.”

2. Give the gift of solitude. Introverts need alone time. As a manager, refrain from judging this need, and do what it takes to honor it instead. One option: Rather than stopping by throughout the workday, bundle your nonpriority items and schedule a single conversation.

3. Write more, converse less. Accommodate your introverts' preference for writing over conversation, or one-on-one meetings over groups. When possible, instead of picking up the phone or showing up unannounced at their desks, communicate through email or online chat.

4. Encourage balanced participation in meetings, and help introverts prepare. Ask for agenda items in advance and agree on a system that invites everyone to be heard. In one company, the meeting leader distributes 10 tokens to each team member at the start of a meeting. When someone speaks, he or she gives up a token. No tokens, no talking.

5. Allow them time to prepare ... and recharge. Provide an agenda for meetings so introverts can bring their best thinking. Give them a heads up about what you want them to contribute. When possible, provide your questions for one-on-one sessions in advance.

After meetings and social events, recognize that introverts prefer time alone to recharge their batteries.



What if YOU are the introvert?

Introverts bring many positive qualities to the table as managers, including the capacity for deeper reflection, preparation and focus. In many cases, introverted managers often need strategies to offset “interaction fatigue” caused by a bit too many meetings, teamwork and interaction. Try these workarounds:

- **Set boundaries.** There's a natural human tendency to load work onto people who complain the least—a real dilemma for introverts. If you have trouble saying no to either assignments or interactions, rehearse your “no” scripts in advance.
- **Identify your “no talk” zones.** Because the introvert's space is often less chaotic than those of others, your colleagues are likely drawn to it. And an open-door policy could be inviting stress in. Work on ways to be clear that there are times when it's not OK to approach you, maybe with a closed door, a desk sign or a quick “*Don't have time right now*” comment.
- **Consider staggering your hours.** If it's possible to get some work done during times when you have distance from your staff or co-workers, consider staggering your hours or telework.
- **Disarm potential intruders.** Identify interruptions that may come during the workday and head them off beforehand. Ask people what they need from you so you can organize your time and minimize disruptions. Recognize that the quicker you respond to email, the more willing co-workers will use it to contact you.
- **Be careful not to come off as aloof.** It sounds trite, but even something as simple as saying “Good morning” can help build goodwill. Always explain your need for “alone time” and be careful to never come across as rude.

Tailor your engagement strategy to each generation

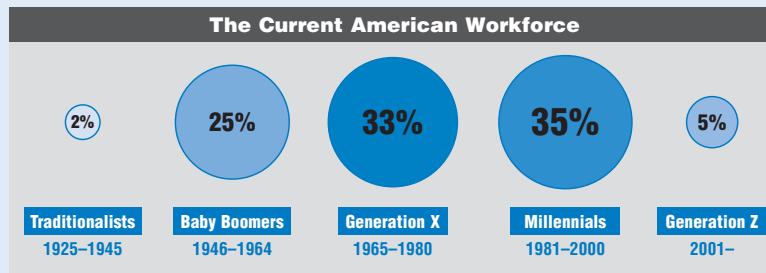
Employers are wisely shifting their priorities and resources to improve engagement. Companies do so by focusing on certain employee experiences, or “drivers,” that have a significant impact on engagement.

When it comes to prioritizing engagement drivers, however, most organizations fail to take generational differences into account. Instead, they manage engagement under a one-size-fits-all strategy. This is a costly mistake that contributes to employee attrition and revenue loss.

To increase engagement, a deeper understanding of (and investment in) the personal and professional motivations of each generation is critical:

BABY BOOMERS (born 1944–1962) have always worked and played hard, and they display outward symbols of success. As a result, their values center around professional identity and prestige, while staying youthful and healthy. Increase Boomer engagement by implementing tactics that will improve their:

- Core career identity: Do they feel deeply connected to their job?
- Professional status: Do they feel



externally validated and rewarded?

- Physical/mental health: Are they optimistic about their wellbeing?

GENERATION X (born 1963–1981) grew up when life seemed to be falling apart (energy crisis, Watergate, AIDS). These were the “latchkey kids” of divorced, dual-income parents. As a result, Gen Xers value security, mobility (which they see as a means to security) and work/life balance. To improve engagement, focus on their:

- Professional development: Do they believe there are real opportunities to advance?
- Job security and autonomy: Does their employment situation feel secure and within their control?
- Work/life balance: Do they feel alignment in their professional and personal lives?

MILLENNIALS (born 1982–2000) experienced educational and parental

systems rich in praise. Having grown up in a 24/7 world of global events and communication, they are motivated to solve big problems and see blurred boundaries between work and the rest of their lives. To

improve engagement, focus on:

- Feedback and growth: Do they perceive their supervisors as mentors?
- Meaningful work: Are they enthusiastic about their employer’s impact on the world and the opportunities to solve “real” problems?
- Flexible work: Can they manage their professional and personal obligations fluidly?

Bottom line: Employee engagement can succeed if companies are willing to adopt a more strategic approach to each generation.



Webinar: Feb. 27

On Feb. 27 at 1:00pm Eastern, learn how to inspire the best performance from each generation in a special webinar by Amy Robinson, president of the Interchange Group. Learn more at www.TheHRSpecialist.com/events.

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Workplace suicides hit record: How to respond

The Bureau of Labor Statistics said 304 employees killed themselves at their workplace in 2018, an 11% increase from the year before and the highest number since BLS began tracking 26 years ago. The number of other workplace fatalities has declined during that time. Make employers aware of your EAP and other mental-health services.

Online resources Find more recommended best practices for employers at www.workplacesuicideprevention.com and www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides.

New W-4 isn't needed for existing employees

While all employees you hire in 2020 will be required to fill out the newly revised W-4 withholding form, you don't need to request new W-4s from your *current* employees, unless they make withholding changes during the year. The IRS is encouraging you to point employees to the IRS's upgraded Tax Withholding Estimator, an online calculator to help people determine how much to withhold. You can access the new W-4 and calculator at www.irs.gov/w4. Download our free guide to the new form at www.BusinessManagementDaily.com/W4.

Be wary of abbreviating 2020 on documents, checks

As the calendar turned to 2020, financial experts were warning of a new potential trick by scammers. When the year 2020 is abbreviated as "20" on official forms or checks, people can easily manipulate those numbers. For example, a document or check with a date of "2/14/20" written on it could be changed to "2/14/2021" simply by adding two numbers at the end. To be safe, remind employees to spell out the full 2020 year on contracts, documents, checks and other official correspondence.

An interview question to identify 'yes men'

A hiring manager says she's had success in identifying "yes men" (or women) with this question in interviews: Hold out a pen and ask "*Would you like to buy this pen?*"

Hey, we still have *some* standards here!

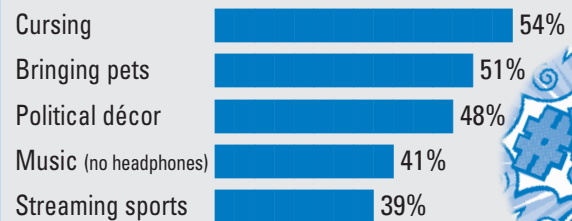
A full 91% of senior managers surveyed by Accountemps said their organizations have loosened up over the past decade. Top reasons: relaxed societal standards (59%) and employers catering to younger professionals (52%).

About one-third of companies said they've dropped their objections in the past decade to things like visible tattoos (35%), unusual hair colors (34%) and using casual language or emojis in company emails (30%).

"Workplace policies today are designed to attract and retain employees, and that often means they're more relaxed," said Mike Steinitz, Accountemps executive director.

But certain behaviors are still frowned upon in the workplace, led by swearing and bringing pets to work.

What's still considered unacceptable at work



If the candidate says "yes" and something like "*because it's good to have a pen with you*" then he leans toward being a yes-man. The person who holds up his own pen (he should have one) and says "*No, I already have one,*" is more likely to be an independent thinker.

Calm your mind through ... your phone?

Several apps—that you can use or that you can point employees toward—offer assistance in mediation or emotional health (Headspace, Youper, Calm or SouperBetter). Other apps that connect you to a licensed therapist can be a convenient and less expensive option to traditional therapy (TalkSpace, BetterHelp, ReGain or 7 Cups).

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Is there anything more dangerous than crossing the IRS?

Payroll Compliance Handbook

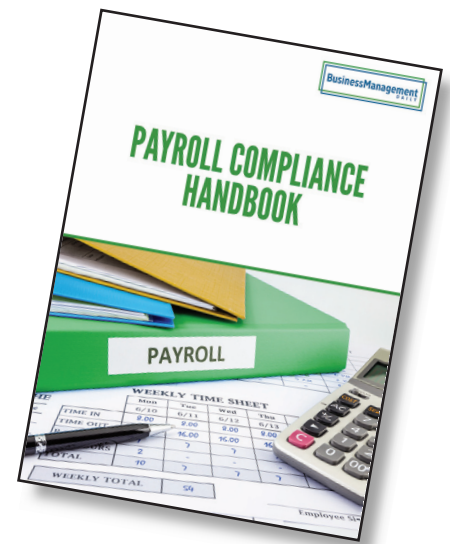
Once upon a time, payroll used to be easy: the employee's gross pay minus federal, state and local taxes. Then along came health premium and 401(k) deductions. Still simple, but...

Today, payroll managers deal with direct deposit, health spending accounts, vehicle allowances, phone expenses, earned income credits, garnishments and more. Payroll is now a confusing and time-consuming task prone to error.

Don't let a simple mistake unleash the full and frightening power of the IRS and wipe out your business... and you personally.

With our newly updated *Payroll Compliance Handbook*, you'll quickly and easily find answers to all of your nagging payroll questions. This handy reference is written in plain English - no legal gobbledygook here - so you can quickly understand what you need to do to stay in compliance, improve efficiencies and avoid costly payroll errors.

Each chapter focuses on a specific aspect of payroll management and compliance... and every issue of payroll compliance you need to know is addressed.



Navigate easily to topics including:

- Complicated tax calculations
- Exempt classification
- Fringe benefit deductibility
- Independent contractor status
- Paying for on-call time
- Business expense reimbursement
- Saving on unemployment taxes
- Payroll record-keeping
- Handling the IRS without stress
- Everything you need to know about W-4 forms
- And dozens more critical topics!

Over, please

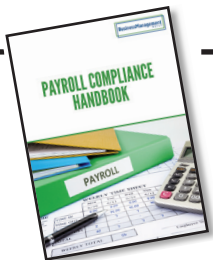
We've Made Payroll Easy Again!

You will not find a more comprehensive payroll resource than the **Payroll Compliance Handbook**. The author, Alice Gilman, Esq., is our resident expert in payroll and tax compliance. Over the past 30 years, she's written and edited several leading payroll publications, including Business Management Daily's *Payroll Legal Alert*, the Research Institute of America's *Payroll Guide*, the American Payroll Association's *Basic Guide to Payroll* and the *Payroll Manager's Letter*.

The **Payroll Compliance Handbook** answers questions like:

- **Are your employees exempt or non-exempt?** A handy checklist makes it easy to determine
- **Must you pay an employee for attending a training program?** The answer may be no if these four conditions are met
- **How can you avoid the most common FLSA violation?** Simply follow our chart or be at risk for a hefty fine
- **A woman has less experience and education than a man in a similar role. Can you pay her less?** Plus, how to establish an equal pay merit system that works
- **Fringe benefits: taxable or non-taxable?** How to reward fringe benefits to employees without crossing swords with the IRS
- **W-2s, W-3s, 1099s and more: What errors will land you in the IRS hot seat?** We'll tell you how to avoid them
- **What's the law in your state?** Check out the appendixes for the requirements in your state.

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