



HR Pro Consulting Newsletter

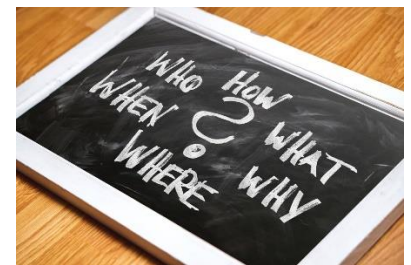
IN THIS ISSUE:

2017 In Review

2017 was full of questions and a lot of hurry up and wait with the new administration taking a stand against ACA/ObamaCare and making promises of reform in many areas affecting U.S. businesses.

We watched high profile stars lose their jobs and livelihoods, blemishing their reputations beyond repair as their employers took swift action to address sexual harassment issues once they surfaced.

Recruiting and retention issues continued to be a global problem as did employee (dis)engagement.



Conducting a Harassment Investigation

As harassment claims dominated the headlines with high profile cases in late 2017, and more this year, your employees may have become more aware of the consequences of inappropriate behavior in the workplace and inspired to speak out. Is your business prepared to handle a claim?

Current News

TrumpCare has yet to be defined, but the Affordable Care Act has been rolled back in many aspects leaving consumers and employers confused.

#MeToo movement is resulting in heightened awareness and discussion about widespread sexual harassment and abuse problems in the workplace.

Technology, flexibility and recruiting the next generation of workers are the issues keeping business owners and HR professionals up at night.

Green workplaces and open concept office spaces on the rise.

The independent contractor vs. employee relationship gains more popularity.



Attracting Talent in 2018

The war for talent continues to rage. What are you doing differently to attract talent?



Healthcare Reform Continues

The Trump administration has been unsuccessful at solving the healthcare puzzle; however, they have been chipping away at dismantling ACA/ObamaCare.



‘TrumpCare’ Undefined

As the Trump administration works to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA)/ ObamaCare in parts and pieces, insurance companies are dubbing any program that is not ACA compliant “TrumpCare”; however, the actual American Health Care Act (AHCA)/“TrumpCare” bill was removed from the House in mid-2017 prior to a vote.

The changes that have occurred under the new administration are happening regularly and in pieces. They are referred to as rollback changes for ACA and have included: the delay of the “Cadillac Tax”, ending of subsidy payments, and elimination of the individual mandate a.k.a. ObamaCare Tax Penalty.

The partial changes have disrupted the insurance marketplace and are dismantling the ACA piece by piece leaving a wake of confusion for consumers and employers.

If you made significant changes to your employer sponsored health insurance programs to comply with ACA, your business may be faced with the need to make rollback changes of your own. Don’t wait until renewal to discuss your options with your broker and be sure to build in an on-going communication plan for your employees to understand what affects the changes will have on them.



Mandatory State and Federal Postings

Several state and federal laws changed in 2017 and new postings are required for 2018 to remain compliant. Do you have the most up-to-date versions?

Conducting a Harassment Investigation

Sexual harassment is not a new issue affecting employers; however, it has gotten a lot of attention recently with high profile cases in the media and the #MeToo movement sweeping the nation. Now is a great time to assess your company’s protocol for handling a claim. Defending a sexual harassment claim can be costly to employers and have a significant impact on morale, talent retention and recruiting.

Shore up your policies and procedures in 2018 and communicate them to your workforce with interactive training. If you don’t have a clear investigative action plan, develop one with the help of your HR professional and/or an outside resource. Your plan should include information on:

- How to report a claim
- Who will investigate
- What will take place during the investigation
- What actions will be taken after the investigation

One of the most important parts of Sexual Harassment Training includes clearly communicating how an employee, who is a victim of sexual harassment, should go about reporting a claim. A natural complaint process usually starts by notifying a supervisor; however, the employee may not be comfortable discussing something of this nature with their supervisor or (s)he could be the offender. Make sure your employees have multiple routes to take and understand your company’s goal is to maintain confidentiality and take the claim seriously. Ensure company standards and values are communicated and procedures for victims to come forward are communicated and understood.

Often, it is a good idea to consider employing outside resources to conduct the investigation to maintain confidentiality and avoid bias. Co-workers and even internal Human Resource professionals can be too close to the situation to effectively gather facts and information about the claim. Your employment attorney or a certified investigator are good options.

Follow your action plan and determine who should be interviewed and what information is to be learned. Then, launch an investigation **immediately**. Treat all complaints with urgency and priority. If evidence supports the allegations, take immediate action and, at minimum, suspend the accused employee until the investigation is complete. Take notes from the swift action that was taken by NBC terminating Matt Lauer and follow suit, if warranted.

Document conversations and evidence thoroughly. Review the findings and prepare a report. Determine what final actions will be taken and how they will be communicated to the victim. Prepare and execute a follow-up plan if both individuals will continue to be employed by your business.

The War for Talent Continues...

Unemployment rates have reached a 10-year low and in many states are less than pre-Great Recession rates ever were. The baby boomers are steadily leaving the workforce and the new generation of workers wants different benefits and work environments. Add to those challenges the fact the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau predict the deficit of workers to fill open jobs to grow to 1.25 million by 2025.

What is your company doing differently to overcome these challenges? Are you thinking creatively? Have you developed a plan for appealing to the next generation of workers? How are you retaining your current employees? Have you developed a strategy for attracting boomerang talent—employees who have previously left your organization for another opportunity or even retirement? Who will execute the strategies you develop?

Competing for talent in 2018 will require a multi-faceted approach and dynamic strategies to tackle all the previously listed challenges and benefit from multiple sources to find candidates.

Technology is both the answer and challenge to part of the problem. Capitalizing on the benefits of technology to automate functions within workflow processes and reduce the number of employees needed to successfully run all aspects of your business should be part of your approach. Consider polling your current employees or implementing a rewards system that shares cost reductions with the employee(s) who recommends ways to improve your business processes with technology. These programs are often win/win for employees and businesses.

Additionally, using technology to attract the next generation of workers and will appeal to what Millennials/Gen Z want from their employers—flexibility, challenge and purpose from how and where they work. Consider offering project-based assignments to independent contractors vs. traditional employees and telecommuting options to regular employees, where applicable. The next generation of workers are also concerned about their fellow citizens and the environment. Green and open work spaces appeal to them, as do employers with an active philanthropic culture.

Monitoring and working to improve engagement and culture consistently will help you retain your current employees. Offering flexibility and opportunities to grow will go a long way with employees who are assets to your business. Generous referral bonuses encourage current employees to refer talent.

Maintain contact with alumni employees and don't be opposed to rehiring someone who left for another opportunity and has decided the grass is not greener. Boomerang employees can be some of your most loyal advocates. Considering offering job sharing and/or part-time work to employees who retire from your company. Many baby boomers are struggling with what to do after retirement and some still are not in a financial position to fully retire. These employees are often willing to work reduced hours, at a part-time status without benefits eligibility, especially if they qualify for Medicare benefits. They remain active and relevant and often are great mentors for the next generation of workers.

Since you will need to fish from many ponds to fill the openings at your company, you will need a crew of fishers to execute your plans and strategies. Every employee can be an advocate and a talent scout.



Fast Facts

- On average, it costs 20% of an employee's annual salary to replace him/her
- 30% of U.S. women have experienced unwanted sexual advances from male co-workers
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau predict the deficit of workers to fill open jobs to grow to 1.25 million by 2025
- 64% of employees say their workspace is bad for their well-being
- 1/3 of U.S. workers are actively engaged at work
- Millennials make up 34% of the workforce

Supporting local businesses with management of
their most important assets...people



If you would like more information about any of the topics covered in this edition of HR Pro Consulting's newsletter or need support in any of the following areas, contact Michelle Wachtel, SPHR today!

Small Business Human Resource Expertise

or

Interim Human Resource Management

If you do not have an on-site human resource professional, I can be your on-call subject matter expert for support when you need it.

or

If your human resource professional resigns or takes a leave of absence, I will fill the gap until a permanent hire is made or (s)he returns.

- Interviewing, selection and employment offers
- New employee on-boarding
- Termination support and exit interviewing
- Employee relations
- Benefits administration
- Performance management
- Compliance: FMLA, ADA, EEO
- Safety and wellness programs
- Employee handbook development

Project-Based Human Capital Support

When you require an outside resource to lead or contribute to business planning initiatives involving human capital, I can help.

- Strategic planning
- Succession planning
- Employee and leadership development
- Compensation program and incentive design
- Merger and acquisition support
- Reduction in force
- Organizational development and design
- Performance management system implementation
- Employee engagement
- Employee handbook review
- Job descriptions
- Human Resource audit



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Michelle Wachtel, SPHR is a tactical and strategic Human Resource professional with over twenty years of successful experience directing and executing Human Resource vision, strategy and administration in the areas of: talent acquisition, organizational development, performance management, employee relations, diversity and inclusion, succession planning, employee benefits, compensation, payroll administration, loss control, unemployment and worker's compensation insurance and employee safety and wellness programs.