



HR Pro Consulting Newsletter

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Candidate Ghosting

The term “ghosting” describes someone who has ceased or avoided communication with someone by ignoring phone calls, texts and/or social media communication. This term is most often used to describe a way someone chooses to end a dating relationship or friendship. As the job market continues to be strong and unemployment rates are at record lows, employers are being “ghosted” by candidates.

Candidate ghosting is happening throughout the stages of recruiting cycles and in all industries and professions. Some candidates do not return initial phone calls or emails from potential employers after submitting applications or resumes. Others fail to show up for interviews. Staggering numbers do not show up to their first day on the job. And more employees than ever before are quitting by abandoning their jobs and simply stop showing up.

This phenomenon is nothing employers haven’t experienced in the past; however, this behavior was generally seen in lower level positions and generally occurred much less often. Today, employers report these occurrences with all levels of professionals and the rates it is happening have employers and recruiters frustrated. Not only are there fewer candidates to select from, the recruiting process is exacerbated by candidate ghosting.

There are many theories and explanations as to why this is happening. Some experts believe candidates are trying to spare feelings or avoid conflict and difficult conversations. Candidate ghosting has also been justified by the fact that employers have been ghosting candidates for years by not responding to their applications, emails or phone calls and failing to follow up after interviews. Though ghosting is a term coined by millennials, candidates of all generations are participating in this behavior.

To combat ghosting, employers must spend additional time recruiting candidates throughout the selection process. Following up with candidates timely is imperative to attracting and retaining talent. A succinct and consistent selection process is another key to avoiding ghosting. And a strong on-boarding process will help minimize ghosting on or after the employee’s first day on the job.

These are all processes and procedures HR has been recommending and working to implement for years. If your company has not invested in its recruiting and on-boarding systems, you’re likely to continue to experience the effects of ghosting at ever-increasing rates. If your recruiting processes and systems include regular communication with candidates, which include updates and explanations of your process the opportunities to be ghosted will be substantially minimized. And remember, recruiting shouldn’t stop when a candidate has accepted your offer or even started at your company. To retain talent, employees need to be engaged and productive quickly, feel welcomed and appreciated, and receive regular feedback about the work they are doing.



Safety: OSHA Memo

OSHA issued a memo clarifying their stand on post-injury drug screening and safety incentive programs.



Strategic Planning and Human Capital

This is the time of year to plan for next year and those ahead. Make sure your strategy considers the human capital component.



2019 Regulatory Changes

Forms, systems and process changes to be aware of in the new year.

Safety: OSHA Memo

On October 11, 2018 OSHA issued a memo clarifying the final rule regarding workplace safety incentive programs and post-incident drug testing policies originally issued on May 12, 2016. The new memo clearly states, OSHA does not prohibit workplace safety incentive programs or post-incident drug testing. “Action taken under a safety incentive program or post-incident drug testing policy would only violate 29 C.F.R. § 1904.35(b)(1)(iv) if the employer took the action to penalize an employee for reporting a work-related injury or illness rather than for the legitimate purpose of promoting workplace safety and health.”

Since the final rule was issued, employers and safety professionals have reconsidered policies which include drug testing following report of an injury or accident because they were concerned about violating OSHA regulation. All policies and programs are to be administered consistently and never enforced in a retaliatory manner. If that is your company practice, you can count on remaining compliant.

The entire memo can be found on the OSHA website at:
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2018-10-11>

Strategic Planning and Human Capital

Strategic planning includes five essential elements: vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans. In each of these elements, the key component is people. Your company’s vision gives direction to employees on accomplishing the mission. The objectives, strategies and action plans are all carried out by the employees and ideally those same employees have participated in developing the objectives, strategies and action plans.

When building your strategic plan, start by identifying the people component of your vision. What resources does your team need to effectively bring the vision into focus and make it reality?

The vision of Zappos.com, is “delivering happiness to customers, employees, and vendors.” To be capable of achieving their vision, Zappos works hard to be sure their employees are happy. In his book *Delivering Happiness*, CEO Tony Hsieh, shares how concentrating on the happiness of those around you can increase your own and lead to a thriving business driven by engaged employees.

Starbucks mission statement is “To inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time.” Starbucks Coffee “inspires and nurtures the human spirit,” starting with its employees. To address this component of its mission statement, the company maintains a small company culture, where rapport and warmth are important. This culture extends to the customer experience.

The objectives, strategies and action plans are the steps your team will take to realize the vision and demonstrate the mission. When considering these elements of your planning, it is important to understand if your team has the skills and resources to put it all into action.

- Staffing—are there enough people employed and assigned to the objectives to bring it to fruition?
- Leadership—do the leaders of those objectives live the values required to lead by example and support their teams?
- Succession planning—are there people identified to take the torch and carry the objectives forward if someone retires or leaves the company?

Every area of strategic planning involves human capital. The companies who focus on their employees see the best productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction results. Focus on the people component of each element of strategic planning and you’ll experience the same success.

2019 Changes in Regulations

Each year businesses and HR professionals are challenged with implementing new processes and updating forms to remain compliant with local and federal regulations. Here are some highlights to be aware of for 2019.

- **401k** employee contribution limit increased to \$19,000
- Health Savings Account (**HSA**) contribution maximums increase to
 - Self-only: \$3,500
 - Family: \$7,000
- **ACA's** affordability standard as adjusted for inflation, health coverage will satisfy the requirement to be affordable if the lowest-cost self-only coverage option available to employees does not exceed 9.86% of an employee's household income. For 2019 calendar-year plans using the federal poverty level (FPL) safe harbor to determine affordability, an employee's premium payment can't exceed \$99.75 per month
- Maximum earnings that will be subject to the **Social Security payroll tax** will increase by \$4,500 to \$132,900
- USCIS has indicated that it is seeking to change the rules for U.S. employers filing **H-1B** petitions that are subject to the regular and master's caps. According to USCIS, the changes would be consistent with President Donald Trump's "Buy American, Hire American" executive order, which called for reform of the H-1B process to ensure that visas are awarded to the most-skilled workers at the highest salary levels. The proposal still must go through the rulemaking process. The agency plans to propose three changes to the lottery system.
 - The order of the two H-1B lotteries would change
 - Companies would have to electronically preregister
 - Visa allocation may be prioritized
- The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) plans to propose a new **overtime regulation** in January 2019. The proposal, which would replace the Obama administration's proposed \$47,476 salary threshold for overtime eligibility, was previously slated for October 2018 but has been postponed.



Fast Facts

- 20-50% of candidates ghost employers during the recruiting process
- 73% percent of employees would prefer a cash bonus in lieu of a holiday party
- 8 in 10 workers are open to new job opportunities
- The U.S. unemployment rate is at its lowest level since 1969, 3.7%

*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.