



HR Pro Consulting Newsletter



About half of the United States is fully vaccinated, businesses are reopened, mask mandates are relaxed, and sports and entertainment venues are serving near or full capacity. Everywhere you go people are talking about “getting back to normal”. Yet, we must admit some of what we considered “normal” is permanently changed.

The general sense of security and comfort has been shaken and some are taking longer to recover. There will continue to be mask wearers, people who decline invites to larger gatherings and those who debate the effectiveness and necessity of the COVID-19 vaccines. Other changes which are here to stay include remote work, fist bumps, virtual meetings and increased attention to sanitization and mental health in the workplace.

We are also experiencing some ancillary side effects of a nation and world recovering from the pandemic. Supply chain disruptions and talent shortages are plaguing businesses around the world. Employers were fighting for talent prior to 2020 and are thwarted from recovery and growth due to increased shortages of available talent post-pandemic.

Diversity, equity and inclusion have become highlighted areas of business and community concern with increased awareness and pressure to do *something*. Advocacy groups are speaking out and employers of choice must have a commitment to an inclusive culture and demonstrate equity in hiring, performance management, promotion and standard operating procedures to compete for talent.

“Normal” is ever changing, but 2020 was definitely a year for the history books and one most of us are anxious to put behind us. As we look to the future, employees will need to come first and they will put their families first. Organizations who don’t make the shift to that dimension of the “new normal” will struggle.

IN THIS ISSUE



Talent Shortage

Despite there being a gap of available workers to openings, some organizations are battling the talent war creatively.



DE&I

Diversity, equity and inclusion needs to be more than a buzz word. Employers with commitment and follow through will impact their culture by initiating and sustaining change.

Talent Shortage: Recruiting in this decade

Though the baby boomers were afraid robots would take their jobs and fought against automation, technology evolved. Artificial intelligence and automation continue to reduce manual processes and create efficiencies; however, despite the advances in technology, the number of job openings exceeds the number of available workers by **millions**. Though unemployment rates remain high in our current covid recovery phase, there simply are not enough people available to fill the current openings and the statistics will not improve during the next decade.

Additionally, experts have predicted a mass resignation period post-covid, whereby qualified talent will resign for the reasons mentioned below in droves. In June 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the number of job leavers reached nearly 1 million bringing credibility to this theory.

During the pandemic's peak impact on businesses and employees, we learned many jobs can be successfully performed remotely and, when polled, employees prefer to stay home. Employees are demanding better benefits and work/life balance. They also know the value of their skills and talents and will leave companies to be compensated better. Hourly rates and salaries are increasing at double digit percentages while increased time off, remote work options and other perks are also sought after by employees looking for a change. Employees are also looking for an equitable and inclusive experience for themselves and their co-workers.

Those employers who fall short in the areas above will continue to struggle to find talent. Conversely, those companies who take a close look at their compensation practices, consider alternative benefit choices, and telecommuting and remote work options will become employers of choice. With the cubicle walls down, the war on talent is truly global. Employers will need to make a strong effort at finding candidates where they are and developing diverse recruiting strategies to compete for talent.

Beginning with job descriptions and advertisements, employers should assess language and qualifications that are limiting to sourcing candidates. Intern, apprenticeship and training programs are smart investments in talent attraction and development to close the gap on talent shortages. Geographic and scheduling considerations can offer options to candidates who would otherwise not fit the on-site, 9 to 5 workday and open the doors of your talent pool.

Candidate selection practices including resume screening, interviewing and background checking need to be assessed from an inclusive vs. exclusive lens. Many selection practices may be out of date and were developed from a "weed out" vs. "open up" perspective for defining and selecting candidates. Educational requirements can pose barriers to attracting diverse candidates. Interview questions which do not support inclusivity or diversity of experience and qualifications will weed out candidates who may otherwise be complimentary to your team. Background checks have always been a compliance issue. Discrimination will continue to be condemned and will be discovered and penalized at higher rates. Hiring managers should take extra precaution to use compliant and progressive hiring practices.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Recently, a fellow consultant and I hosted a forum for professionals in southeastern Wisconsin to discuss challenges with diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives within our community's businesses. We brainstormed solutions and best practices for igniting and sustaining change. During our short time together, the group unanimously agreed most business leaders do not know where to start; therefore, perpetuate the cycle of inactivity. And those organizations who begin DE&I programs, lack commitment and do not continue their efforts. Their programs become a one-, or two-time, event vs. a strategy that takes hold and changes culture.

Some large organizations have officially declared their intentions to become an inclusive company. Those with strong strategies in place to enforce their declaration are making some progress. Most smaller companies do not have resources dedicated to DE&I efforts and most do not even have it on their radar.

Education and training around DE&I are keys for employees at all levels; however, leaders must carry the torch and demonstrate the behaviors and commitment to change in order to realize change within their company culture.

Undoubtedly, there is pressure to do *something*. But a one-time training or event can do more harm than good. Consider assessing your company policies and procedures from recruiting and hiring practices to performance management and promotion systems. And don't forget the daily standard operating procedures which should be audited for equity and inclusion, as well. Contact HR Pro Consulting LLC to get started.

Fast Facts

- 1 in 4 US employees plan to leave their employer as the pandemic subsides
- 87% of Americans who began working remotely during the pandemic was to continue at least one day a week
- Employee turnover due to racial inequity has cost \$172 billion in the last 5 years

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.

- Diversity, equity and inclusion assessment
- 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 assessment



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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.