

HR Connections

2nd Quarter
2019

President's Message

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” This well-known quote is habit #5 from Stephen Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. It emphasizes the importance of active listening, with the intent of truly hearing the message that’s being presented, not half-listening while thinking about how you’re going to respond. It’s a simple concept in principle, and I’ve found it to be a very powerful strategy for working through conflict in the workplace.

When an employee is upset with a co-worker, a subordinate, or a supervisor, they’ll often come to HR to talk about the problem. They want to feel heard. They want to be validated. They want the problem solved. But at the same time, if they’re at the point where they feel they need to go to HR, their emotions could be high. They may not clearly communicate the problem and it may seem like they’re rambling, or all over the place with their thoughts.

Part of our job is to listen carefully – not just to the words being said, but the message beneath the words – to truly UNDERSTAND the employee’s concerns. For example, a new manager joins a department full of long-tenured employees. After a few weeks, one of the employees might come to you and say, “My new boss is horrible”, then tell you all about the things the new boss has done that the employee doesn’t like: changed their job responsibilities, changed some procedures, enforced policies more strictly than the previous manager, etc.

A traditional response to this employee might be telling them the new manager is going to do some things differently, and that they need to accept the changes if they want to continue working in that department. But the employee will just hear “life’s tough, deal with it”, which won’t make the employee feel better, and will probably bring their morale down even more.

By taking the time to carefully listen to everything the employee is saying and seeking to understand the employee we have an opportunity to identify the root of the problem (the manager took away the employee’s favorite part of the job, the procedure that changed was a one the employee had worked hard to create, etc.). Only once we understand what the employee is really trying to tell us – what they’re really upset about – will we be able to work toward a meaningful solution.

If we can help the employee feel their voice has been heard, and that we understand their concerns, the highly-charged emotions will usually recede. At that point the employee will be more receptive to what we say to them. Maybe we’ll be able to mediate a discussion between them and their manager to compromise on some of the recent changes they’re so upset about. But if the situation isn’t something that’s going to change, we should focus on guiding the employee toward understanding the reason behind the manager’s decision.

We often spend a lot of time telling employees the “what” (a new policy, for example) and the “how” (do this instead of that), but the “why” is what they often want to hear. Often, once an employee understands the reasoning behind the decision, they’re more willing to accept it. If the “why” is “because I said so”, the employee will view the manager as a power-hungry dictator. But if the “why” is more meaningful – like “because we have to comply with a new law” or “because when you do it this way, you’ll save time” – it changes the conversation.

So, the next time an employee comes to you for help, seek to understand their perspective and the “why” behind their emotions. Only once you understand the employee, will you be able to offer an effective solution.



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Katie Quackenbush
HRLA President
President@hrlact.org

Fundamentals of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 4/16/19 at the Norwich Holiday Inn



Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within complex organizational and community systems is often difficult to achieve. One of the biggest challenges for HR Professionals is developing methods to value, engage, and leverage DEI in the workplace. Minority Inclusion Project is an innovative organization that helps nonprofits, public agencies, and private businesses integrate DEI into their organizational framework using a systems-thinking approach.

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In this presentation, Jamal Jimerson brings us up to speed on what has been found to be effective in advancing DEI in the workplace. His presentation is an introduction to the fundamentals of DEI, an explanation of why DEI matters for HR professionals, and real-world solutions for practitioners.

About the Speaker:

Jamal Jimerson is the Founder / Executive Director of Minority Inclusion Project and Managing Partner for Thought Partner Solutions where he is a leader in regional efforts to close the nonprofit racial leadership gap as a trainer, race-equity coach, facilitator, and consultant. Jamal has almost 20 years of public service experience and has given several invited presentations and keynotes on race-equity, diversity, and inclusive leadership for regional and national conferences, colleges, and universities. Known for being “real” in his facilitation, presentation, and interpersonal communication style, Jamal leverages his personal background, professional experiences, and academic credentials as a resource in race-equity and inclusion based strategic planning, program development, and philanthropy. He holds a B.A. in Communications (University of Bridgeport), an M.A. in Business Communications (Trident University), and an M.S. in Human Services (Capella University). His recent awards include 100 Men of Color (2017) and Hartford Business Journal’s 40 Under Forty (2017).

1.0 SHRM & HRCI CREDIT APPROVED





May 8th Event

5:30pm

Norwich Holiday Inn

Addressing Substance Abuse and Mental Health Challenges Event

When a good employee's performance suddenly declines, there could be a number of reasons. But what should you do if you suspect (or have knowledge of) a mental health and/or substance abuse issue? Join us to gain insight into the growing problem of mental health and substance abuse, learn the signs and symptoms employees might exhibit, and get information on drug testing, the ADA, and whether it matters if the employee is impaired by an illegal drug or something legally prescribed. Our panelists will also discuss the EAP referral process, as well as what treatment and recovery might be like for the employees.

About the Presenters:

Liz Westcott, LCSW is the Manager of the Employee Assistance and Worksite Wellness Services at United Services, Inc. . As a licensed clinical social worker, Liz works with clients who present with a variety of concerns and helps them address problems or finds the resources to do so. She also consults with and supports managers to assist them when employees are having behavioral or performance issues.

Patricia E. Reilly is the chair of Murtha Cullina's Labor and Employment Group. She is an experienced litigator who represents clients in a wide range of cases. In addition to maintaining an active litigation practice, Tricia counsels clients on a variety of employment-related issues including hiring, firing, and discipline; wage and hour; state and federal FMLA; sexual harassment investigations and prevention; Title IX; pregnancy and disability accommodation; and avoidance of employment discrimination liability. Tricia received her B.A. from Wesleyan University and her J.D. from University of California, Berkeley School of Law.

Deb Hinchey has worked in the medical/social work field for many years. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Eastern Connecticut University and a Master's of Social Work from UCONN School of Social Work. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and her work experience includes case management for older adults who lived independently in the community who were at risk of institutionalization. She has been involved in hospice care for both the Center for Hospice Care and Hartford Hospital Hospice and Home Care. She served for four years as a Norwich City Councilwoman followed by four years as the Mayor of Norwich. She is currently the Vice President of Behavior Health at United Community and Family Services.

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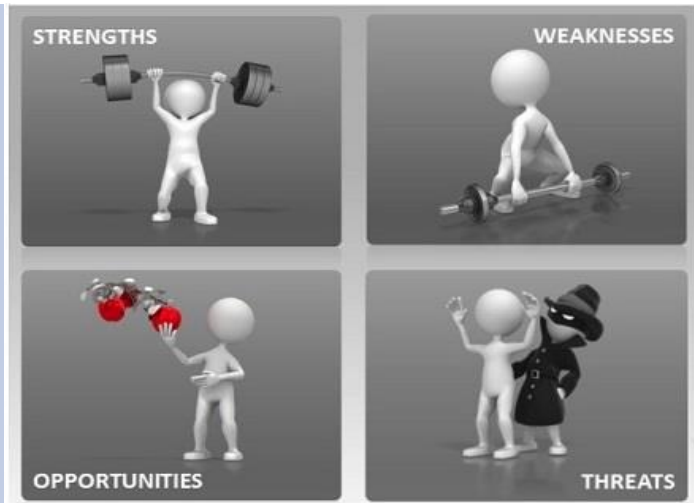
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1.0 SHRM & HRCI (Business)
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Strategic Planning in Human Resources Event on June 12th



Human Resource Departments are shifting from transactional to strategic work. That prompts the need for us to explore our abilities to contribute and align to our organizational strategy and strategic initiatives. Are you curious what other HRLA members are doing to leverage their strengths and opportunities strategically? Join us to practice and share two important tools for Strategic Planning. At this learning event, you will:

- Analyze your HR department's current situation applying the S.W.O.T. Analysis tool
- Identify your HR department's strategic priorities by employing the T.O.W.S. Analysis tool

Presenter Bio:

Leslie Bartholomew has worked in the Organizational Development and Learning capacity within healthcare for over twenty-five years. She has recently pivoted to apply her skills in the retail environment where she works for Ocean State Job Lot as a Regional Performance Support Manager. She is also a small business owner of SynergyGlue Consulting where her purpose is to help a business strategy and its people stick together to meet goals.

Leslie has been involved with SHRM and ATD throughout her professional career. Leslie received her undergraduate degree from Hood College, in Frederick MD and her first graduate degree from University of New Haven, CT. She is working towards her second graduate degree in Organizational & Strategic Leadership from Amberton University, TX.



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Recertify Your SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP in 2019! IT'S EASY!

If you are at least one year into your recertification period and have the required 60 credits or more, you can recertify by going to your SHRM certification portal. It's easy!

If you recertify before your current three-year recertification period ends, your recertification period remains the same (it is not shortened), and the new recertification period begins as previously scheduled. Recertification periods begin with the month following your birth month. Once your recertification application is complete and has been approved, your next three-year recertification period will begin from your existing end date.

Example:

- Initial certification period: May 2016 (took exam)–July 2019 (birth month)
- Recertified: December 2018
- Next three-year recertification period: July 2019–July 2022

Credits you earn between when you recertify and the end of the current period do not apply to the next recertification period, but you won't have to track them, either.

Don't wait, if you have the credits, do it now! Log onto the SHRM Website for more details and directions: www.SHRMCertification.org

Questions? Contact Sandy Spencer or Janine Dunn.



Your 2019 Chapter Leadership Team

-Executive Board-

President:	Katie Quackenbush
President-Elect:	Kemberly Core
Secretary:	Sandy Lamotte
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-Other Board Members-

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Diversity & Inclusion -	Izzy Williams
Member Engagement -	Maria D'Amelia



Have something to contribute to the newsletter such as event pictures or interesting HR articles? Send your contributions to communications@hrlact.org