

# HR Connections

3rd Quarter  
2019

## President's Message

Working in HR is hard. We deal with discipline, terminations, and conflict. We get torn between helping managers fill open head counts, and a lack of qualified candidates. We have to play both sides – representing management to the employees, and representing the employees to management – and still find a way to get everyone to trust us. We're expected to have a solution to every problem, and if we don't have the solution there's an expectation that we'll create a magical policy that will prevent the problem from ever happening again. And because we need to maintain confidentiality and respect employee's privacy, we often have few - if any - coworkers we can talk to when things get tough. Working in HR can be frustrating and overwhelming.

But it can also be very rewarding and inspiring. We provide training, and watch the timid employee blossom as her confidence grows. We create recognition programs, and see morale improve because employees feel appreciated. We hire or promote an employee, and later learn how that opportunity was a pivotal moment in their personal life. We oversee payroll, insurance, time off, and retirement plans, and know we are helping our employees (and their families) beyond their time at work.

On paper it looks like a nice balance between the good and the bad parts of the job. So why is it that when we talk about our HR experiences, we tend to swap horror stories more often than success stories? Why does it seem easier to remember the negative things than the positive ones?

Novelist Chuck Palahniuk said "It's so hard to forget pain, but it's even harder to remember sweetness. We have no scar to show for happiness." Our HR "scars" are those ongoing reminders of things that didn't go the way we would have liked. They include unemployment claims, lawsuits, a decline in morale, and sleepless nights replaying a difficult conversation or thinking about one to come. These things can consume our time and pull our thoughts in a negative direction.

Positive thoughts are an important part of staying mentally balanced, so we need to find ongoing reminders of the good aspects of our job to offset those negative thoughts. One easy idea is to grab a notebook and write down one good thing – one "win" – every day. At first it may be challenging, but it will get easier with practice. The wins will sometimes be big events, like a promotion or a conversion to a new vendor that goes smoothly, but wins can also be found in all the little, routine parts of the day. A meeting that ends early. Less emails in your inbox at the end of the day than when the day began. A productive block of time without interruptions.

When we start looking for positive things, we'll find them everywhere and begin to reprogram our minds to balance positive and negative thoughts. Writing down the "wins" gives us something tangible to lift us up on a day when all we seem to see are "scars". There will still be days that we feel overwhelmed, or start to question why we're in this crazy line of work, but a quick trip down memory lane can serve as a reminder of the positive impact we have, the contributions we make, and the reasons we love what we do.



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*Katie Quackenbush*  
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## Congratulations to HRLA! EXCEL Platinum Award Recipient

SHRM  
EXCEL  
2018

**Norwich, CT May 28, 2019** — SHRM (the Society for Human Resource Management) recently awarded the Human Resource Leadership Association (HRLA) its prestigious EXCEL Platinum Award for the Chapter's accomplishments in 2018.

The EXCEL award aligns individual chapters' and state councils' activities with SHRM's aspirations for the HR profession. The award recognizes major accomplishments, strategic activities, and tactical initiatives that elevate the profession of human resources.

"So much of SHRM's success in shaping better workplaces—where employers and employees can thrive together— is owed to the hard work of our chapters and state councils such as HRLA. Through their courage and leadership, HRLA is driving true, measurable progress toward the healthy, productive, and dynamic workplaces of tomorrow," said Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, president and chief executive officer of SHRM. "Awarding this Platinum Excel Award is just one small way for SHRM to recognize and celebrate the big steps this chapter has taken this past year."

The EXCEL Award can be earned at four levels: bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Each level has a prescribed set of requirements and accomplishments that must be met. HRLA will receive recognition in SHRM publications and at conferences, a logo to display on its website, and information to share with its members about the significance of this award.

HRLA focused on four goals:

1. Growing our chapter to over 100 members by the end of 2018 and increasing our visibility amongst business leaders.
2. help future HR leaders better understand the various paths an HR career can take. This helped our chapter strengthen our relationship with our student chapter.
3. We needed new blood on the Board and wanted to encourage more members to become involved at some level.
4. Our goal was to increase awareness of the SHRM-CP and -SCP certification program and recertification requirements. Encouraging HR professionals to become certified helps establish credibility in our field.

For more information about HRLA, visit [www.hrlact.org](http://www.hrlact.org)

**Media:** For more information, contact Katie Quackenbush of HRLA at 860.230.7286 and [president@hrlact.org](mailto:president@hrlact.org)



### **About SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management)**

SHRM, the Society for Human Resource Management, creates better workplaces where employers and employees thrive together. As the voice of all things work, workers and the workplace, SHRM is the foremost expert, convener and thought leader on issues impacting today's evolving workplaces. With 300,000+ HR and business executive members in 165 countries, SHRM impacts the lives of more than 115 million workers and families globally. Learn more at [SHRM.org](http://SHRM.org) and on Twitter [@SHRM](https://twitter.com/SHRM).

## Sweeping FMLA Changes Coming to Connecticut Employers



Connecticut joined neighboring states New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island and became the latest state to pass a paid leave bill. The legislation bill makes sweeping changes to current Connecticut FMLA laws, although the benefits would not become available to employees until January 1, 2022.

The funds for paid leave will come from employee contributions of a set percentage of their wages taxable for Social Security purposes, up to 0.5%. There is no employer contribution.

The new law will provide up to 12 weeks of replacement wages, payable on a sliding scale up to a maximum of 95 % for minimum-wage earners, capped at 60 times the minimum wage. Employees needing leave because of pregnancy could get an additional two weeks. (The benefit can be reduced to ensure fund solvency.) Additionally, starting January 1, 2022, Connecticut FMLA benefits will apply to all private sector employers with at least one employee, a significant change from the current 75 employee threshold.

While the new legislation shortens the amount of leave from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, it also shortens the length of time an employee must work before becoming eligible from 12 months and 1000 hours to 3 months with no minimum hour requirement. Employed individuals must have earned at least \$2,325 in a “base period” to be eligible for paid leave benefits. Individuals who are unemployed may apply for benefits if they meet the earnings requirement and were employed within the 12 weeks before they applied for benefits.

Other changes include a provision that employers requiring employees to use employer-provided paid leave must allow their employees to retain at least two weeks of paid leave and the expansion of the definition of “family member” to include siblings, parent-in-laws, grandparents, grandchildren, or “an individual related to the employee by blood or affinity whose close association the employee shows to be the equivalent of those family relationships.” Employers must also allow leave for reasons covered under the state’s family violence leave law.

In addition to private sector employees, the legislation covers non-union State employees, as well as unionized municipal and local or regional board of employees whose bargaining units have negotiated inclusion in the paid leave program. In those cases where unionized public employees have negotiated inclusion, non-union employees for those employers would also be covered.

Employers can also provide benefits through a private plan, which must provide their employees with at least the same level of benefits, under the same conditions and employee costs, as the new program. Employers can apply for approval of a private program, but it must provide equivalent benefits and meet other requirements, including approval by a majority vote of the employees.

Beginning July 1, 2022, employers must provide notice to employees at the time of hire and again each year. The notice must describe FMLA entitlement and terms of use, explain that retaliation is prohibited, and inform the employee that of the right to file a complaint with the Connecticut DOL for violations of the Connecticut FMLA.

Although employers have over a year to prepare for these changes, the legislation will undeniably create concern and stress for many employers who have never had to consider or deal with FMLA leave before. Reviewing your policies and understanding this law is going to take time and employers would be wise to get a head start.

The attorneys in the [Labor and Employment Law](#) practice group at Berchem Moses, PC are available to assist you with navigating these changes to paid leave, as well as any other labor and employment related matters.



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[My Profile](#)

All HRLA Events  
Registration Link:  
[www.hrlact.org](http://www.hrlact.org)

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are an HRLA member hoping to become more active within the chapter, there are many opportunities available!

Communications &  
Marketing Committee

Membership Committee

Programs Committee

Being a volunteer is such a rewarding experience and the connections you make with one another are lifelong.

For more information, send an email to [volunteering@hrlact.org](mailto:volunteering@hrlact.org)



## July's Summer Social



Summer is here and that means it's time for our summer social! Join us on July 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at the beautiful Stonington Vineyards located at 523 Taugwonk Rd, Stonington.

**Bring a Guest and be entered into a raffle for a \$25 Visa card.**

Delicious food and wine! Fun activities to help you make new connections with HR professionals. Fantastic give-aways, a 50/50 raffle to raise money for the SHRM Foundation (cash only), and much more! Many thanks to our sponsors!



# The Employee Experience

Carrying on our conversation of *Building a Culture of Accountability*, attendees will have an opportunity to brainstorm ideas with one another to discover their role surrounding the culture, onboarding, and retention in creating a fantastic workplace.

## **SPECIAL OFFER for this Event Only!**

If you are an HRLA member, and join SHRM at this event, the CT SHRM State Council will offer you a \$25 incentive off your SHRM Membership. You can use this incentive in conjunction with the SHRM membership incentive, also!

If you are a SHRM member, and join the HRLA Chapter at this event, the CT SHRM State Council will offer the same \$25 incentive off your HRLA Membership! (no transfer of membership from another CT SHRM chapter to HRLA.)

**NOTE: These terrific incentives are only for THE FIRST 20 first-time members who sign up! Discounts not available for membership renewals. Arrive early! Doors open at 5pm.**

This event is FREE for members of HRLA and other local CT SHRM chapters.

\$25 for non-members.

**All attendees must register.**

1.5 SHRM and HRCI credits pending



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**About the Speaker:** David O'Brien is the President of WorkChoice Solutions. His Human Resources and Organizational Development consulting career spans 30 years within a variety of industries. In his current role, David is responsible for providing Leadership and Team Effectiveness training, coaching and consulting services to organizations throughout the United States.

David is strongly committed to community service and is actively involved in many community organizations. He has authored two books - *The Navigator's Handbook, 101 Leadership Lessons for Work & Life*, and *The Navigator's Compass, 101 Steps Toward Leadership Excellence* - along with numerous articles which have appeared in a wide range of publications.



## Have You Renewed Yet?

Most memberships ended on  
December 31st

Renew online at [www.hrlact.org](http://www.hrlact.org).



[www.hrlact.org](http://www.hrlact.org)

[www.facebook.com/HRLAECT/](https://www.facebook.com/HRLAECT/)

[www.linkedin.com/groups/2100402](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2100402)



## GROW YOUR HR NETWORK

In Eastern CT by becoming an HRLA Sponsor! Space is limited at most events. Sign up NOW to reserve your spot!

\$500 – single event  
\$800 – two events

Contact  
[info@hrlact.org](mailto:info@hrlact.org)  
for more information!



## 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](http://www.SHRMCertification.org)

**Questions?** Contact Sandy Spencer or Janine Dunn.



## Your 2019 Chapter Leadership Team

### -Executive Board-

<b>President:</b>	Katie Quackenbush
<b>President-Elect:</b>	Kemberly Core
<b>Secretary:</b>	Sandy Lamotte
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Cheryl Calderado
<b>VP Membership:</b>	Davina Pegge
<b>VP Programs:</b>	Nancy Tanner

### -Other Board Members-

<b>Certifications -</b>	Sandy Spencer
<b>Community Relations -</b>	Janine Dunn
<b>Legislative Affairs -</b>	Meredith Diette
<b>SHRM Foundation -</b>	Maria FisherProulx
<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion -</b>	Izzy Williams
<b>Member Engagement -</b>	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](mailto:communications@hrlact.org)