

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



HR Trends:

- Generation Z (those born in 1995 or later) are on the way to becoming the fastest growing workforce population; they generally prefer to communicate on and off the job on their cell phones and expect to be able to engage the application process on a mobile device.
- As of 2017, nearly 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. live with some level of mental illness, which undoubtedly affects our workplaces.
- States continue to evaluate the need for employers to re-classify gig workers, generally contractors, as employees.
- Vaping is a new addiction employers must consider in their approach to supporting employees health.
- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2019 was the 22nd straight month that the number of job openings was higher than the number of unemployed job seekers.
- According to SHRM, 4 in 10 employees consider themselves to be social activists and 38% have spoken up to support or criticize their employers actions over a controversial issue that affects society .

Tips for Practicing Active Listening

Active listening can be a valuable tool to employ when working to understand and collaboratively problem solve in the workplace. Here are some tips for how you might employ this skill more effectively in your workplace—or whenever you are in problem-solving mode.

According to Jathan Janove, JD, there are 3 practices you can adopt to help make your active listening more effective. The first one is to consider your period to question mark ratio when in conversation. Work to be aware of how often you are telling versus asking—good communication requires understanding first

and this facilitated by asking questions. Additionally, you build trust when you show that you want to understand the situation fully before drawing conclusions. Next, use EAAR (Explore, Acknowledge, Apply, and Respond). Begin this with an exploratory open-ended question such as, "I hear that you . . ." "What are the reasons that you believe this action should be taken?" Followed by "Tell me more," "Share some examples," or "Can you clarify . . .?" Once you have gathered the information, verbally summarize it and ask for acknowledgement that your understanding is correct. Adjust your summary until you are in agreement. In

your summary, apply words and phrases that you hear from the other to help assure that you are in alignment with each other in your understanding. Showing understanding for what the individual chose to do may not mean that you completely agree. If this is the case, you can then respond by working with the person to make a plan that adapts or changes the original action or desired action to one that is more appropriate. Many managers find that this approach helps keep the conversation collaborative and solution-oriented.

On the other hand, sometimes you have to deliver

bad news or a decision that you know may meet with resistance or disappointment. It may be tempting to break the news gently, but oftentimes that will come across as disingenuous. It is best to confront by making a direct statement and then following up with questions such as: "What do you think?" "What questions do you have?" or "How do you see things at this point?" Assuming that there is disagreement, you can then move into EARR mode and begin exploring where they agree, where they disagree and what ideas they may have.

Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.
—Oscar Wilde

Considering the Four-Day Workweek

According to Benefit News, Ford was the first U.S. company to standardize the 5-day, 40-hour workweek. This took place in 1926; it took until 1940, with much lobbying, organizing and legal change for this to become the standard. Until then some companies had gone so far as to lock their employees in to keep them working longer hours. Even with this change, the U.S. has a reputation for "overworking." With technological advances, this has become even more so.

According to SHRM's 2019 benefits survey, 32% of U.S. employers offer employees the option of a 4-day, 40-hour workweek. Another 15% offer employees a 4-day, 32-hour workweek—some even offer this without a pay cut.

The case for the 4-day workweek is based on

factors that include: 1. A shorter workweek pushes employees to be more productive with the time they have. Some authors on this topic suggest that it may be in part due to elimination or shortening of meetings, lessening of administrative work, more creative ways of working and better prioritization. According to Andrew Barnes, the author of *The 4 Day Week*, most workplaces who implement this find that productivity does not stay the same, but goes up. 2. It encourages a better work-life balance. 3. It improves employee morale and lowers life stress (more time for exercise, improved relationships, etc.). 4. It may also be attractive to potential candidates for job openings. Particularly, this can be appealing to workers from the Millennial generation forward, who tend to prioritize flexibility in their work schedule

and the ability to engage in other life activities. Socially, it benefits parents of small children by saving on day-care costs and giving them the opportunity for more quality time with their kids. When considering whether this is a good choice for your business, experts say that having a productive work culture to begin with is critical. Additionally, if your business is such that you are open 5-7 days a week, you may also need to employ more staff. However, the fact that you are not asking for a 5-day a week commitment could expand your applicant pool. Customers are another consideration. Even if your business is not such that it needs to be open 5 or more days a week, your customers may feel that they need you to be open and may feel that they have

been negatively impacted. In 2008, state government workers in Utah were allowed to cut back to 4 days a week. Despite the rise in morale and productivity, taxpayers were not happy with the change and eventually Utah returned to 5-days weeks. It's important to involve your customers, employees and vendors in your exploration of whether this is a good option for your organization. You can also give thought to implementing the change gradually by cutting back to 4.5 days—or gradually implementing it through departments. Consider ramifications for part-time employees, employees on leave and other exceptional circumstances. Stay open to adjusting as needed, but be sure to clearly write and communicate your policy and intentions for this change.