

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



“Your insurance provides coverage for catastrophic events — but a bad haircut doesn't qualify.”

Did you know that:

- HSA limits are rising minimally for 2020 to \$3,550 for individuals and \$7,100 for family?
- Based on SHRM's Benefits Survey, the percentage of employers offering long-term care insurance as part of their benefits package increased from 22% in 2017 to 32% in 2018?
- The IRS has made exceptions in 401k regulations by allowing employers to provide matching funds (up to the plan's maximum match %) to an employee's 401k account equal to the employee's student loan payments?
- According to Duke University, 48.6% of 212 U.S. chief financial officers interviewed believe the nation will be in recession by the end of 2019?
- As skills training declines in the U.S. the job market for skilled labor is heating up and 84% of employers say they are seeing a shortage in skilled job applicants; 54% of employers respond to the shortage by providing additional training?
- Honing listening skills can be the best strategy to grow your ability as a good manager; good communication is built on good listening?

Disconnecting While on Vacation

Vacation should be a time to truly rest, relax, recharge, unhook and gain fresh perspective. But, for most of us, it's challenging to separate from work. Technology has certainly contributed further to this dilemma. Work culture, personal style, and business needs also contribute to this. As a reward, businesses have begun to offer to pay employees to disconnect while on vacation. It is all well and good to say how important it is to do this, but how do we support ourselves, our co-workers and our employees in actually doing it?

Two articles I read offer suggestions which might be of assistance. In the first article the author, Jenni Maier, addressed the excuses we may have for not disconnecting completely. She uses them all herself, but on her trip outside of the country she decided that she was not going to check her inbox. Here is a

summary of the six main excuses she (and we) tends to use for checking in at work while on vacation. 1. I'll Be Swamped With Work When I Return. This may be true, but unless you make a full effort to work (Maier calls this a workcation—working a full day from a vacation-like location), these spot checks are more likely to stress you out than be effective. 2. Still, I'd Prefer to Know What is Going to be Waiting for Me When I Return. Instead of using your inbox as a “to-do list” for when you get back, make a list before you leave. List the things you know will be coming up. Although other items will come up while you are gone, you will most likely have a pretty comprehensive sense of what you will face when you return. 3. What if Someone Needs Something From Me and I Hold Them Up By Not Responding? Communicate with your most reliable co-workers. Let them know the dates you will be un-

reachable and ask what you can do in advance to cover the bases. Then, a few days before you go, follow up again. This time, add that you will not be checking messages and name a point person(s) who can handle issues in your stead and who knows how to reach you. Tell your point person(s), in the case of an emergency to please text you. 4. I Feel Guilty Asking People to Help Me While I Sit on Beach. It's your turn this time. Next time, it could be theirs. If that doesn't work, bring them a gift of appreciation. 5. But Here's the Thing, I am a Very Important Person. Take a step back. Is this really life or death, or can your point people handle this for you? If not, there is still the “text me in an emergency message.” 6. Okay, if I Am Being Honest, Sometimes I Check My Inbox Without Even Realizing I'm Doing It. First, turn off all notifica-

tions. Second, put all work related apps in a “Do Not Open Folder” on your phone. This puts one more step and a reminder between you and checking in.

Lisa Abramson, executive coach, offer seven tips for how to enjoy your time. 1. Set an intention for your vacation: How do you want to feel? What support will you need? 2. Make a list of your wants and needs. What do you want to do while your gone? Is it doable? If not, rethink it. Tell your travel buddies—invite them to support your efforts. 3. Set device rules and limits. 4. Set expectations back at the office and set out of office messages. 5. Build in time for reflection during your vacation. It may spark new ideas and open new directions. 6. We have a pre-programmed negativity bias—counter that by practicing gratitude and soak in those positive experiences. 7. Make space for reintegration—don't head straight back to the office upon your return.

New Pay Equity Law in Washington State

On May 9, 2019, Governor Jay Insley signed the most recent pay equity legislation banning employers from asking for pay history and requiring them to be more transparent about their pay scale. It is an amendment to the existing Equal Opportunity Pay Act (EOPA) originally enacted in March of 2018. This new law takes effect on July 28, 2019 and applies to all sizes of employers. This puts Washington in the company of 15 other states that have implemented bans on salary history questions.

Most obviously, this means changing your employment practices so you do not ask for salary history. This might include changing the job history section on your employment application. It also means being more willing to share salary, both internally and externally. The amended EOPA requires employers to provide a “wage scale or salary range” to a current employee when an employer offers him or her an internal transfer, new position or promotion, if the employee requests the infor-

mation. The law clarifies that if no wage scale or salary range exists, the employer must then provide “the minimum wage or salary expectation” set by the employer prior to posting the position, or that was set prior to the employer's offering the transfer or promotion to the current employee.

Employers who already practice compensation transparency have an advantage in preparing for this change. More importantly, however, they also have an advantage in that by doing so, they are building trust in a meaningful

I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I needed to be.

—Douglas Adams

way with both their existing employees and job applicants. This can improve employee retention and strengthen your reputation as an employer of choice. So, although this trend to prohibit questions of pay history has gained traction primarily from the movement to bridge the pay gap between men and women, it may also have the effect of fostering integrity and building trust overall.