

HOT SHEET

Volume 8, Issue 2
February 22, 2021



Full-Circle HR



"We should never have hired that Waldo chap."

HR Trends:

- According to the latest Workforce Report from LinkedIn, the hiring rate for graduates of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) rose 5.9%/year from 2016 to 2019; the rate of increase for non-HBCUs was 1.3%/year.
- According to *The Journey to Equity and Inclusion*, 62% of HR professionals say their organizations have invested significantly in diversity initiatives; 70% believe that their organizations should be doing more to create opportunities for people of color.
- Unfortunately, SHRM studies have also found that there is a dearth of practices for managing intersectionality—overlapping and interdependent systems of different identity characteristics such as race, gender, age, and sexuality.
- In any management position, but particularly when stepping into a new management role, it is critical that you clearly convey your expectations, communication preferences and management style to your reports. This is even more true during times of remote work.
- Projections for the future suggest that up to 40% of employees may need to work in a remote model.

Pets and COVID—Pets at Work

When I saw this article offering considerations and suggestions regarding reducing stress for pets and their people who are beginning to return to work, as a dog person I was immediately drawn to it. However, beyond these very practical suggestions for employers and the pet owners, it also addresses the topic of service animals and emotional support animals.

During COVID many people acquired pets and they, and those who already had pets, found themselves more available on a daily basis to share person/pet companionship. They also

engaged in new habits such as more walking breaks during the day. In many ways this sounds like a great emotional and physical wellness plan that could help keep medical costs down for everyone! Employers may want to find ways to extend some flexibility that allows for some of these new habits to continue. One suggestion is to revisit pets at work policies, consider mental and physical health breaks during the day, and allow flexibility during the transition. Additionally, the employees with pets can begin to implement their pre-COVID routines gradu-

ally so that they and their pets can become accustomed to the imminent routine change. This makes it less stressful on everyone when the separation happens.

As an employer, you may be considering a pets at work policy. Whether you choose to allow this or not, it is important that you be aware that you may still need to allow pets in the workplace for employees with disabilities. The ADA generally requires that service animals be allowed onto an employer's property. These are different from comfort or emotional

support animals because service animals must be trained to take a specific action to assist a person with a disability. However, in some instances the line is blurred—if an emotional support animal assists a disabled employee in performing the essential functions of their job through that support, then it may be a reasonable accommodation to allow the pet at work. An example of this may be in the case of post-traumatic stress disorder; engaging in interactive dialogue with the employee about this will help you discern if it is a reasonable accommodation.

Resilience and Happiness in Times of COVID

In these times of COVID, if we are to find some level of ability to navigate the circumstances, we have been invited to become comfortable with reality. This may help us find satisfaction, contentment and then, yes, resilience. Seems like a funny thing to be talking about when so much of what we hear in the news is about denying reality—but those of us actually trying to operate within this dysfunction hopefully understand the difference between reality and what the pundits are spewing. In an article from the London Business School, the author, Aine Doris, talks about understanding the difference between pleasure and happiness. Pleasure in the standard definition is something that comes to us from the outside—even

when remembering things that we enjoyed, the pleasure is derived from the outside. We hope that it will make us happy, but since pleasure is fleeting, so is the 'happiness.' Why this is important for you not only as an individual, but also as an employer, is that happy employees are more productive and healthier. In these times we are not only faced with challenges to our physical safety and well-being but also to look at how our mental well-being impacts our physical well-being and our general ability to function.

In this article Doris offers a suggestion from Selin Kesebir, (Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior) that happiness is a skill of mind that can be learned like any other skill. True or not, I thought the following suggestions offer valuable ways

to adjust our perspective. Kesebir's offers a light of hope that happiness is what emerges when we become comfortable with reality. Her suggestions include: **1. Know that life is difficult and suffering is inevitable.** I believe that the dissonance between what we expect and what is true creates much of our unhappiness. Technology and improving conditions have led us to believe we should be able to be comfortable. The pandemic has shown us otherwise. **2. Expect to have negative experiences and emotions and accept them.** My experience is that by doing this we adjust our expectations and build our resilience like we build a muscle. **3. Stop arguing with reality.** Railing against reality is a waste of energy and capacity to do

When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us. —Helen Keller

other more productive and possibly happiness inducing things. I believe that resistance is at least 50% of the pain we feel. **4. Adopt a positive outlook.** "Our attention is like a spotlight — its beam illuminates whatever we focus on and that becomes our reality." **5. Don't buy into everything that pops into your head.** Fusing with thoughts and feelings that pop up can result in your taking them to be facts when they are actually only temporary waves that will pass. Check them out and refocus on the positives and learn to build on those aspects of yourself. Figure out how to replicate your successes and learn from the failures but do not indulge the negative.