

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



"What did you take away from the meeting?"

HR Trends:

- More employers today turn to third parties to administer COBRA; historically a challenging compliance notification process, it has become more challenging over the last 2 years. Failure to comply is leading to litigation against employers.
- In California, workers normally accrue overtime for hours worked over 8/day. However, employers may apply for an Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) which can exempt them from accruing overtime—there are specific steps the employer must follow to get an AWS.
- According to the US Department of Labor, the number of workers continuing to file for unemployment is the lowest rate since January 17, 1970.
- The 8th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that employers are not necessarily required, under federal law, to provide job applicants with criminal convictions a chance to explain a negative background check before rescinding a job offer.
- People in the Asian-American & Pacific Islander demographic often are stereo-typed as the 'Model Minority'—possibly making them less likely to be considered for top level roles.

Managing Volatile Employees

Considering the past two plus years, many, if not all, of us are under a great deal of stress. And, with rising prices, the stressors do not seem to be abating. This makes it even more critical for us to maintain awareness of and contact with potentially volatile (or high-risk) employees. There are some practices employers can use to get ahead of possible volatile situations in the workplace. In a SHRM article, Dr. Steve Albrecht*, provides suggestions for Administrative, Security, Information, and Mental Health Management that can proactively protect your workplace and your employees from violence. Some things you can do **Administratively** include:

1. Humane Supervision and Treatment. Often HR Reps and Supervisors are targeted by violent acts by current or former employees. It is so important to really listen to staff, even as they vent, and to skillfully coach them toward a more balanced perspective—and not show frustration or act dismissively. 2. Coaching meetings when appropriate and before the employee is at risk of being fired. 3. Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) with specific and attainable goals. 4. Creative solutions that might include reasonable accommodations while the employee is under stress. 5. Strong and consistent progressive discipline that is appropriate to the stage of the behavior. 6. Benevolent

severance pay. This can mean providing more severance when someone complies with behavioral requirements. **Security Management** suggestions are: 1. Ensure access control is enacted and maintained. Oftentimes employees will forego security for convenience and not lock doors, etc. 2. In an alert situation, employ security guards where appropriate. 3. Cyber access control & monitoring requires attention to and escalation as needed of all cyber threats. 4. Regular increased law enforcement presence/surveillance at varying times can be appropriate depending on the situation. 5. Implement home and work safety plans. **Information Management**

includes: 1. Review files and work history. 2. Forensic professional review can be helpful. 3. Monitor social media. 4. Get input from friends, family, and co-workers. **Mental Health** suggestions include: 1. Assessing potential suicidal or homicidal tendencies and differentiate these. 2. Implement an EAP, make clear its usefulness, and destigmatize its use. 3. Medication compliance awareness is subject to HIPAA privacy rules, but oftentimes employees dependent upon medication will tell a co-worker if they have stopped taking their medication. 4. Carefully consider any return-to-work strategies if you allow anyone who has made threats to return.

Thoughts about Re-Engaging Employees**

While reading a SHRM article about re-engaging dissatisfied employees, it prompted me to think about comments from applicants for various open positions. The most striking one is that, while money is still important for meeting their financial needs, once that need is met, the top priority is work that has meaning. As author, Laura Otting, put it in *The Limitless Leader*, which is a study based on a survey of 5,600 employees, they are seeking consonance. Consonance put simply means when 'what you do' matches 'who you are.'** Just typing that phrase creates the feeling of visceral resonance for me.

While I encourage you to read the full study, the key take-away points can be

summarized with these four suggestions: 1. **Aim for work-life alignment rather than work-life balance**—we have long heard about the mystical beast called 'work-life balance.' The issue is that it's really tough to find a work-life balance, particularly for workers aged 20-45 who are dealing with starting a family, buying a home, caring for aging parents, engaging in community causes, and much more. Work-life alignment in which what they do at work augments what they do in their time away from work is more attainable. Additionally, 65% of respondents said they want to have more control over which projects they are assigned to. Surprisingly, this control diminishes as they rise in the ranks and that has resulted in many

middle management employees to leave their jobs. Keep checking in with employees to evaluate their satisfaction with the overarching trajectory of their careers. 2. **Find out what drives them and work with them to reshape their role.** Find out what inspires them by keeping the lines of communication open. Having a good connection with their leaders was named as a desire by the majority of respondents and this gives you a path to understanding what motivates them. 3. **Engage them more fully in the recruitment process.** This means more than just allowing them to be a part in the final interview—it also means having them review the job description to ensure that the

Perhaps there is more sense in our nonsense and more nonsense in our 'sense' than we care to believe.
—David Bohm

role is still relevant as written. Get their input about the skills and abilities most needed for the role. Also have them take part in the interview process and in the onboarding/training process for the new hire. 4. **Connect their work to the larger picture.** In this survey 92.4% reported that they do better work when they understand how the quality of their work contributes to the strategic objectives of the organization, but only about half had this understanding. Connect the dots between high level objectives and how the day-to-day work they do contributes to those objectives.

* *Managing High-Risk Employees*, SHRM, Risk Management 2022, Dr. Steve Albrecht, PHR.

** *The Limitless Leader: Recruiting and Retaining Top Performers During the Great Resignation and Beyond*, Laura Gassner-Otting, January, 2022.