

# HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR

## HR Trends:

- A federal district court in Texas has ruled that Congress violated the constitution when it passed the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) resulting in the EEOC being stayed from enforcing this law in Texas.
- According to SHRM there has been an unexpected trend of employees choosing to retire. This could result in staffing concerns for employers.
- According to a survey by Boston Consulting Group, people of color are less likely to have their request for a disability accommodation approved than their white counterparts.
- The NLRB has weighed in on employers who banned certain Black Lives Matter logos depending upon how the logo was displayed. They supported Whole Foods for banning extraneous attire with the logo but did not do so when the logo was on an apron that was required for work.
- Even though inflation has cooled, over 50% of workers say that their paychecks are not keeping pace with inflation.
- While only 4% of employers do this currently, there is a growing trend of offering menopause benefits such as virtual care and hormone therapy.

## Championing Civility at Work

According to a recent SHRM survey of 1,000 people, 2/3 of them had experienced or witnessed incivility in the workplace within the last month; 57% said they experienced/witnessed it in the last week.\* According to this survey the three most common forms of incivility are addressing someone disrespectfully, interrupting or silencing another while speaking, and excessive monitoring/micromanaging. In today's political environment, violent language and incivility are rampant. For some people it seems to give permission to engage in this behavior without concern for consequence. The consequences when it shows up in the workplace are hurtful to the individual and in turn can create job dissatisfaction, turnover, dis-

rupted teamwork, unwillingness to openly share ideas resulting in reduced innovation and creativity, distrust, decreased customer satisfaction, and low morale. On the other hand, a kind word, a smile, or a sincere positive acknowledgement of someone's contribution can buoy a person's spirits for the whole day and ultimately have the exact opposite impact on your organization as does incivility. Some things you can do in your organization to promote civility, particularly in this election year, are: 1. Survey employees to see if incivility exists. Is it happening between employees, or between employees and vendors, or customers, or both? 2. Praise employees for positive performances. It is a natural human instinct to readily notice the

'threat' or what is wrong and it is easy to overlook what has gone right. Encourage your leaders in particular to turn this tendency on its head by looking for what is right and praiseworthy. Praise it. 3. Be alert and sensitive to employees' feelings. Don't discount them. Rather, if they don't make sense to you, reflect them back in a neutral way and then be curious about them by asking open-ended questions. Be tactful about where and when you do this. 4. Encourage respectful dissent related to tasks, strategies, and mission. If you see that someone is in disagreement encourage them to speak. If they are highly charged about it, encourage them to give their disagreement more thought, follow up later, or

ask them to put it in writing after thinking it out more fully. 5. Create diverse teams where different perspectives can be heard. 'Cross pollination' of your staff also strengthens your organization. 6. Encourage people to manage their own conflicts. Give them a resource if they need a neutral facilitator to help do this. 7. Provide training to handle conflict or recommend resources for this. De-escalation training such as Verbal Judo or Nonviolent Communication are options. These skills can be invaluable between staff, with customers and vendors, and in your employees' personal lives as well.

*What we once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us. — Helen Keller*

## Teamwork Between Gen Z and Baby Boomers

While we still have folks from the Silent Generation (born 1925-1945) in the workforce, the majority of the oldest generation are Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and the youngest of the generations are known as Gen Z (2001-2020). To the 'naked eye' these generations may look like night and day, but it is important to find common ground for our workers to get the most satisfaction and give their best effort at work.\*\* Toward this end, start by dispelling the stereotypes for all of the generations. Baby Boomers are typed as collaborative but averse to change; Gen X as independent but bleak; Millennials as driven but entitled; and Gen Z as progressive

but disloyal.\*\*\* Additionally, the prime motivator for Baby Boomers is often said to be job security and for Gen Z it is working for a cause they believe in. You can see that generalizations can offer some guidance so that we can be aware of the possible differences, but it is important to go below the surface assumptions. We all might value job security and working for a cause. On the other hand, there are some skills and qualities that the different generations can offer. The older generations offer historical/institutional knowledge which can also lead to wisdom and leadership. The younger generations are often much more tech savvy, offer a fresh perspective, and often ask

"why?" One Gen Z person told a story of her dad's frustration that he calls his direct reports and they respond via email. She wondered why he didn't just send a text! A survey by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) revealed that younger generations who are managed by older generations report lower productivity.\*\* The larger the age gap, the lower the productivity. They also found that when employers engaged processes that fostered valuing the differences and aligning around common values and motivations productivity went up. Additional actions you can take with your staff. 1.

Learn about your employees. This might include their motivations, their work habits, and their goals. Look for common ground. 2. Conduct workshops. One company found that communications were breaking down due to different communication styles and chose to have a workshop on effective communication. 3. Create mixed generation teams. 4. Encourage open dialogue. 5. Do teambuilding exercises. Provide an opportunity for them to do something fun and new together. Focus on shared values. 6. Start a two-way mentorship program. Reciprocal learning breaks down barriers and promotes continuous improvement and adaptation.

\* SHRM, *Workplace Incivility is More Common Than You Think*, Gonzales, Matt, March 6, 2024.

\*\*SHRM, *Encouraging Generation Z and Baby Boomers to Work Together*, Lobell, Kylie Ora, March 5, 2024.

\*\*\*<https://hbr.org/2021/08/how-to-manage-a-multi-generational-team>, Waldman, Emma.

