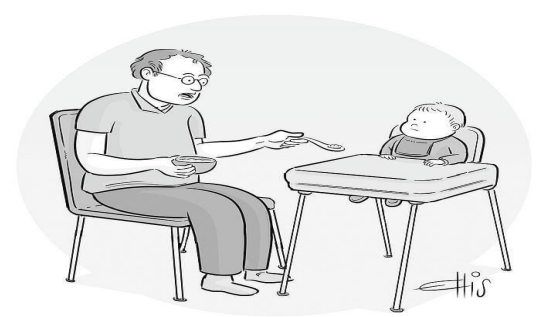


HOT SHEET

Volume 11, Issue 5
May 29, 2024



Full-Circle HR



"After I introduce you to solids, I'm going to need your help with some computer stuff."

HR Trends:

- If you conduct criminal background checks, four important considerations are: The nature and gravity of the offense (s). The time that has passed since the incident (s). The essential functions of the position. Whether and how the candidate's criminal history relates to their ability to perform those functions, if at all.*
- The slowing of job growth and wage growth may indicate that the Federal Government will be lowering interest rates this year.
- On May 3, President Biden vetoed a resolution to overturn the National Labor Relation's joint employer rule—this rule prevents employers from evading the bargaining obligations or liability when they actually control an employee's working conditions while the employee is technically on someone else's payroll.
- In February of this year, employee engagement fell to 30%—the lowest point in over a decade. It was 33% in December of 2023.
- 73% of employees say that their employers only say they care about their mental health but when it comes to backing this up with action, the employers fall short.

Engaging Generation Z

This youngest generation of the workplace is generally the most tech savvy of any. They likely will quickly disengage if you are not open to having, or already have in place, workplace tools and digital systems that operate smoothly and are responsive and efficient.** They seek the same tech fluidity in the workplace that they have in their personal lives and they can get frustrated when not only is that not the case, but management does not seem open to moving in that direction. For perspective, I don't know about all of you readers, but I remember using a mimeograph to

print copies. I learned how to type on a manual typewriter and did not have my first cell phone (it was basically a brick) until I was in my thirties—this generation likely does not know about these things and rather has grown up with technology at their fingertips. Not surprisingly, tech companies are distinctly poised to engage this generation. Assuming you are not that, there are still ways to approach this engagement.

Becoming a more tech-savvy organization does not mean you need to abandon the human touch. Rather, do it more interactively by understanding the actual needs of

your staff. You strive for a more human experience for them that streamlines their jobs and offers more options for how they may get their work done.

Once again, beginning by asking questions is an excellent way to start. Examples of these questions might be: 1. Where are the 'log jams' in your workflow? What thoughts do you have about addressing them? 2. What in our systems do you see that need to be updated? Are there particular thoughts you have about those updates? 3. What thoughts do you have about new technology we could explore? 4. If you

know, what are other organizations doing to stay up to date—or even be ahead of the curve?

Some organizations begin with something as simple as having a texting list of phone numbers. Oftentimes this is the quickest way to reach someone without necessarily interrupting them. Encourage them to use text blocking techniques during personal time or other time that should not be interrupted. Look for ways to prevent digital overload and encourage balance.

Everything is either an opportunity to grow or an obstacle to keep you from growing. You get to choose — Wayne Dyer

Moving the Needle from Pessimism to Optimism

As I consider all that we hear and see in the news and on social media about inflation, war, extreme climate events, political divisiveness, and more, it is not surprising that it carries over into the workplace in the form of pessimism. Half to three quarters of workers feel pessimistic about having an opportunity to better their lives through their current job.^ This is in spite of the many attempts (e.g. perks, modest increases, and pep talks) that employers may have tried to improve morale and encourage a more optimistic outlook.

According to experts in the field, what employees value most is a healthy work environment, empowerment in their work, and feeling included in how their work impacts and is impacted by the business.

First, let's talk about what pessimism is—a tendency to see the worst aspect of things . . . a lack of hope or confidence in the future. While this sounds pretty bleak, sometimes it's good to have a healthy amount of pessimism and not be a 'Pollyanna.' However, it must be balanced with a sense of optimism about being able to have a positive impact. This can drive change.

According to author Laura Putnam, this rise in pessimism did not just begin.^ It has been on the rise as the pay inequality gap has widened. National and world events have spurred it on.

What can employers do to shift this trend in their workplace? Again, as has often been said, managers and supervisors are key to employee engagement—but the top levels of the organization must support them in this

effort to foster a culture of wellness where employees can be vulnerable and talk about how they are experiencing the workplace. According to a meQuilibrium report a supportive manager/supervisor can cut turnover 44 to 55 percent. While emotional intelligence is not always the key to successful performance, it is vitally important for managers and supervisors. Hire for it and support it in the folks who manage people. They need to listen to and understand their employee's life situations and then use that information in making decisions. At the least, they should not be surprised by how their decision impacts each of their employees—even if it is a negative impact, it can be done with attunement and consideration, and that matters!

Most of all, how you engage basic work practices is vital to the goal of shifting from pessimism to optimism in your culture. Some basics include: 1. How you run your meetings, including how many meetings you have and having the right people in them. 2. How you treat your employees day in and day out—at all levels. 3. How much of a sense of belonging employees feel—aim for inclusion of all voices and all styles. 4. Balance workloads and pay equitably for those who carry heavier burdens. 5. Attend to the perception of fairness at work. 6. Conduct performance appraisals with integrity and consistency. 7. Assure that employees are compensated adequately for the work they are doing. 8. Encourage employees to support one another.

* SHRM, *When are Criminal Background Checks Permitted*, Smith J.D., Allen, May 2, 2024.

** SHRM, *Using Technology to Engage Generation Z*, Gensing-Pophal, Lin, May 4, 2024.

^SHRM, *Negativity Grows in the Workplace*, Wilkie, Dana, April 6, 2024.