

POINT of VIEW



Stephen L. Korbel — President, PHRA

To hear the Inaugural President's Message go to the PHRA's NEW YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/user/PittsburghHRA.

In this message Steve Korbel, Esq. will address the rebranding of the Communications Committee as the Social Media/Communications Committee under the Leadership of Jeff Cermak, Gatto Associates LLC. The goal of this committee is to increase connectivity between the members and to help the PHRA provide better services to the members.

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COMMITTEE CORNER NETWORKING COMMITTEE ARTICLE

In the words of Gary Halbert, "The formula for success is simple: Find out what people want and give it to them. But you must find out what they really want, not just what they say they want."

It is our responsibility as HR Professionals to keep our ear on the heartbeat of our community. Information sharing is pivotal to our professional growth and the health of our organizations. It is the goal of the Networking Committee to facilitate opportunities for you to share information and aspirations while promoting interconnectedness in our community. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce and thank the 2011 Networking Committee:

Patrick Bendel, Synergy Staffing, Inc.

Polly Capots, Capozza Advisory Group, LLC

Kristina Conner, ECI Telecom

Vince Consoli, Consoli Solutions Human Resources Consulting

Nicole DeMartino, Lange Financial Group, LLC

Douglas Doran, Specialty Consultants, Inc.

Harry Troelstra

Rob Hazlett, AEC Group

Debbie Larkin, UPMC

Beth Matalis, CIBER

Mike McCarren

Jaime Morgan

Jenn Plummer, Lowes

Lisa Tannenbaum, Best Practices in HR, LLC

Hope Vaccaro, PNC

The Networking Committee will be kicking off 2011 with a Meet Your PHRA Colleagues Social. We will be hosting our first event at Mad Mex in Robinson Town Center from 5-8pm on Wednesday, March 23rd. We invite all members to join us for an evening of appetizers and networking. If you are a new member looking to get acquainted please ask the PHRA office to connect you with a mentor prior to the event. This person will be your point of contact to help you better understand how to leverage your PHRA membership and introduce you to other members.

HEALTH CARE INSURANCE EXCHANGES How Will They Impact My Benefit Plan?

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 mandates that each state have a Healthcare Insurance Exchange in place by January 1, 2014. If we assume that the act will be determined to be in tune with the Constitution, then the establishment of state (or Federal) exchanges will likely have a material affect on most employer healthcare plans.

First of all, what is an exchange? In layman's terms, exchanges could simply be identified as a community web-based tool that should enable the consumer to obtain quick access to all of the various insurance offerings available in each state. Rules governing exchanges will provide for standard plan designs (Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze) so that the consumer can determine his/her best option, and states will be responsible for reviewing and approving all plans offered. The task that will likely prove most difficult for your employees will be to ascertain how the various exchange offerings compare with your company's plan offerings. Several factors will make this a complicated decision:

1. Will I qualify for a subsidy?
2. If I do qualify, how much will it reduce my plan cost?
3. How will the final net exchange plan's value compare with the value of my employer subsidized plan?
4. What can I expect will be my out of pocket costs and can I afford that level of risk?
5. How will the network of participating medical providers compare?
6. Can I expect the same quality of service that I have with my current employer plan?

Since subsidies are available even at 400% of the Federal Poverty Level and below, the majority of employers will have current covered employees who may be eligible for a subsidy, or a Free Choice Voucher depending on the amount of the employer contribution you require. And remember, if you have more than 50 employees, you can be penalized for employees who leave

your plan to choose a subsidized exchange plan. Those employees who are below 139% of the FPL will be eligible for Medicaid without creating any penalties.

If you desire to maintain high participation in your benefit plan, some advance planning will be important. With the typical rich plan designs prevalent in our area, it is very likely that some of your employees will find one of the lower cost plans in the exchange to be an attraction. Obviously, this type of option will be increasingly more attractive in relation to how much the individual believes they are unlikely to use the insurance. Certainly, you don't want your healthiest employees to leave your plan. As a result, employers who want to retain valued private plans will need to structure employee contributions, or offer low cost alternatives to avoid creating Free Choice Vouchers or penalties. The other option might be to just give up and force all employees to purchase through the exchanges. In any event communicating plan options will be of vital importance, as employees are not used to making these kinds of decisions on their own.

The current political uncertainties make quality decision-making difficult both for the states and for employers. Unfortunately, it appears that the Supreme Court is not going to accelerate the constitutionality issue. Delaying any plan changes may seem prudent, as making significant strategy moves now could prove to be premature and unnecessarily expensive. At the same time, many HR professionals are faced with their C-Suite people asking questions like - "shouldn't we be doing something" and "what will it cost". And there is always the question of whether there will be enough time to implement if you wait for certainty to arrive. Making the correct decision in this environment will be very hard, so be sure that you stay well informed, you keep your seat belt tight, and you are prepared for a rough road ahead.

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MEMBERSHIP AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE NEW LOGO AND SLOGAN...



MEMBERSHIP AND DIVERSITY CONNECTIONS!

In the late half of 2010, The Membership and Diversity Committee realized a strategic opportunity to focus the strengths of the team and created into two sub-committees: The Membership Subcommittee and The Diversity Subcommittee.

The Membership Subcommittee was tasked with defining the two most important objectives as generating new members and retention of existing membership. One of our first initiatives was geared solely toward member retention. We officially launched "The Buddy Program" in January of this year after much research, debate, and cooperation. Here is an overview of the program: A volunteer member of the PHRA is paired with a new member. An initial call is made within the first week or two to explain the program to the new member and find out more about that person's expectations of their membership. The Committee Buddy to that new member follows up and shares the relevant important to the new members based on their interests and expectations. Guidelines were also set that contact will be made once per quarter via phone and a goal of one face-to-face contact would be made over the course of the year. The final phone contact of the year would be geared toward

making sure the person will be renewing their membership.

The program is off and running with some early successes already being shared. One of the first "Buddy" calls resulted in a potential new College Relations Committee Member. We are optimistic that these stories will continue to be communicated and that our retention goal will be far exceeded in 2011.

The Diversity Sub-Committee is on the move. As our logo and slogan illustrates, we are making connections with diverse organizations that will benefit members of PHRA as well as strengthen our diversity connections within the Greater Pittsburgh area. The committee will present four educational and developmental seminars this year regarding topics on diversity. Please join us for our first seminar scheduled on March 29, 2011 titled "Gen Y Now: Attract and Retain the Next Generation of Talent."

Our connections within Greater Pittsburgh continues to expand as we maintain our connection with the Vietnam Veterans and are now connected with WPDI (Western Pennsylvania Diversity Initiative), Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and The African American Chamber of Commerce for Western PA.

84% OF WORKERS WANT TO QUIT IN 2011

Don't be surprised if your company loses top workers in 2011. A recent survey reveals 84% of U.S. Employees plan to look for new jobs in 2011 — up from 60% a year ago. Only 5% want to stay at their current position.

"This finding is more about employee dissatisfaction and discontent than projected turnover," said Douglas Matthews, president of Right Management, which conducted the poll.

"Clearly, if the job market picks up next year many employees are going to take advantage of it, and organizations stand to lose some of their top contributors," Matthews said. "So this is a wake-up call to management."

Employees are unhappy because of the recession, job-market weakness and disruptive economic and workforce changes, he said: "Employees' trust has been seriously shaken and there is a lack of confidence in leaders."

To alleviate dissatisfaction, managers should:

- Identify star performers and have open and constructive career discussions with them. "High-value employees always have opportunities available. Know who they are and be sure to take care of them."

- Be honest and positive with employees. "Provide them with feedback on what they are doing well and ways for them improve."

Right Management surveyed 1,413 employees in October and November. "We view it as a barometer of their trust in management or commitment to the job," Matthews said. "It's a workplace equivalent to opinion polling on whether or not 'this country is moving in the right direction.' Just as people are questioning their elected leaders in government, so too are workers wondering if their management is up to the challenge of renewed growth or developing a sound strategy moving forward."

*Brian Anthony Hernandez
BusinessNewsDaily Staff Writer*

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