



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

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WELLNESS

RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU'RE BURNING OUT

Everyone has a bad or stressful day from time to time and we all deal with that day in various ways. However, when those days start to outnumber the non-stressful days, and when our ability to deal with a bad situation is compromised so that we make it worse, we may be headed for a burn out. Burning out is more than just feeling tired and overworked. It's that plus a level of anxiety and a dose of resignation, all followed by a plethora of health issues. If you can identify this before it happens, you'll save more than your sanity in the long run.

So, what are the signs of burning out? Your body will send you plenty of clues that it's time to slow down and take a break. In an article on CNN's website titled, "[Burned out? Know the signs and how to fix it](#)," one of the first signs is that your memory begins to slip. Unfortunately, if you're stressed enough that this happens, you may not even realize it. Things like forgetting your phone, the name of a client, or even a coworker, can be red flag. Your ability to focus is interrupted and the stress hinders your body's ability to encode memory details.



Another burnout issue is poor health. Most people are aware that when they're stressed, their resistance is down, but did you know this also affects the healing process? Simple cuts and scrapes can take longer to heal. Another health issue when careening toward burnout is that your gut starts to rebel like an angry teenager. Gastrointestinal issues such as acid reflux, nausea, and bowel issues are part of the roller coaster ride that your body goes on when overly stressed. And women get to deal with another issue made worse by stress – PMS. Yes, not only do cramps become worse, but extreme burnout can throw the entire menstrual cycle off track. Now that your body is freaking out, it's time for its largest organ to react. That's right, the skin chimes in about this point with inflammation and itchiness. This is why people under heavy stress often show visible hot spots, scratch themselves, or get rashes. It's the skin's dynamic ability to react that makes it so sensitive. Speaking of dynamic reactions, burning out can often lead to sleep deprivation, which can then lead to weird dreams. Strange dreams are the direct result of your body prioritizing REM sleep whenever you

do get some much-needed rest. Finally, you may get a severe headache or even a migraine, but the funny thing is that this doesn't occur until the weekend when things have calmed down. It's not known why this is triggered, but it could be due to a sharp drop in the level of activity and the body's buildup of stress-related chemicals.

Okay, you've made a checklist of these signs that you're heading for a burnout and all the boxes on your list are checked, some may even be marked two or three times and highlighted. What do you do about it? Start with the basics. Learn relaxation techniques such as meditative breathing, yoga, and small breaks throughout the day. When it comes to meals, use those as a further break rather than grabbing something fast and inhaling it while you continue to work. While you're eating, pick healthy foods your body needs such as lean protein, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. And stop skimping on your sleep routine. Set aside the right amount of time for proper, deep sleep and then dedicate yourself to following it.

Utilizing these tips for recognition and relaxation will certainly help you to become a more composed and productive person rather than someone on their way to burning out.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

BEING HYPER AWARE OF EMPLOYEE HYPERTENSION

As wellness programs continue to flourish among employers, a discovery is being made about one of the most important health aspects -- hypertension. Hypertension (also known as high blood pressure) is a medical issue where the pressure of the blood in a person's cardiovascular system is constantly elevated. According to the Mayo Clinic, a person can have high blood pressure for years without any symptoms. Yet even without symptoms, damage to arteries, blood vessels, and even the heart continues until serious health issues, including a heart attack and stroke, happen.

According to an article on the website of *Employee Benefit News* titled, "[Many employees unaware of hypertension](#)," the discovery is that almost 70 percent of employees whose hypertension was detected during workplace health screenings were completely unaware they had the condition. The research was published in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.



So, why should employers care? Aside from the serious health concern this poses to the employee, this lack of awareness is costly to an employer whether or not an employer provides health insurance. Hypertension adds more to an employer's health care costs per employee than any other condition including depression and mental illness. People who have high blood pressure miss more work days versus people without the condition.

The good news for both employers and employees is that hypertension is one of the easiest things to test and one of the most cost effective wellness screenings. Testing can be done on-site, via kiosks, or as part of a full biometric program. Furthermore, if hypertension is discovered, it's easily controlled with diet, exercise, lifestyle changes, and medicine. The research previously referenced noted that people who are overweight (or have a poor diet), have a sedentary lifestyle, smoke, or diabetes have a greater chance of undiagnosed high blood pressure.

The sooner a person realizes they have hypertension, the sooner they can get the treatment necessary to improve their health. Employers should consider implementing the following strategies to improve the health of their workforce.

Because so many employees are unaware they have hypertension, education is an important first step. May is National High Blood Pressure Month, so it's a great opportunity to motivate employees to get screened. Healthy eating and drinking can be supported through the stocking of vending machines with low-sodium snacks and beverages. Exercise should be encouraged as often as possible as a great way to lower blood pressure.

There's no sure-fire way to alleviate hypertension that all employers and employees can agree on, but there's no denying that a healthy workforce improves productivity and reduces employer costs. By utilizing multiple strategies for combatting hypertension, employers and employees can reach a common goal.

SEARCHING FOR JOBS ONLINE

When it comes to searching for jobs, most Americans go online rather than depend on friends or other contacts for this information. In a *Society For Human Resource Management* article titled, "[Online Job Searching Has Doubled Since 2005](#)," they reference a Pew Research Center study that found about half of all U.S. job seekers have researched and applied for jobs online. That's more than double the number from 2005.

What this means for recruiters is that people seeking jobs are getting their information about the job as well as the company from the Internet. Other forms of job listings such as employment agencies, print ads, and job fairs are still being utilized, but not as much according to the Pew study. In addition, people with higher levels of education are more likely to use the Internet when looking for a job. Nearly 90 percent of college graduates went online, versus just over three-quarters of people who attended, but didn't graduate, and fewer than 70 percent of people who never went to college at all.



The advice given was that if you search online for a job, then you should definitely have a LinkedIn, or other professional social media profile. This is especially true if you're using a tablet or other mobile device to apply online. Can you imagine having to submit your résumé using a smartphone? It's so much easier just to link it to a profile and many employers accept that.

In fact, another aspect of the Pew study was the percentage of Americans who used a mobile device and social media to search and apply for a job. What should come as no surprise is that more than half of all 18- to 29-year-olds have used a smartphone to search for jobs. Recruiters should take notice and make it easier for these job seekers to find and apply for available jobs. They should also be able to easily share or forward these jobs to a friend if they know he or she is looking.

The article states that more than 30 percent of social media users have relied on social media to research jobs in which they had an interest. In addition, approximately 20 percent applied for a job via social media and more than 10 percent said that the information they posted on their own personal social media account helped them get a job.

The article noted that while this may make it seem like younger job seekers are utilizing online tools more, people age 50 and older have caught on to this strategy and are also using it to their advantage.

IN BRIEF

KEEPING YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

It's the middle of January. Have you already abandoned your New Year's resolutions? If you have, or are seriously considering breaking them, then there's still hope for you. Don't give up just yet! Well, at least not until you've read this. While written a few years ago, *Time* magazine listed the "[Top 10 Commonly Broken New Year's Resolutions](#)." They are: lose weight and get fit, quit smoking, learn something new, eat healthier and diet, get out of debt and save money, spend more time with family, travel to new places, be less stressed, volunteer, and drink less.

Do any of those sound familiar? If you look closely, you'll notice that half of these are related to improving health. This is a noble goal, right? Then why do so many people quit? The problem isn't the person, but the resolution. In an article on the *Forbes* website titled, "[Making New Year's Resolutions That You Can Actually Keep](#)," the author discusses why the key to keeping our resolutions is to make better ones.

For example, is the goal too vague? If you say you want to "get fit," then does that mean compete in a marathon or just be able to walk from your office to your car without having to catch your breath? If you have a resolution to "drink less," then don't focus on how much you're drinking, but what is causing you to drink more. If you live next to a liquor store or bar, or work at either of those, then go out and drink with friends, you're probably going to have a tough time achieving that goal.

On your way to achieving your New Year's resolutions, you should include some small, measurable results on

the way to your ultimate goal. If your resolution is to quit smoking, then start small and work your way up. Don't quit cold turkey, have one less cigarette each day until you completely stop. Also, don't go it alone. Enlist the help of your spouse, family, and friends to help. Tell them about a bad habit you'd like to break. Finally, don't set too many resolutions at once. If you truly want to have several, then start with one or two. Once those are achieved, start some of the others rather than trying to do them all at once.

Here's to a successful new year!

EMPLOYER WEBINAR

CONTROLLED GROUPS & AFFILIATED SERVICE GROUPS: WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2016

1:00 P.M. CT

Controlled group and affiliated service group aggregation rules require certain related businesses to consider all of the employees across the businesses together in relation to some benefit plan administration. Controlled group rules can impact an employer's headcount dramatically, but not all federal reporting requirements and regulations take aggregation into account. This webinar will help employers understand when to undergo controlled group or affiliated service group analysis, and when the aggregated headcounts are used.

This webinar will:

- Explain what controlled groups and affiliated service groups are, including the differences between parent-child groups, brother-sister groups, A-orgs, and B-orgs
- The impact of family, trusts, and estate relationships on controlled groups
- Discuss the impact an aggregated headcount has on employer shared responsibility and related reporting under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Explain how aggregated headcounts impact COBRA and FMLA obligations
- Discuss the impact a controlled group headcount has for 401(k) purposes
- Discuss the impact of being a controlled or affiliated service group on non-discrimination testing for cafeteria plans
- Provide best practices on undergoing analysis to determine if an employer is a controlled group, and documenting the results of the analysis
- Explain instances where aggregated headcounts are ignored, such as for W-2 reporting of the cost of health care coverage

This 90-minute beginner to intermediate level webinar will help employers understand the rules regarding aggregated groups, and how it can impact benefit plans.

Registration and presenter information for this webinar will be available soon! Please contact [Stephens Insurance](#) and let us know you're interested. If you've never attended a webinar please include your contact information.

Certification

This webinar event has been submitted to the [Human Resource Certification Institute](#) to qualify for 1.5 recertification credit hours.

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