



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

Even though you already have a job, you've been interviewing with other companies and have now just been offered a position. This is the day you go to your supervisor or HR department and turn in your two weeks' notice (you are a professional after all, you don't just quit). But then, surprise, you get a counteroffer to stay.

While this still happens in approximately 20% of the largest U.S. markets, the stay-put counteroffer may be a dying trend in corporate America. In an article on *Society for Human Resource Management's* website shrm.org titled, [Stay-Put Counteroffers Can Backfire, CFOs Say](#), survey data shows that counteroffers can often have unintended consequences.

For one thing, when a counteroffer is extended and more money is offered, the chief financial officers (CFOs) in the survey indicated that this usually necessitates raises for other employees within that department. It can also affect annual budgets and make employees wonder if they need to quit in order to get a raise. Plus, if only the one employee accepts the counteroffer of more money while the remaining employees get nothing, it can harbor resentment within the department and make the team members question the loyalty of the person who stayed "just for the money."

Furthermore, just offering more money to get an employee not to leave doesn't address the root issue that made the person want to leave in the first place. Think about that. If an employee truly enjoyed his or her job, yet felt they were underpaid (grossly that is, I think everyone feels they're underpaid to some degree), surely this employee would talk to their supervisor and ask for a raise rather than go through the effort of finding a



new job that they may not like. Most likely, the employee doesn't like several factors about their position. Plus, offering more money could reinforce the perception that they were always underpaid and, therefore, resent their supervisor and/or company even more.

There are better ways of improving employee retention, and if compensation is an issue within a particular market, it's best that companies review this on a regular basis to stay competitive. Other issues at play could be excessive workload, lack of teamwork, bad management, no reward system, and little to no opportunity for advancement.

Obviously, companies need to improve employee retention -- especially when it comes to top talent -- but that doesn't mean they can just throw money at people and expect them to stay. Based on the survey in the article, most CFOs have already figured this out.

WELLNESS

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE, SO STOP AND TAKE A DRINK

It sure is hot this summer. How hot is it? It's so hot that... well, let's just say that it's so hot people need to remember to stay hydrated. And that's not just for people who exercise! With such a plethora of water choices, it should be easy for anyone to satisfy their thirst. There's regular tap water, purified water, mineral water, flavored water, pH-balanced water, and the latest craze -- coconut water. *The Washington Post's* wellness article titled, [Is coconut really more hydrating? Clarifying myths and fact on waters](#), states that there isn't much of a difference, really, in terms of which one is better at hydrating the body. The most important issue is not to get dehydrated in the first place, not which water you should be drinking. Also, it's good to remember that some foods, beverages, and herbal supplements can actually accelerate dehydration. Drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, soda) and alcohol are the primary culprits and so are food diets that are high in protein.

If someone says they're thirsty, but doesn't do anything about it, then he or she is asking for trouble. In an article on *CNN.com* titled, [From bad breath to car accidents, dehydration is a real health threat](#), when the body gets dehydrated all sorts of bad things can happen, and it doesn't take much to become dehydrated. The human body is approximately 60% water and a drop of just 1.5% can cause mild dehydration. So what can happen to the body when this occurs?



Let's start with the mild health effects of dehydration such as bad breath, a craving for sugar, and fatigue or a decrease in physical performance. These don't seem so bad until you consider that those are just the tip of the iceberg. Mild fatigue can quickly turn into being tired, and trying to push yourself physically can cause muscle cramps. Dehydration also causes your skin to dry out, changes mood for the worse, can cause headaches or dizziness, and even constipation. Again, you may not consider these problems to be a major concern and you'll grab some water as soon as you can. If you're one of these people, then I have one more item to consider.

The same CNN article mentions research published in *Physiology and Behavior*, which showed that "the number of driving errors doubled during a two-hour drive when drivers were dehydrated versus hydrated--an effect similar to driving while drunk." Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that your day-to-day commute isn't very long and you hate being stuck in traffic if you've absolutely got to use the restroom. I also know several people who intentionally don't drink anything before a long road trip so that they don't have to stop for a restroom break. Is either of these scenarios worth the danger of increasing the risk of having a traffic accident? Not just no, but heck no!

So raise your glass often and have a cool, refreshing drink. Your body will thank you in more ways than one!

TECHNOLOGY

"FRIENDING" YOUR DOCTOR

The term "friending" refers to adding someone to a list of friends on a social media website. This list is more of a contact database rather than meaning someone on it is actually your friend. And yet, the popularity of social media can't be ignored. It's everywhere and we use it to connect with our family, friends, and coworkers. Now, think about what we could do if we used this to communicate with our doctor.

The first thing you're probably thinking is that it will violate the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), but you wouldn't use it to share sensitive, confidential information that crosses professional and ethical boundaries. You would use it to manage your health care and access health information.



If health care organizations can figure out how to use Facebook, or other social media websites, to their benefit, then they will have a real advantage with their patients. In an article on *The Huffington Post* titled, [Communicating With Your Doctor On Facebook May Be The Future Of Healthcare](#), it said that many organizations (also known as telemedicine and is the use of electronic and telecommunications technologies to provide health care from a distance) are well on their way to utilizing email and social media. For example, telehealth organizations have electronic ways for patients to use messaging, access test results, track their health, etc.

A study published in the [Journal of General Internal Medicine](#), showed that many patients are interested in this type of communication, but they may be unaware that it's available. If you're still not sold on the concept of communicating with your doctor via email or social media, consider the benefits. You could have faster and 'round-the-clock access to health care professionals. In addition, you would be able to better manage and monitor your health care and do it from the comfort and privacy of your own home. Doctors and health care organizations would benefit from the "social" aspect by extending their clinical reach to people in rural areas or outside the typical radius of a health care facility. Furthermore, they could provide real-time information so that the community at large can benefit from their expertise.

As with all technology, there are pros and cons as well as a definite learning curve associated with it. While this can initially limit both the patients' and doctors' ability to effectively use the new technology, once they become more familiar with the ins and outs, they should feel confident enough to rely on its benefits.

IN BRIEF

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF PETS

If you're already a pet owner, you know how much they have improved your life. I can tell you that my mood instantly brightens the moment I come home to find my dog happy to see me. It's an almost indescribable feeling of joy I get that improves my overall well-being.

If you don't currently own a pet, then an article titled, "[5 ways pets benefit your health](#)," on *CNN.com*, just might change your mind. In it, the author accurately describes pets as shoulder to cry on, an alarm clock, an exercise partner, and a true member of the family. In the article, there are numerous links and facts about the health benefits of pet ownership, but one thing that may surprise you is that there is more than 25 years of research that proves this.

Some of the health benefits are that by owning and walking a dog, it helps people get exercise when they might not have otherwise. Walking a dog also makes a person more social in that they usually interact with neighbors or other pet owners along the way. Pets also provide 24/7 stress reduction. Somehow, pets just seem to know when we need them and they unconditionally give us an emotional boost and a feeling that everything is going to be okay. Plus, all this exercise and reduction in stress equals a healthier heart. Finally, if your family had pets when you were growing up and as an adult you don't have any allergies, you may have your pets to thank for that. A study by the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* showed that children who were exposed to pet dander saw a reduction in allergy development.

With all these studies, there's no denying that pet ownership has tremendous health benefits. If you're a pet owner, you probably already know this. If you don't own a pet, the only question now is when are you going to get one?

JUST MARRIED! WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE OBERGEFELL RULING & SAME SEX MARRIAGE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2015

2:00 P.M. ET

The Supreme Court ruled in [Obergefell v Hodges](#), that the 14th Amendment requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex, and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out of state. This ruling raises new questions about providing benefits to individuals who have a same-sex spouse, as well as preventing discrimination based on the sex of an individual's spouse.

This webinar will:

- Explain the impact of Obergefell on group benefit plans
- Discuss the difference regarding states that did not previously recognize same sex marriage and those that did
- Differentiate between ERISA obligations and obligations under anti-discrimination regulations
- Provide information on the difference between domestic partners and spouses
- Discuss best practices for administering enrollment for individuals with same-sex spouses now; and in the future
- Provide best practices for employers regarding same sex harassment prevention

This 90-minute basic webinar will help employers understand the impact of the decision in Obergefell on employee benefits and other employment issues.

Registration for this webinar will be available soon! Please contact your local [UBA Partner Firm](#).

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