



Ideas and Information for Human Resources Professionals

Stephens

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

BEING ADDICTED TO IMPROVE WORKPLACE PERFORMANCE

As the use of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medications proliferated in children, so too has that carried into adulthood, and sometimes with serious consequences. As with almost any drug, there's always the potential for abuse. However, when it's from a prescription drug, human resources needs to walk a fine line while still addressing the issue.

For example, a child diagnosed with ADHD is prescribed medicine to help manage it. As that child grows, he or she continues using the medication through grade school and into college because it helps them with their concentration, focus, and alertness. Now as adults, they may feel the need to increase their dosage, or take stronger alternatives to the medicine(s) they were taking.

According to an article on *Human Resource Executive Online* titled, [Alert, Productive -- and Addicted](#), a growing number of young adults entering the workforce take ADHD medications on a daily basis. That same article references a report last year from St. Louis-based Express Scripts, the nation's largest pharmacy benefit manager, which found that the number of young American adults taking ADHD medications nearly doubled from 2008 to 2012, from 340,000 to 640,000 among those between the ages 26 and 34.

So, you may ask, what's the problem? If these employees have a valid prescription, and they're able to accomplish more at work because of it, then there's no need to step in and have that awkward HR conversation about addiction. While there's plenty of truth to that, the issue is noticing and protecting a



valued employee from abusing that prescription just as they would someone who is abusing a prescription pain killer.

Managers may notice -- and appreciate -- someone who's a real go-getter. This employee not only takes on more than anyone else, but also completes those projects faster. Initially, this just may be a star employee. However, if that same manager notices that the employee always seems tired, despite being productive, or that the employee is showing other signs of drug addiction, then the manager should bring this to the attention of HR so that they can monitor the situation and verify whether everything is okay.

In fact, companies can be proactive in ensuring the health and well-being of their employees by having wellness discussions about addiction. Just because managers are being asked to do more with less is not an excuse to burn out an employee for short-term results. Addiction, whether to illegal or legal drugs, affects the quality of life of the employee and should be treated.

EMPLOYER WEBINAR

AT YOUR SERVICE! THE SERVICE CONTRACT ACT AND EMPLOYERS

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

1:00 P.M.

The Service Contract Act outlines operational requirements for service contracts, making compliance for government contractors (both sub and prime) confusing and complex. This webinar will discuss when the Service Contract Act applies, who it covers, and how to remain in compliance.

This webinar will:

- Explain when the Service Contract Act applies
- Help determine who the Service Contract Act covers
- Identify executive orders that impact the Service Contract Act
- Outline benefits under the Service Contract Act
- Explain how health care reform impacts Service Contract Act contractors

This 90-minute basic webinar will help you determine if the Service Contract Act applies to you and how to comply with its rules.

Contact [Stephens Insurance](#) to register and view this webinar free of charge.

About the Presenter:

[Thomas M. Lucas](#) is an Office Managing Shareholder and Litigation Manager in the Norfolk, Virginia, office of Jackson Lewis P.C. Mr. Lucas represents management exclusively in the full range of employment and labor law matters, including employment discrimination litigation and traditional labor law. He has represented corporate clients for more than 25 years. Prior to entering private practice, Mr. Lucas practiced with the National Labor Relations Board as a Trial Specialist and Deputy to the Assistant General Counsel.

Mr. Lucas' counseling practice includes drafting employment policies, handbooks, employment and non-competition agreements, and advising clients on the difficult day-to-day issues arising in the workplace.

Mr. Lucas was recognized for his employment and labor law expertise by his election as a Fellow in The College of Labor and Employment Law of the American Bar Association in 2009. He has been designated in *The Best Lawyers in America*, Labor and Employment Law, for the past 19 years, and was selected for inclusion in 2012 and 2013 *Virginia Super Lawyers*. He is also a contributing editor to *The Developing Labor Law*, the essential research tool for labor and employment law practitioners.

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

BETTER LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is not often associated with learning -- unless you want to learn about the latest gossip concerning your friend or a celebrity -- yet it is emerging as the next tool for employers to improve upon the learning environment for their workforce.

This is not to say that employers should jump on the bandwagon. Just because the cool kids are doing it doesn't mean that it's the right tool for every learning situation. An employer should focus on the goal of what needs to be accomplished and then determine whether social media can help take employees there faster, better, or more easily.

If it's determined that social media is the way to go, then an article on *Society for Human Resource Management's* website shrm.org titled, [Social Media Can Enhance Employees' Learning](#), has a few recommendations on how trainers can use it to its full advantage. Primarily, if social media is to be incorporated into a training program, then it needs to be utilized before, during, and after each session.



Trainers need to embrace social media as a collaborative gathering place for employees. People are able to share notes, ideas, materials, concerns, and expectations in order to maximize the value they receive during the training sessions. In fact, trainers and organizers, not just participants, must participate in order for the sessions to be successful. You can expect others to offer input if the leaders are not willing to jump in first. The author of the *shrm.org* article says that the "holy triangle" of social media is to give/ask/thank while creating enthusiasm for the program.

Equally important to social media training is the follow-up once the sessions are complete. Just because it's over, doesn't mean that it has to be over. The trainer, organizer, or both should collect feedback on the program while also sharing references, resources and providing connections that will help participants continue to learn and grow.

From the comfort of one's own home or office, employees have access to other people who have the same passion as they do about a particular topic and are willing to share their knowledge. HR leaders need to think of social media as the ultimate study group that never stops and then evaluate whether social media fits into their corporate culture.

STOP SITTING!

You're not a couch potato. You routinely exercise at least three times each week. You eat healthy, or at least reasonably healthy, and you don't smoke. However, when you're at work or at home you have a nasty habit of sitting down for long periods of time. How bad that can be? After all, it's already been established that you exercise; right? Well, it turns out that all that sitting most likely negates the exercise.

Wait. What?!

An article on *CNN.com* titled, [Sitting will kill you, even if you exercise](#), references a new study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* that found that this kind of sedentary behavior increases our chances of getting a disease or a condition that will kill us prematurely, even if we exercise. In fact, the World Health Organization has identified that being inactive physically is the fourth-leading risk factor for death for people worldwide.

So is sitting the new smoking? In the *CNN* article, researchers from Toronto came to this conclusion after analyzing nearly 50 sedentary behavior studies. Illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and Type 2 diabetes all increase with being



sedentary. For people who sit more than 12 hours each day -- also called prolonged sitting -- their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes increased by a whopping 90%. Ninety percent! Think about that and add up all the time you sit down -- commuting to and from work, working at your desk, watching TV, using the computer at home, or even playing with your kids on the floor all contribute to this time of sedentary behavior.

Granted, the studies did find that the amount of time someone exercises impacts the negativity of sitting, but that being sedentary still outweighs the benefit we get from exercising. Now that you're armed with this information, how can you reduce the time you sit down?

The first thing to do is be aware of how much you're sitting and make a note of it. Then, you can have a goal of reducing that number a little each week. You can do this by getting up and walking around every 30 minutes at work. Play with your kids involving activities that require physical activity. If you watch TV, rather than remain seated during the commercials, or fast-forwarding past them with your DVR, stand up and keep walking until they're over.

Whatever furniture you sit on, whether it's your chair, couch, chaise lounge, ottoman, recliner, stool, bench, sofa, love seat, or even your bed, they are all working against your health. So stop sitting and get up!

IN BRIEF

MAKE HEALTH CARE COSTS PART OF RETIREMENT

There are plenty of educational programs on how to save for retirement, and even the industry as a whole has told people to find their goal or a specific dollar amount for retirement. However, what is often not considered is just how much a person will be spending on health care once they retire.

An article titled, "[Workers not factoring health costs into retirement planning](#)," on *Employee Benefit News*, says that while people may factor in cost-of-living increases, they don't consider what they'll spend on health care. This can be made worse if that person has a family history of declining health as they age or if the individual expects they may need long-term care well before they are ready to stop working.



With pensions almost non-existent, and company health plans for retirees being reduced or eliminated altogether, creative strategies are needed when planning for retirement. A good retirement advisor can discuss income solutions throughout each stage of a person's lifetime so that they never run out of money. This strategy is far more valuable than reaching a number because it takes into account all the possible elements someone might face and then adjusts their financial picture accordingly, thus allowing them to be better prepared when they finally decide to retire.

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