



FUTURE OF WORK

Managing Employees in the Gig Economy

Understandably, some employers (and employees) have mixed feelings about the gig economy. While many enjoy the freedom gained and overhead saved, others miss office camaraderie and routine. No matter your position, research shows that the trend isn't going anywhere anytime soon. By 2021, 9.2 million Americans will work on-demand jobs, and so employers need to start asking themselves how they plan to keep employees of all stripes engaged in office work and culture.

[As HR Technologist cautions, employee engagement goes both ways.](#) While employers should be concerned about the reliability and loyalty of their freelance pool, they must also maintain strong relationships with their current full-time employees. Best practices for addressing this include providing similar perks to all workers, using in-depth onboarding services and training, and maintaining meticulously open lines of communication.

It is also important to remember that integration like this can't happen overnight. Building a strong and diverse team, whether fully remote or mixed, takes time. Many companies are engaging "future ready" practices, so that hybrid workforces can be available whenever a particular company is ready to consider open options. Such practices are rooted primarily in savvy digital platforms, allowing for collaboration and innovation, as well as clear conversations about benefits and salaries. Not only do such techniques strengthen the current team, but they also position organizations as solid competitors for rising digital talent. Finally, remember that talent management isn't merely an agenda item. It's also a driving tool for strategic decisions about innovation, growth, and performance ability.

While there is no one established way forward, it's clear that employers who are cognizant of the growing gig economy trend are able to both deepen and strengthen their current talent pool while looking toward the future.

[Read "How to Keep Employees Engaged in the Gig Economy"](#)

[Read "Why Companies Should Rethink Their Approach to Freelancers"](#)

[Read "Taking Talent Management to the Board"](#)

TECHNOLOGY

Managing Robots in the Work Force

As the gig economy increases its influence, offices become more decentralized. Sometimes, whether to save money or finesse consistency, companies turn to artificial intelligence, or AI, for assistance. While robots have been employed to operate machinery or sort objects for years now, they are increasingly working white-collar jobs too.

[As *The New York Times* reports, these new algorithms are especially talented at spotting patterns, which helps companies do everything from picking stocks to designing clothing, and even diagnosing cancer.](#) Experts doubt that the workforce will ever become fully automated, however they are confident that many positions will become at least partially automated soon. For example, a robot might be able to discern increasingly popular t-shirt styles, but only a human can judge the feeling of the fabric between fingers, and the way the drape and color will fit a specific body.

Paradoxically to some, many companies find hope in this trend. They see artificial technologies not as job replacements but as job enhancers, as they often give employees more time to strengthen intuitive instinct and relationship-building techniques.

Plus, through their sophisticated search capabilities, AI can often save HR Departments hours on job fulfillment. [A recent article in *Human Resource Executive* pushed this even further, stating, “The impact will not be so much on the number of jobs, but rather on the actual content of jobs themselves... people will collaborate with increasingly intelligent machines to do more complex and higher-value work.”](#) What this means precisely is still unfolding, however many are excited about the possibility of reinventing fields, increasing project-based work, and perhaps even redefining the idea of “work” itself.

[Read “High-Skilled White-Collar Work? Machines Can Do That, Too”](#)

[Read “Let a Robot Be Your New Clerk with RPA!”](#)

[Read “Artificial Intelligence, Automation, and the Future of Talent Acquisition”](#)

[Read “A.I. Assistants Want to Raise \(and Market to\) Your Children”](#)

HIRING PRACTICES

Leveraging Generational Factors for Overall Success

No matter what your office looks like—in a gig economy or a more traditional one, with or without AI—interviews will be a part of the culture. Learning about best practices benefits everyone, whether you are the interviewer or the interviewee. Especially at busy times, it can be easy to forget that an interview isn’t simply to learn about potential coworkers. In fact, a solid interview often uncovers and develops potential growth strategies for future-looking companies.

Sometimes, solutions are as simple as learning what to do with your body. [Recently *Human Resource Executive* reported some of the biggest mistakes job seekers made during an interview, including failure to make eye contact or to smile, playing with something on the table, or fidgeting.](#)

Another tried-and-true technique for success, no matter what side of the table you’re on, is listening—not only to what the interviewee is saying, but to what they’re not saying too. Listening between the lines doesn’t mean you’re being suspicious; rather, it helps uncover frustrations and challenges that a future employee might not be comfortable voicing right away. Shining light on such situations helps everyone move forward.

In nearly all instances, it's important to remember that there is no one “right” interview style for everyone—or even for a certain business on a certain day. The strongest leaders (and the most forward-thinking companies) are adaptable, and change their styles as needed to fit a given situation.

[Read “Unusual Interview Mistakes and Body Language Mishaps”](#)

[Read “How to Stop Saying ‘Um,’ ‘Ah,’ and ‘You Know’”](#)

[Read “These 6 Communication Styles Should Be In Every Leader’s Toolbox”](#)

IN BRIEF

Facing Bias in the Workplace

Data shows that when it comes to influencing people’s interactions in the workplace, generally [information doesn’t change behavior](#). As well-intentioned as diversity training might be, and while it is certainly a valuable tool for raising awareness and introducing language, unconscious cognitive bias takes time to change. Because of this, [experts have started referring to bias not as a “glass ceiling” but as a tax](#).

Increasingly, many companies are growing to understand the brain as a muscle that can be molded and strengthened with repetitive practice. Behaviorally informed hiring policies, objective evaluation rubrics, and scientific methods all serve neuroplasticity. [Bias is often subtle](#), but with time and effort brains can change.

[Read “5 Tips to Tackle Bias in the Workplace”](#)

[Read “How Good Communication Skills Can Counter Workplace Bias”](#)

[Read “Why Subtle Bias Is So Often Worse than Blatant Discrimination”](#)

EMPLOYER WEBINAR

The Government is Knocking: IRS Penalty Assessment Letters and DOL Audits of Health and Welfare Plans

Tuesday, September 11, 2018 • 2:00 p.m. ET / 11:00 a.m. PT

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) continues to send proposed penalty assessment letters to large employers. The Department of Labor (DOL) continues to audit health and welfare benefit plans of all sizes. Being prepared is critical to an employer's success in responding to the government.

This webinar will:

- Discuss what triggers an IRS proposed penalty assessment letter
- Describe the general first steps employers should take when they receive a proposed penalty assessment letter
- Describe the types of follow-up letters that employers may receive from the IRS
- Briefly describe the Marketplace Notices that employers may receive and how these notices differ from IRS proposed penalty assessment letters
- Discuss what triggers a DOL audit
- Provide general first steps for employers to consider if they receive an audit letter from the DOL
- Discuss what the DOL is looking for during an audit, for both fully insured and self-funded plans
- Discuss issues the DOL is looking for under the ACA, HIPAA, GINA, mental health parity, the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act, and the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act
- Provide information on the general timeline of a DOL audit
- Briefly discuss what employers should do if they realize they failed to file ACA reporting forms, report or pay the PCORI fee, or file Form 5500
- Provide best practice tips to prepare for an audit of a health and welfare plan

This 60-minute basic webinar will help employers understand how to be prepared when they receive an IRS proposed penalty assessment letter or notice of a DOL audit.

Registration

[Register here for the webinar](#). The presentation will be posted on the [UBA website](#) the afternoon before the webinar.

About the Presenter

[Lorie Maring](#) is Of Counsel in the Atlanta, Georgia, office of Fisher Phillips. She focuses her practice on helping employers navigate Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and other state and federal laws impacting the design, implementation and ongoing compliance of their employee benefit plans and programs.

She regularly advises clients on the Affordable Care Act, health and welfare benefits, qualified plans, executive compensation, Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWAs) and multiemployer plan issues. Lorie also represents employers in managing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Department of Labor (DOL) audits, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance and fiduciary obligations. She serves clients in the public and private sector, including non-profit organizations and trade associations.

Certification

This webinar has been submitted to the [Human Resource Certification Institute](#) and the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) to qualify for 1 recertification credit hour.