



WORKPLACE CULTURE

Giving Thanks in the Office

While our personal lives may offer plenty of opportunities to give thanks, it's also important to make a habit of it in our professional lives, according to an article in the [Cobb Business Journal](#). Few people in a study cited expressed gratitude for their work, and that might be because a culture of gratitude needs to be cultivated in the office, and from the top. Business leaders worried that giving thanks will be seen as hinting at a promotion, showing weakness, or failing to inspire hard work should take note of leaders like Richard Branson and Oprah Winfrey. Both view gratitude as an essential element of success and built empires by cultivating a culture of thankfulness. The data supports that mindset, with the vast majority of employees reporting they'd work harder for a more grateful boss.

Gratitude builds critical connections and a common bond, yes, but it also motivates us to persevere through difficult tasks and navigate failures better says an article in [Business Management](#). Research even suggests a grateful mindset helps us sleep better and stay healthier by boosting the immune system and reducing stress. That's good for people and for business.

One thing to avoid in your new gratitude mindset? Expecting thanks for help your colleagues didn't ask for. An article in [Science Daily](#) tracks research that differentiates between proactive and reactive help. While it might seem unkind to refrain from proactively helping, workers across age ranges and industries said unrequested offers of assistance were both frustrating and lowered their self-esteem. The helper also reported feeling less motivated to help in the future



and similar frustration in the lack of gratitude shown. A worker's best bet is to focus on doing their job well until a request for help comes in.

Read more:

[Building a no-strings-attached gratitude culture in the workplace](#)

[Keep gratitude at the forefront](#)

[Don't offer co-workers help unless asked](#)

HEALTH & WELLNESS

It's Flu Season...Again

When flu season hits, absenteeism skyrockets and productivity drops. In a [recent article](#), *Employee Benefit News* points out that the first step is the "ounce of prevention," the flu vaccine. Providing for vaccination can be a smart benefit to offer employees, and it requires navigating misinformation about the vaccine, motivating employees to act, and contending with supply issues. For employers who want to increase vaccination rates, experts suggest making the process more convenient or incentivizing getting a shot. On-site programs are more effective since they are not only more convenient but also allow employees to be motivated by seeing their coworkers getting the shot. Regardless of approach, careful planning – from scheduling to ordering to addressing employee concerns – can help an office place stay healthier.

Last year's flu season was the worst on record, per the CDC. Shared spaces and devices make offices and workplaces perfect places for flu germs to spread. As an article in [HR Dive](#) shows, 40% of employees with the flu admit to coming to work and 10% attend a social gathering while sick. Should an employee contract the flu, employers need to have policies in place that empower and encourage workers to stay home when sick.

In "[Threat of Another Nasty Flu Season Prompts Workplaces to Be Proactive](#)," *Workforce* echoes the importance of the flu shot and a no-tolerance policy toward sick employees coming to the office. Policies and a culture that encourage self care over powering through an illness can help foster calling in when needed. The article also reinforces other preventative behaviors like hand washing, staying home while feverish, and coughing into your elbow.

Read more:

[HR's recurring headache: Persuading employees to get a flu shot](#)

[40% of workers admit coming to work with the flu](#)

[Threat of Another Nasty Flu Season Prompts Workplaces to Be Proactive](#)

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Happier Holidays, the HR Way

Most people, according to a new survey featured in [HR Dive](#), have the greatest sense of belonging in their own homes. That may not be surprising news, but what is interesting is that one third of respondents felt the greatest sense of belonging in their workplace. A significant

percentage, 40 percent, attribute that feeling to actions their colleagues and managers take to check in on them, both personally and professionally. Belonging improves employee retention and productivity, certainly, but it requires acknowledgement of diversity and efforts at inclusion.

This critical sense of belonging can be deepened, or hampered, during the holiday season. Beyond secular or national holidays like Thanksgiving and New Year's, the fall and winter months are full of faith-based holidays beyond Christmas. The Society for Human Resource Management has some tips as well as a list of celebrations for the coming months intended to help companies create inclusive workspaces for people of more faiths and culture. When employees feel valued and known, they are more engaged.

Mutual respect is not only good for morale, it's good for productivity. Some tips include sharing more about holidays in internal communications, creating luncheons that feature traditional dishes or are mindful of dietary restrictions or fasting practices, or sponsoring a service or volunteer day.

Read more:

[One third of workers report feeling a sense of 'belonging' in the workplace](#)

[Ask an HR Expert: How Can We Foster Inclusivity Among Our Multifaith Workforce This Holiday Season?](#)

IN BRIEF

Culture Questions

With unemployment continuing at historically low numbers, it's up to employers to win sought-after candidates. During an interview, employers are likely ready for the culture question. When asked about culture directly, according to an article in [Fast Company](#), interviewers are quick to offer pat or polished answers. Interviewees are being encouraged to dig deeper, asking more specific questions that require detailed answers. To wow and win the hire, be prepared to share about opportunities to give back, which might be expected, but also on some tough questions focused on things like recent achievements and how they were celebrated or company-wide learning gleaned from big challenges. Also get ready to talk about and show life at the office, with interviewees asking about what lunch time is like, what activities employees participate in, or even requesting a quick tour.

Read more:

[Ask these 10 questions to understand the real truths about a company culture](#)

EMPLOYER WEBINAR

What Employers Need to Know About IRS Reporting in 2019

Tuesday, December 11, 2018
2:00 p.m. Eastern / 11 a.m. Pacific

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's reporting requirements are rapidly approaching for employers with group health plans or with 50 or more full-time or full-time equivalent employees. The IRS recently provided final instructions for employers who are preparing to file. This webinar will provide an overview of the reporting process, what we learned from earlier rounds of reporting, and how employers should be tracking employees.

This webinar will:

- Review the 2018 final reporting forms and instructions
- Review the deadlines for employers to submit forms to the IRS and to employees
- Discuss reporting offers of COBRA coverage
- Explain the difference in reporting requirements for small (less than 50 employees) and large (50 or more employees) employers, and self-funded versus fully insured
- Discuss the two measurement methods to determine which employees receive a Form 1095-C
- Provide best practices on the monthly measurement method and the lookback measurement method
- Discuss the importance of accurate reporting in light of the IRS' proposed penalty assessment letters
- Describe what we learned about reporting based on errors that led to IRS proposed penalty assessment letters

This 60-minute intermediate level webinar will help employers determine the best practices for reporting in 2019.

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.