

THE RESOURCE

HR INSIGHTS

VOL. IX, ISSUE V

magazine

eyes of industry leaders



**IMPROVISATION.
ADAPTATION.
RESILIENCE.**

IN THIS ISSUE

Employee Engagement:
Now More Important Than Ever

How AI Can Help Companies
Build Winning Workforces

What Will HR Look Like
After Covid-19

Learning in Times
of Change

THE RESOURCE FULFILLMENT CENTER

It's funny how history repeats itself, and the same challenges & opportunities of the past come back around every 10 or 20 years, at least!

Our company has always had the desire to help the people we employ with training & developing new skills, to better position them for growth and progress in their careers.

For years we've discussed creating a program where we could train candidates with no prior experience to: drive a forklift, develop leadership skills, or simply try out a new job function in a manufacturing or distribution environment, among many other things - thus creating our own pool of qualified employees by giving them the skills to meet the needs of the job market.

Now that opportunity is here! We have a new facility in Winston-Salem - The Resource Fulfillment Center, where we are building not only a forklift training program, but also a full-scale contract packaging, product fulfillment, rework and warehousing operation.

Our Fulfillment Center will allow us to build a workforce of candidates who may have barriers to full-time employment, and work with them to overcome those barriers and develop into a great employee!

What do we want to accomplish? We want to train as many people as we can and equip them with new skills and abilities to help them better themselves and their families. At the same time, we create the workforce both we and our customer's need, and hopefully build a business operation that will thrive.

We firmly believe that through diversity, inclusivity, and opportunity-based learning we improve our community and the lives of all of our employees. Our innovative, compassionate, and process-driven team enjoys the opportunities and challenges of each new project we bring into our Fulfillment Center. We seek to empower and challenge our employees to be better everyday, working with them to improve their skills, enhance their job satisfaction, and expand their earning potential. As this workforce improves and employees become more successful in their roles at our facility, we can better assist them with landing the job in our community that they have been striving for!

CONTACT US TODAY to learn more about our Fulfillment Center, our full suite of services that may benefit your organization, or to gain access to the talent pool we're currently developing!

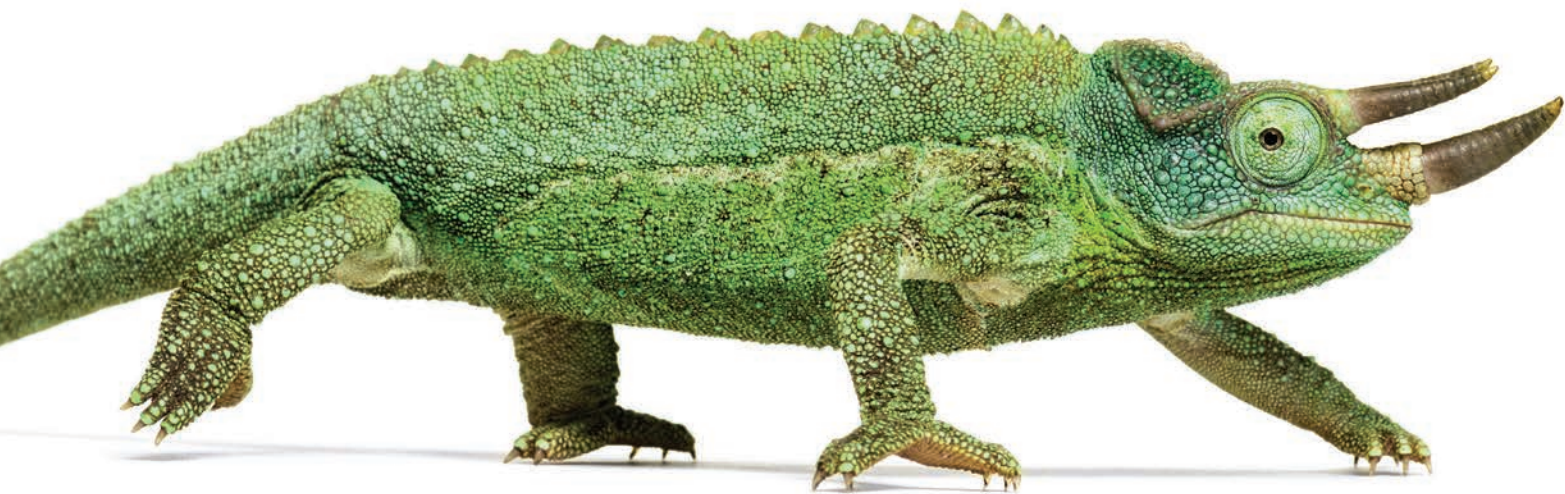
fulfillment@theresource.com
336.970.5229

THE RESOURCE

Kenneth Dalton *President*



Early in his career, Kenneth worked as an Onsite Manager for The Resource's largest manufacturing client. His 30+ years of experience in the industry, coupled with his values & problem solving expertise make him a powerful resource for maximizing business potential. Kenneth is a member of TempNet, American Staffing Association, and has been certified by the National Safety Council.



LEADERSHIP



4 Four Ways Leaders Can Temper an Overly Critical Approach
by Terri Klass

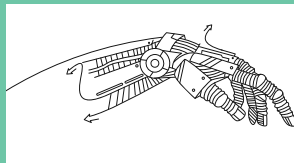
6 Employee Engagement: Now More Important Than Ever
by Baili Bigham

LESSONS LEARNED

8 HR and Operations: Lessons Learned from the Economic Downturn
by Chas Fields

DEVELOPMENT

10 How AI Can Help Companies Build Winning Workforces
by Christine Rochelle



WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

12 What Will HR Look Like After Covid-19
by Danielle Cronquist



14 Coaching From Afar
by Valerie Grubb



16 Learning In Times of Change
The Rework Editors

WATER COOLER CHRONICLES

18 The Path Forward
by Mike McKerns

RECIPE

18 Roasted Stuffed Tomatoes





HR INSIGHTS

from the eyes of industry leaders

PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTORS

Mamu Media

EDITOR IN CHIEF Mike McKerns

MANAGING EDITOR Marsha Brofka-Berends

DIRECTOR OF SALES Robert S. Herbein III

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Baili Bigham

Danielle Cronquist

Chas Fields

Valerie Grubb

Terri Klass

Christine Rochelle

The Rework Editors

DESIGN

Matt Coleman



Spending an enormous amount of time out of the office over the past several months has given many people the opportunity to do some thinking. For some leaders, that reflection may result in excessive analysis of their team members or assignments to the point of focusing on the negative.

Four Ways Leaders Can Temper an Overly Critical Approach

BY TERRI KLAAS

These days “nagging” employees about their work probably says more about a leader’s need for more control during these unpredictable times than it says about the actual work itself. Leaders are feeling a lack of control, which manifests as overly critical feedback. They may also be feeling insecure about adding value and turning out the highest level of deliverables. Right now, many leaders are in the same boat, each trying to navigate this uncertain time period.

In order to lead more completely, though, leaders need to be aware of this context and examine their actions and motivations closely. By combining deep analysis with empathy, they can find ways to temper their excessive criticism.

Be Honest about Current Feelings

Before a leader responds to a less-than-favorable situation, they should take stock of their feelings about it. Self-aware leaders are better able to respond thoughtfully (rather than simply react immediately). To understand their current state of mind, they should ask themselves the following questions:

- Do I have any particular biases about the person who is sharing this information?
- Am I able to listen to the entire message without jumping in with my ideas? Is my rush to comment affecting this interaction?
- How do I feel right now? (Angry? Frustrated? Defensive? Open-minded?)
- Would it be better to have this conversation at a later date when I am in a different state of mind?

Analyze, Don’t Criticize

Leaders who want to avoid being overly critical should stick to facts and observations and avoid negative belittling. When faced with a team member or colleague who holds a different point of view, leaders should try to address the divide by backing up their own opinions with specific data. Similarly, presenting descriptive, detailed suggestions—and steering clear of nebulous language—can help a leader ensure a more positive reception of their analysis.

Use Respectful Words and Body Language

Excessive criticism often involves attacking others with disrespect. Even in disagreement, leaders should be respectful of differences and mindful of how others perceive their words and body language. Nonverbal communication can speak louder than actual words, particularly if the speaker is seen as being too critical. Some simple strategies can help leaders maintain a respectful approach:

- Consider the positives before sharing the negatives. (Leaders don’t need to sugarcoat the truth. They just need to look at all sides of a situation.)
- Rather than be “judgy” and jump to conclusions, leaders should use words that honor the other person’s intentions.
- Smile and strive to be approachable. Even when offering negative feedback, leaders want others to listen with the openness that results from a personal connection.
- Never point fingers (literally) at someone. That hand gesture is aggressive and unfriendly, and often reminds adults of being reprimanded by their parents or teachers.

Include Empathy and Kindness

When employees sense that their leaders are genuinely invested in how they may be feeling, those leaders will be able to share honest feedback successfully. Leaders who get in the habit of trying to look at situations through the perspectives of others will create meaningful connections with them. As these respectful relationships flourish, the need for overly critical feedback diminishes. The result will be a valuable conversation built on mutual trust, respect, and kindness.

Terri Klaas is a highly sought-after leadership skills facilitator, trainer, coach, and speaker who helps organizations develop influential leaders and retain their experienced talent. She can be reached at www.terriklaclassconsulting.com/.



**EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT:
NOW MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN EVER**

BY BAILI BIGHAM

As the world moves into the “new normal” and a new frontier emerges in the state of work, HR departments across the world are being asked to ramp up their employee engagement efforts. The pandemic and its effects on the economy have shaken many organizations to their core, revealing incredible humanity and resiliency—as well as deep fissures that require attention. No one has a roadmap for what comes next, yet the longstanding correlation between employee engagement and organizational health is a clear sign that focusing on engagement can help companies navigate the uncertainly ahead.

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

Most managers have an idea of what defines an engaged employee but don't necessarily have a detailed understanding of how different levels of engagement and disengagement can shape employee behavior.

- Engaged employees are set apart by the level of excitement they willingly bring to their work. They go the extra mile and feel connected to their organizations' missions, and their passion drives innovation.
- Unengaged employees do just enough to get by but rarely go above and beyond their primary responsibilities. They're there for the paycheck—and that's about it.
- Actively unengaged employees are extremely unfulfilled at work and completely unable to be their best selves every day. In stark contrast to engaged employees, actively unengaged workers can have a negative impact on customer experiences, productivity, and profitability.

Unfortunately, the majority of the world's workforce is unengaged, with “only 13 percent of employees working for an organization” falling into the “engaged” category.¹ Compared to their engaged counterparts, unengaged workers have higher rates of absenteeism, are less productive, and create less profit for their organizations—all negatives that are likely to increase even more during a crisis if left unaddressed.

THE TRUE COST OF AN UNENGAGED EMPLOYEE

Unengaged employees represent the greatest opportunity for an organization to improve both its culture and its profitability. A disengaged employee costs their organization about 34 percent of their annual salary.² When a company has multiple disengaged employees, such losses can quickly add up. And those numbers don't even taken into account the impact on morale after an employee leaves, the cost of resources needed to backfill the role, and the amount of time it take to get a new employee onboarded and up to speed.

When a crisis emerges, the price of losing good talent can be far more than a dollar amount. That's why having the right employee engagement strategy in place could determine whether a business thrives, scrapes by, or even fails. Clearly, engagement isn't just something that's “nice to have” but a



GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

No matter where an organization is in its life cycle, the first step it should take to address poor employee engagement is to acknowledge that the problem exists. Many leaders who believe that their companies have high levels of employee engagement usually aren't asking the right questions. In these times of uncertainty, it's more important than ever for organizations to monitor the health of their cultures. That process starts with an honest analysis of how employees feel about their relationship to their work.

An engagement survey can yield an accurate understanding of engagement levels in an organization. Employees want to be heard and they want their voices to matter. But in order to make the most of their feedback, the survey must collect data that is relevant for each segment of the company's workforce, actionable, and tied to the organization's key performance indicators.

Once the results are in, leaders should assess the baseline and then quickly and transparently share the findings. They should also brainstorm measurable solutions—a process that will likely involve identifying barriers to engagement, training managers to weave employee engagement initiatives into all employee touchpoints, and creating feedback loops to regularly assess manager effectiveness.

When taking place during a crisis (whether it's a pandemic or economic uncertainty), however, this process will take on a different form. When the work environment becomes significantly altered or disrupted, leadership will face unique challenges as they try to keep their employees engaged. Although the future is unpredictable, organizations can strive to learn from past experiences and proactively create healthy, thriving, and profitable workplaces in which employees feel heard and understood. ■

Baili Bigham is the content manager at 15Five (www.15five.com), provider of continuous performance management software that includes weekly check-ins, objectives and key results tracking, peer recognition, one-on-one meetings, and 360° reviews. She can be reached on Twitter at @bgbigz.

1. Annamarie Mann and Jim Harter. 2016. “The Worldwide Employee Engagement Crisis.” Gallup website, January 7, www.gallup.com/workplace/236495/worldwide-employee-engagement-crisis.aspx

2. Paul Petrone. 2017. “How to Calculate the Cost of Employee Disengagement.” LinkedIn Learning blog, March 24, learning.linkedin.com/blog/engaging-your-workforce/how-to-calculate-the-cost-of-employee-disengagement.

HR and Operations Lessons Learned from the Economic Downturn

BY CHAS FIELDS



As parts of the USA work toward reopening, human resources and operations leaders are realizing that they need plans in place for handling changes to the basic structures and practices of work. When things finally do settle down, no one will miss the days of social distancing, managing personal and work lives during a pandemic, working early mornings and late nights, and carrying insurmountable stress. But everyone can definitely learn from those challenging experiences.

When COVID-19 was on the rise in early March, few people could answer the question “How is your company handling this situation?” It was evident that no one had a good response prepared for the extreme level of economic suppression that accompanied the pandemic. And now, several months later, companies all have to adjust their business procedures again. At this time, it’s important for them to reflect on the lessons they learned about managing situations beyond their control (such as a pandemic and an economic downturn) and create action plans that consider HR, operations, and employee perspectives.

HR LESSONS LEARNED



If organizations didn’t already consider their HR departments as strategic partners before the crisis, they certainly do now. When the pandemic struck and disruptions escalated, many businesses across the country struggled to handle their day-to-day tasks as they faced new challenges, such as filling emergency shifts, making tough calls about furloughing or laying off employees, maintaining healthy company cultures, and providing support resources for employees who were suffering from the direct or indirect consequences of COVID-19. HR stepped in to help shoulder those burdens and through that process came to several important realizations that can help organizations navigate the days to come.

Employee well-being and safety come first and require an action plan. This isn’t a new concept, but companies need to recognize a shift in the mental and physical health needs of both employees and the business. To keep the business running, companies must have an action plan that not only identifies key employee roles for keeping the organization operational, but also recognizes employees’ value by providing for their safety and giving them confidence in the processes put in place to protect them if they still have to come onsite.

Companies can be more agile about training, reskilling, and upskilling their employees. It’s impossible (or at least very difficult) to find an employee who doesn’t want to learn more and find some satisfaction in their job. Providing opportunities to perform different roles and tasks is a great way for companies to help employees work toward their personal goals while also addressing the organizations’ current skills gaps. By continuing to evaluate, discuss, and identify what employees want to learn, companies can create plans that optimize that information against critical business needs when difficult times strike.

If possible, create and promote remote work policies. Although remote work isn’t viable for every business, many organizations now realize that their employees don’t have to be in the office every day to be productive. By leveraging HR data to track employee behaviors and work activities, an organization can determine whether remote work is a good option for that particular business.

Mental health should never be stigmatized, and organizations should continue discussions on it. Companies should provide their employees with information about how to understand the signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety, burnout, and declining mental health in general. Beyond that, organizations need to develop mental health plans that are easy for employees to understand and lay out what actions employees, HR, and management can take to address mental health issues.

OPERATIONAL LESSONS LEARNED



The many business disruptions that operations leaders have overcome and continue to address have revealed many opportunities to collaborate with HR. Several new perspectives have emerged around communicating with and supporting employees in what had previously been regarded as purely quantitative day-to-day activities.

Nurture employees through operational processes.

This is a great time to be empathetic and real with employees. Recognizing that measuring productivity may look different moving forward, leaders must consider where their productivity gaps are and determine if flexible scheduling will solve these issues. Self-service plays a critical role in shift swapping, shift coverage, and managers having insight on avoiding burnout. Nurturing starts with trust, and using the right technologies to give employees options around when and how they work enables companies to build that trust while at the same time keeping their business goals moving forward.

Be present, be visible, and overcommunicate. It's empowering for employees to know that their peers, colleagues, and managers are willing to have meaningful and transparent conversations about changes taking place. Companies have learned how important it is to have flexible options for notifying employees about process changes. But even with mobile alerts, e-mail notifications, call trees, or other communication plans in place, leaders' willingness to get out from behind their desks for in-person conversations can give those plans an even more positive impact and make sure that employees feel heard and seen.

Educate around labor costs and how they align with productivity.

Leaders who seek to control labor costs, manage overtime, and access data to understand productivity need to make allies of their employees. By using a human capital management system to get reports on who is a top producer, leaders can compare performance within a department (or among people who hold the same position). They can also share some of these results with employees to educate them on which approaches work best to boost efficiency and productivity.

EMPLOYEE LESSONS LEARNED



During the economic downturn employees, too, have learned a lot about how to cope with incredible amounts of stress, remain resilient, and succeed in nontraditional work environments. HR and operations should come together to evaluate the takeaways their people have from this experience and use those conversations to build stronger future approaches.

People are resilient but still want and require leadership and guidance. Employees have moved to a new level when it comes to trusting one another and showing empathy for colleagues. Leaders need to set an example by displaying passion and resilience and reinforcing these positive cultural outcomes for employees so that the stress everyone is experiencing brings people closer together instead of driving them apart.

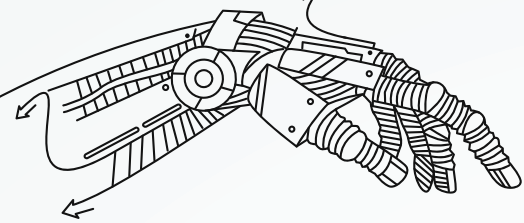
Companies are capable of working remotely—and succeeding. Leaders should give employees the chance to share how the sudden shift to remote work affected the organization's culture both positively and negatively. By investigating how employees structured their daily work lives (especially while maneuvering around childcare and other family-related responsibilities), companies can replicate some of the most successful techniques when employees return to the workplace.

Technology is essential. Leaders should explore with employees how technology helped with transparency and communication during the slowdown. By leveraging employees' insights into the technology that has enabled them to communicate even better, companies can eliminate bad processes and reduce their employees' stress.

Adversity is an opportunity

Over the past few months, people throughout the world have come together to help each other through this crisis, and companies have stepped up to navigate uncertainty. Before things shift again, companies should use this time to reflect and make improvements that can help them achieve even greater things. The actions they take now will shape what happens when the business world returns to a work situation that looks more normal.

As a human capital management strategy consultant for Kronos (www.kronos.com), Chas Fields works with leadership teams to invest in people-centric technologies that enhance the employee experience and overall company culture of their business.



How AI Can Help Companies Build

People have been talking for years about artificial intelligence in the business world. Many of those discussions focus on the “robots versus humans” aspect of AI, but there’s a “robots and humans” perspective to consider, too. People forget that they already live with and use AI every day. In the consumer market, for example, Amazon and Netflix both employ AI to sort through thousands of options and narrow them down to a few “recommended for you” suggestions for each user.

In the broader business world, AI has many potential applications in all areas of a company’s operations. In talent acquisition in particular, it can enable organizations to do more with less (through advanced automation) and give them access to deeper insights for better decision making.

Targeted recruitment

By predicting potential challenges and analyzing data (which can include, for example, answers to questions such as “How long did it take to fill this role previously?” and “Which job boards are most effective?”), AI can suggest ways to align a company’s job descriptions more closely to similar roles in the industry and optimize the process for filling an open position.

Personalized candidate experiences

Although the job market changes daily, the candidate experience remains a priority, and a company’s consumer brand and its employer brand have never been as intertwined as they are today. In an application process that uses AI-generated automated communications that remain personal and human, job seekers feel valued with easy applications, virtual hiring experiences, and tailored recommendations for best-fit jobs.

Recruiters for RPM Pizza (the largest Domino’s franchisee in the USA) use AI to communicate with job seekers via texts and live chat. The company’s AI-powered chatbot, nicknamed “Dottie,” answers job-seeker questions, initiates the screening process, and offers candidates an application tracker to boost engagement and free up the hiring team’s time.¹

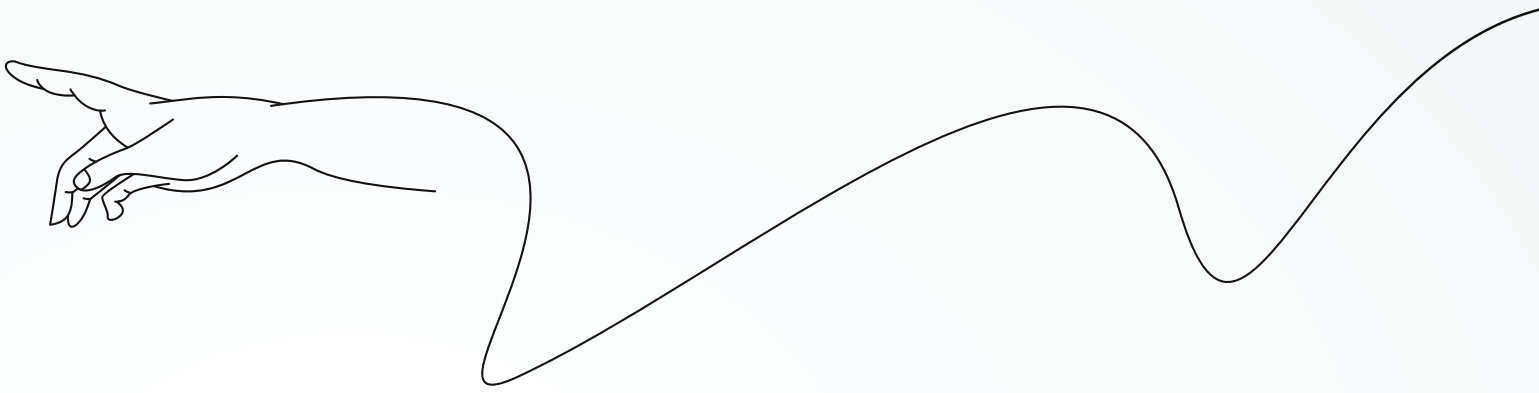
Increased internal mobility

By using AI to support teams in assessing internal talent for open roles, a company can give its current workforce and external potential candidates the same consideration when filling those positions. Such opportunities for internal mobility can help workers feel more invested in the organization.

The American Heart Association offers professional development to its internal talent through its Talent Exchange Portal. There, employees can apply to participate in projects outside their current roles in order to hone their skills and build relationships. A dedicated, internal careers site such as this can even intelligently match workers with adjacent roles within an organization.²

¹ iCIMS. 2020. “How an AI-powered Chatbot and Texting Help Domino’s Largest Franchisee Fight High Turnover and Increase Applicants by 66 Percent.” iCIMS website, cdn31.icims.com/icims3/prod/pdf/customers/RPM-Pizza-Case-Study.pdf.

² American Heart Association. 2017. “Talent Exchange Portal.” Heart U website, heartu.org/tag/talent-exchange-portal/.



Winning Workforces

BY CHRISTINE ROCHELLE

More efficient analysis

Talent acquisition teams often find themselves sorting through thousands of resumes and can struggle to find the time to narrow them down to the perfect candidate pool. These teams are starting to take a page from Netflix's playbook: instead of using one AI engine to enhance search results, Netflix uses multiple algorithms to beef up its offerings. AI using this strategy—called ensemble learning—selects the best options from a set compiled by many algorithms. In hiring, this method can “unearth the best candidates for a job—or jobs for a candidate—then serves those recommendations up in a single view” to provide recruiters with a more focused field to review.³

Greater diversity

Because bias is human nature, it's very difficult for hiring managers and teams to avoid exhibiting some degree of bias as they attract and engage talent. Cognitive bias (which derives from using shortcuts and “rules of thumb” to make sense of the world) can distort people's perceptions and cause them to draw on stereotypes. In the workplace, it can lead to problematic decision making in the hiring process.

The old saying “We've always done it this way” is one common obstacle to change. Fortunately, more and more companies are recognizing the importance of addressing bias in recruitment and hiring so they can make stronger hires and achieve greater diversity. AI helps reduce bias by removing (or reducing) the dominance of human assessment—which is fraught with bias—from the initial review of candidates or jobs.

A Better Tomorrow

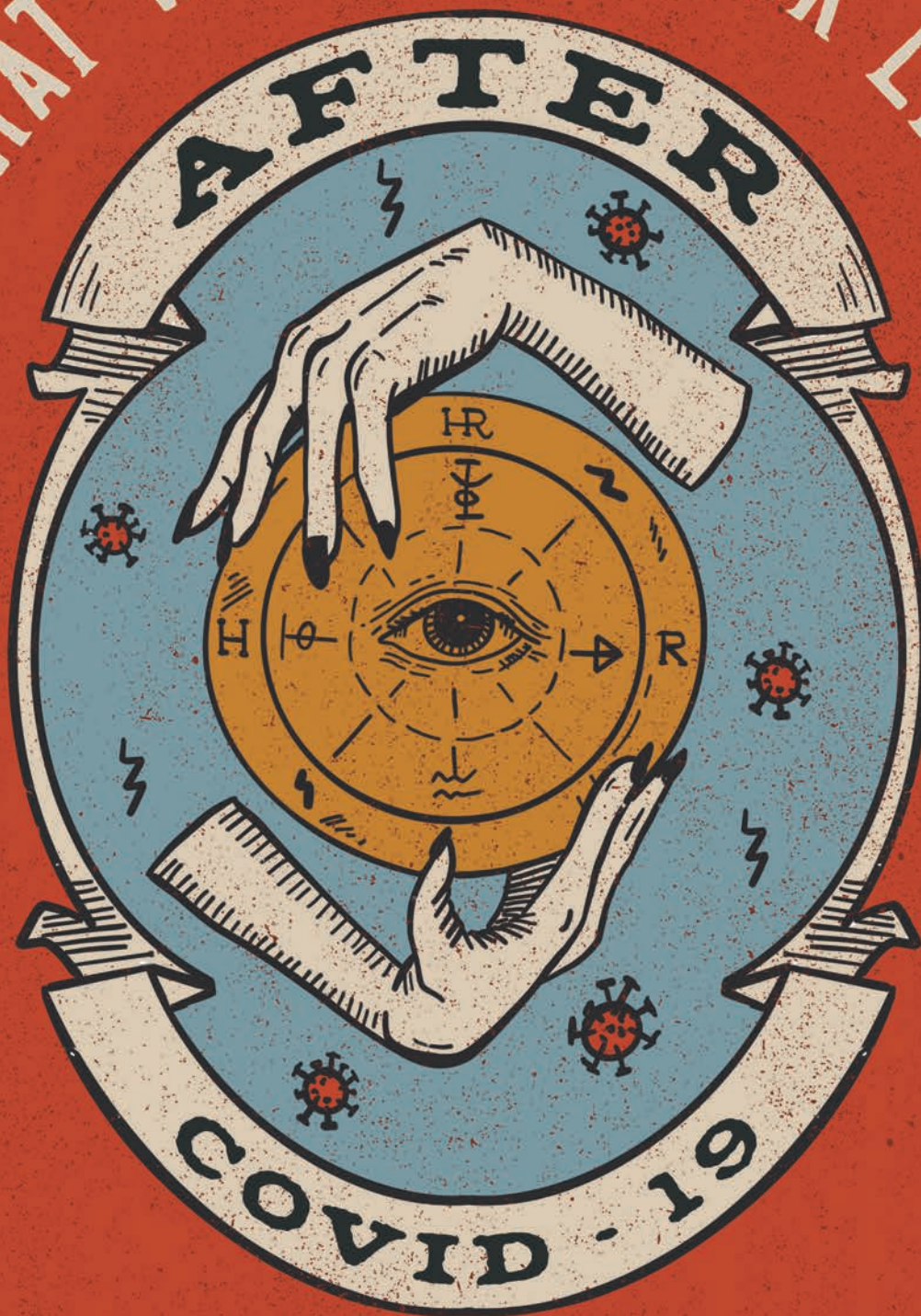
Through the adoption of AI, recruiters can improve the quality of their processes and increase the diversity of their organizations. AI will certainly be a core building block of the business world of the future, but it won't be the foundation. That role is reserved for humans, who will be needed to direct and control the technology. ■

Christine Rochelle is a content strategist at iCIMS, a leading provider of innovative Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) talent-acquisition solutions that help businesses win the war for top talent. To learn more about how iCIMS can help your organization, visit www.icims.com.



3 Virginia Backaitis. 2020. “Employers: iCIMS Holds a Key to Hiring in the Post-COVID-19 Economy.” Digitizing Polaris, April 29, digitizing-polaris.com/employers-icims-holds-the-key-to-hiring-in-the-post-covid-19-economy-5a20fd7c3b8c.

WHAT WILL HR LOOK LIKE



BY DANIELLE CRONQUIST



Over the past several months, many organizations have transitioned to fully remote work, weddings and graduations have been canceled, and destination vacations have been put on indefinite hold. Across the USA, COVID-19 numbers continue to vary wildly, with some states seeing dropoffs in their cases while others experiencing resurgences as they make attempts to reopen. Everyone is desperate for normalcy to return, but what that will look like after the pandemic isn't completely clear yet.

Even though this isn't the world's (or even the nation's) first pandemic, it's hard to know exactly how—and when—it will end. Business operations will certainly be different in the post-COVID-19 world. HR departments in particular should start looking now at predictions for what “normal” life will be like in the future so they can be prepared when employees return to their offices and business can operate as usual.

MORE REMOTE WORK

At the beginning of the pandemic, many offices transitioned as quickly as possible to being fully remote. (Even now, as states are opening back up, many businesses continue to encourage working from home where feasible.) Many of these newly remote employees have found that they enjoy working from home and are more productive there. In-office work isn't going to disappear, but now that employers have seen that workers can be just as productive from home as in the office and some employees have found they prefer working in the solitude of their homes, more companies will offer remote work options after the pandemic. In addition, because many companies have taken financial hits during COVID-19 and will be interested to reduce costs by cutting back on the amount of expensive office space they need.

INCREASED WELLNESS PROGRAMS

COVID-19 has taken a heavy mental, physical, and financial toll on many people. When the lockdowns and quarantines finally end, employees may need help getting back on track and destressing. By providing employees with resources and support in key wellness areas such as finances and mental health, companies can help those workers (and their organizations) adjust to the new normal.

ADJUSTED SICK LEAVE

With a new emphasis on staying healthy and everyone feeling a bit germaphobic, many companies may choose to adjust their sick-leave policies. This could mean allowing for more sick days so employees don't feel the need to come to work if they're unsure about their health. Or it might mean encouraging employees to perform symptom checks every morning and to work from home if they show any signs of illness, even if they are feeling well enough to work.

MASK WEARING

Whether or not working from home is possible, it seems likely that most employers will require or strongly encourage employees to wear face masks until COVID-19 is completely eradicated. If companies choose to have their employees follow this practice, they may wish to provide them with reusable or disposable masks.

GREATER EMPHASIS ON COMPANY CULTURE

Well before COVID-19, HR departments have championed company culture. But the pandemic has helped workers and executives recognize the importance of having a strong company culture in place to raise employee engagement and company performance. Culture is easier to build and maintain in an office, where coworkers can model it for each other. But when the workforce is dispersed, a company's culture is more likely to fracture—or even cease to exist completely. HR will need to work hard to counter that effect.

ALTERED HIRING AND BUDGET PLANS

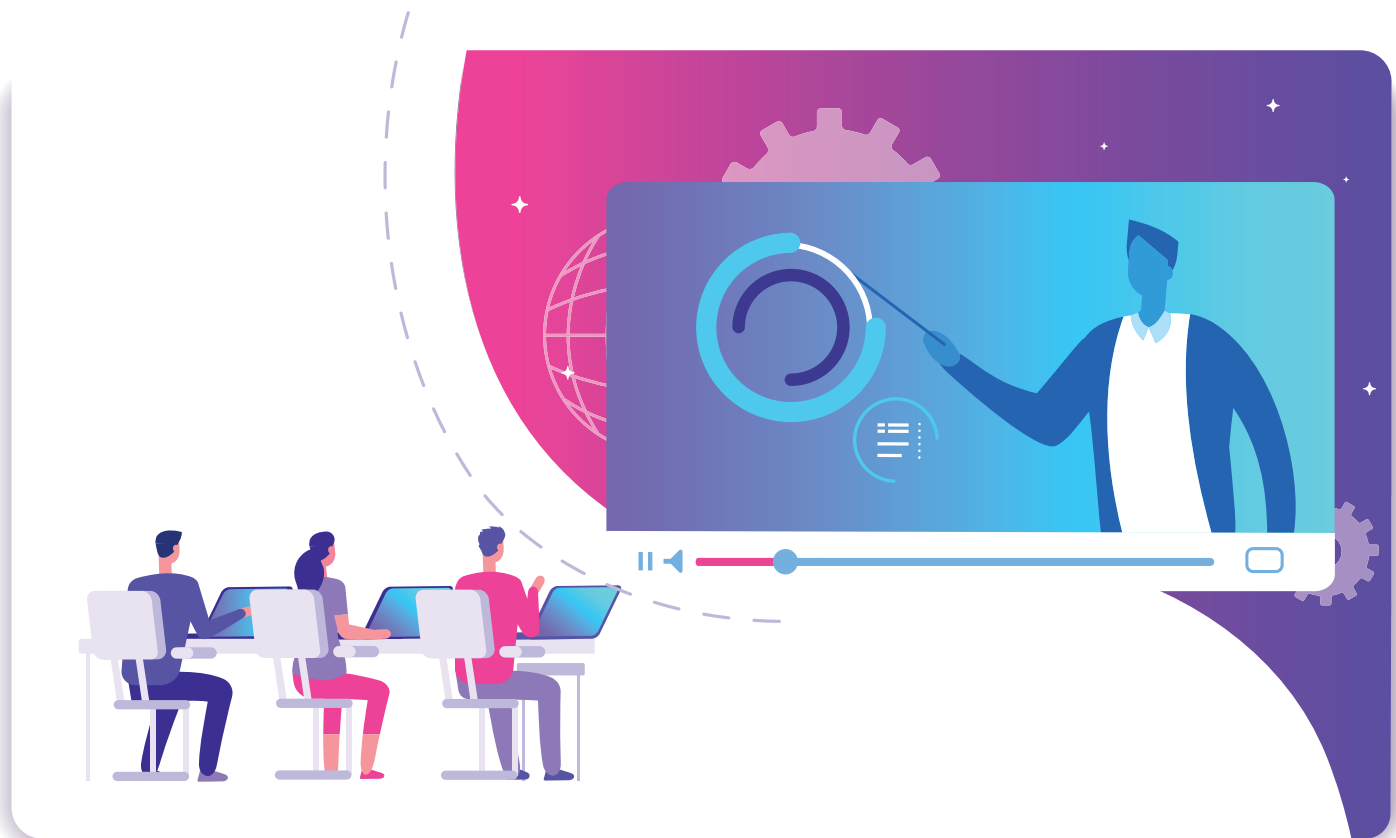
COVID-19 has had a strong negative impact on the economy, with many businesses experiencing layoffs and expense cuts. Moving forward, HR departments must work with hiring and budget plans that look extremely different from the ones they had at the start of the year. With fewer funds available for hiring and recruitment, many HR departments will choose to look internally for candidates. It's more cost effective to train a current employee to step into a bigger role than it is to seek out a new hire from outside. Not only will hiring internally save on costs, but offering promotions can help boost employee engagement and morale.

Because the pandemic has affected every business in different ways, it's impossible to say exactly what the post-COVID-19 world will look like for any one organization. It is safe, however, to say that things will change. To help smooth the transition, companies should start planning now for their return to the office and eventual return to normal business.

Danielle Cronquist is a copywriter for BambooHR (www.bamboohr.com). She writes content that gives people the tools and knowledge they need to do great work and create great places to work.

Coaching from Afar

BY VALERIE GRUBB



Coaching tops the list of skills that many executives look for in their frontline managers, and for good reason: effective coaching can dramatically increase employee engagement and intrinsic motivation. Considering that only about one-third of U.S. workers are engaged and managers have a huge influence on employee engagement (they “account for at least 70 percent of the variance” in those metrics!), it’s clear that managers need to ramp up their coaching skills.

What is effective coaching?

As a developmental and inquiry-oriented tool focused on future behavior, coaching helps employees move ahead by releasing their potential (even if they don't know they have it in them!). Good coaching can yield benefits for employees, for their managers, and for their organizations. It enables employees to take on more responsibility and become more accomplished, for example. Other potential benefits include greater employee retention and higher quality work.

To be an effective coach who helps employees develop greater intrinsic motivation, a manager should use the following strategies:

- **Support employees—and challenge them, too.**
- **Listen.**
- **Ask challenging questions, but don't hand out answers.**
- **Provide a new lens.**
- **Offer a wider range of options.**
- **Emphasize ownership and accountability.**

How does coaching change when everyone is working from home?

Coaching is defined by interpersonal interactions. The continually evolving nature of the coaching relationship is further complicated today by the fact that managers and employees are no longer working together onsite. During these times of widespread work-from-home arrangements, managers have to be even more intentional in their efforts to motivate and engage employees. Coaching from afar is possible during these challenging times. It just requires a slight shift in approach, intentionality, and mindset.

First, keep in mind that good coaching is good coaching. That holds true whether a manager and an employee are seated on opposite sides of the same desk or are looking at each other in a virtual meeting. Regardless of the setting, the foundations of effective coaching remain the same: intentionality and consistency.

Even when everyone has the best of intentions to communicate regularly, “out of sight, out of mind” can still rear its ugly head. And even when everyone is in the office, it's easy for managers



to focus on the tasks on their own plates and not spend enough time checking in on—and developing—their direct reports. When everyone's in a shared physical workplace, at least there's the possibility of having ad-hoc meetings (“Hey, glad I caught you! Let's go grab a quick coffee and chat!”). But those aren't even an option when everyone is geographically scattered.

That's why when everyone is working remotely and not seeing each other regularly in the office, it's more critical than ever to schedule—and follow through on—weekly check-ins. At the start of each week, managers need to block out time on their calendars for employee coaching, then treat that time as sacred (because frequent rescheduling sends a “you're not a priority” message to employees). Because they need to be fully present (and free of distractions) to provide good coaching, managers should be sure to choose times when they can truly focus their energies on being the coaches they wish they had had.

These meetings aren't just for making sure that projects are on schedule. Even though the concept of an “office” has changed recently, that doesn't mean that employees, companies, and managers have stopped pursuing growth opportunities and working toward goals. Coaching is still essential. In fact, it may even be more essential than ever now, as employees increasingly look to their leaders for guidance during these uncertain times.

Valerie M. Grubb of *Val Grubb & Associates Ltd.* (www.valgrubbandassociates.com) is an innovative and visionary operations leader with an exceptional ability to zero in on the systems, processes, and personnel issues that can hamper a company's growth. Grubb regularly consults for mid-range companies wishing to expand and larger companies seeking efficiencies in back-office operations. She is the author of *Planes, Canes, and Automobiles: Connecting with Your Aging Parents through Travel* (Greenleaf, 2015) and *Clash of the Generations: Managing the New Workplace Reality* (Wiley, 2016). She can be reached at vgrubb@valgrubbandassociates.com.

LEARNING IN TIMES OF

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, companies were already facing several challenges, such as the growing skills gap and the continued rise of technologies (in particular, AI and automation) in the workplace. Recognizing that encouraging and enabling skill development on an organization-wide level can foster an environment for growth, more and more companies seek to provide employees with learning opportunities to help them adapt to these shifts. Expanding employee skill sets increases organizational adaptability and prepares the business world for the next version of “normal.” But learning during times of change—such as during a pandemic—can be extremely difficult.

Organizations must understand that people need time to process and adapt before they can turn their attention to the future. In fact, pushing learning opportunities at the wrong time could lead to employees feeling unsupported or overwhelmed. Poorly timed new programs or opportunities could be misconstrued as attempts to rush through the adjustment period and to skip directly to increasing future profit. By understanding how employees navigate change, managers can better assess when to encourage growth, how to support individual team members, and how to innovate successfully through big changes.

Understanding the Stages of Change

As change happens within an organization (or in broader society), employees need time to acclimate and move through the five-stage “change cycle” (loss, doubt, discomfort, discovery, understanding, integration) that everyone experiences in the same order (albeit at different rates and in different ways)¹. Cornerstone’s vice president of strategic initiatives, Mike Bollinger, recently pointed out that the earliest stages of the change cycle—loss and doubt—are not a good time for learning:

*Change is typically about loss—it’s not the way it used to be. Managers have to be mindful of the individual employee’s state, if you will. Are they in a loss? That’s not the time to insert a new set of learning. That’s just going to create more discomfort and more doubt. Rather, find ways to make them comfortable so that they can grow.*²

As employees process feelings of loss and doubt, leaders should listen to them, field their questions, and create spaces for their voices to be heard.

Eventually, employees will reach a discovery stage where “I can’t do this” and “I don’t want to do this” give way to “How can I do this?” Business leaders need to prepare to support employees with learning at this key moment, which is the optimal time to implement company-wide learning opportunities. Simply by making sure that people know how to find the resources they need, companies can help employees feel empowered to overcome change more quickly.

To Lead through Change, Practice Empathy

Because each person moves through change at a different pace, not everyone will be ready for learning opportunities at the same moment. That means it’s up to managers to pay attention to how their employees are feeling during the change process. Setting up systems for more individualized check-ins can help ensure that no one is being rushed through the process.

These are not performance reviews; rather, they are conversations that start with engagement on a human level. These check-ins should focus first on questions such as “How are you coping?” and “How are you feeling?” before moving on to work-related topics.

The more comfortable employees get with change, the more they’ll look to learning. By keeping in mind Conrad Gottfredson and Bob Mosher’s “5 Moments of Need,” organizations can better understand when employees are likely to look for learning in various ways:

- ➔ **NEW:** learning something new for the first time
- ➔ **MORE:** expanding upon previous knowledge
- ➔ **APPLY:** acting upon learned knowledge and skills
- ➔ **CHANGE:** adapting knowledge to new trends
- ➔ **SOLVE:** solving new problems when they arise³

Because employees who have to learn something new “are most likely to ask their boss or mentor (69 percent) . . . for recommendations,” it’s critical that



CHANGE

BY THE REWORK EDITORS

managers be on the lookout for these circumstances and be prepared to make good suggestions.⁴ Therefore they themselves should be actively learning, so they can recommend useful courses that they've taken or point their employees to a particular type of learning opportunity. They should also base their advice on an understanding of how each employee learns best.

A Formula for Learning through Any Kind of Change

Employees are still adjusting to the current remote work environment created by COVID-19. Their organizations have likely experienced layoffs, pay cuts, and culture shifts. But many employees are already seeking out learning opportunities—a sign of a growing level of comfort with change. This is the time for business leaders to reflect on the changes their organizations are facing, assess the resources available to their employees, and ensure that those resources are properly communicated company-wide.

Change is always going to happen. On the other side of this pandemic, we'll continue to acclimate to new normals. This approach to learning can be applied to any change cycle, at any

scale. It is about providing your staff with the tools needed to succeed and understanding them on a human level.

This article was written by the editorial team of Cornerstone's ReWork blog, a guide to the changing talent-management industry that helps executives and HR leaders succeed in the new, technology-driven economy.
www.cornerstoneondemand.com/rework

1. Change Cycle. 2020. "The Change Cycle Overview." Change Cycle website, change-cycle.com/change-cycle.
2. Cornerstone OnDemand. 2020. "A Promise and a Pandemic: How New Capitalism Is Being Put to the Test." HR Labs podcast, April 16, podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/hr-labs/id1482283780.
3. The 5 Moments of Need. 2019. "An Overview of the 5 Moments of Needs." YouTube, February 26, www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ywb_Ek038o.
4. Degreed. 2016. "How the Workforce Learns in 2016." Degreed website, get.degreed.com/hubfs/Degreed_How_the_Workforce_Learns_in_2016.pdf.

The Path Forward

BY MIKE MCKERNS

Disruption. Uncertainty. Anxiety.

These three words encapsulate what most of the business world in this country (and throughout most of the world, for that matter) has been experiencing since late last winter. Once it became clear that the coronavirus would spread quickly if left unchecked, most “nonessential” businesses shuttered or (when possible) shifted to work-from-home arrangements for their employees.

Several months later, COVID-19 is still in our midst, and disruption, uncertainty, and anxiety persist. But companies’ bottom lines can’t support remaining in a state of limbo indefinitely. So, leaders are trying to figure out how to get business back on a “normal” track as soon as possible.

Fortunately, since last spring we’ve learned a great deal about how to live and work in a coronavirus-filled world. For example, public health experts and epidemiologists offer guidance on best practices for keeping shared physical workplaces safe. Thanks to the huge work-from-home experiment that was suddenly thrust onto many companies, managers and employees now have a better understanding of the benefits (and limitations) of remote work. Those lessons (and others) can be incorporated into any plans to move the business world toward a post-pandemic reality.

Most significantly, organizations and their employees have found wells of resourcefulness and flexibility that they might not have known existed if the pandemic hadn’t forced them to dig deep. I’ve been genuinely amazed and impressed by the many stories I’ve read about how companies were able to pivot to accommodate new market demands, to remote work, and to help meet their employees’ needs during these very stressful times. Employees, too, have risen to the challenge and continued to deliver their projects and support their organizations even while balancing work and family and setting up makeshift offices in their kitchens.

In these success stories, I see how the business world can navigate whatever lies ahead. To address ongoing disruption, uncertainty, and anxiety surrounding the pandemic and its impacts on our personal and professional lives, organizations and employees will need to continue to exhibit the skills and attitudes that have enabled them to weather the storm so far: **Improvisation. Adaptation. Resilience.**

Roasted Stuffed Tomatoes

Whether you’re trying to deal with a bountiful harvest of fresh tomatoes or looking for new ways to enliven dull-tasting supermarket tomatoes, there’s one dish that will never fail you: roasted stuffed tomatoes. Roasting brings out the sweetness inherent in all tomatoes (even those sad midwinter ones from the store!), and the classic flavors of this easy-to-prepare dish make it a terrific addition to any meal!

Yield: 4 servings

Time: about 40 minutes

What you’ll need:

- 4 tomatoes
- 1 ½ cups panko bread crumbs
- 1 ½ cups Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, shredded
- 8 tsp extra-virgin olive oil

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Slice the tomatoes in half, then gently squeeze each piece cut-side down to remove and discard as much of the excess moisture, pulp, and seeds as possible without distorting the tomato halves.
- In a small bowl, combine the panko and the cheese; stuff equal portions of this mixture into each tomato half.
- Arrange the tomatoes cut side up in a lightly oiled baking pan. (Try to choose one sized to keep the tomatoes leaning up against each so they remain upright during cooking.)
- Roast the tomatoes for about 30 minutes.
- Just before serving, sprinkle the basil leaves and drizzle the olive oil over the tomatoes.

Nutrition Facts

Amount per Serving

Calories: 305 cal

Fat: 20.5 g

Dietary fiber: 1.5 g

Sugars: 1.1 g

Protein: 17.2 g



THE RESOURCE

POWERFUL | *People* | SOLUTIONS

STAFFING & DIRECT HIRE

Our team specializes in your business

We do the searching & vetting so you don't have to. Reduced time to hire, pre-screened & tested candidates, increased employee retention. Your trusted partner.

HR, PAYROLL & ACCOUNTING Services

We'll take care of the back office so you can focus on growing a successful business

We work to determine your unique needs & customize our services accordingly. Whether you're a new or established business, outsourcing may be the right decision to reduce overhead, increase productivity, and ensure compliance.

CORE Assessment™

Start at the CORE and maximize your employee ROI

The CORE is a single tool; a groundbreaking assessment that allows you to hire smarter, create dynamic teams, develop leaders, and create a culture of top performers.

COACHING & Organizational Development

Solving Business problems by solving People problems

We offer a full suite of customized solutions to help you retain & engage top talent. Our coaching, development & training services help individuals and teams to unlock their potential in work and in life.

FULFILLMENT Center

Contract Packaging & Product Fulfillment

Drawing on our 20 years of fulfillment experience, our new facility allows us to offer our clients enhanced services. Re-packing, Labeling, Picking/ Packing, Returns/ Sorting, Cost-Per-Unit & More.

Employee UPSKILLING & FORKLIFT Certification

Developing candidate abilities & workplace readiness

Uplifting employees to reach their highest potential, through workplace simulation, preparation & training. Dedicated facility for Forklift training & certification, for both new & experienced drivers.

336.896.1000

INFO@THERESOURCE.COM

THERESOURCE.COM

THE RESOURCE



POWERFUL

People

SOLUTIONS



theresource.com

Staffing • Direct Hire • Consulting • CORE Assessment™
Coaching & Organizational Development • Employee Upskilling Program
Dedicated Forklift Training Facility • Contract Packaging & Product Fulfillment