THE RESOURCE

Labor & Industrial

INSIGHTS

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magazine

THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN SAFETY

Battling BURNOUT

In our latest Client Learning Session, Dr. Shawn Ricks gave a fantastic presentation on Burnout. Titled '*Burnout, Boundaries & Balance: Maintaining Wellness in Uncertain Times*', it was a timely topic for so many of the hiring managers we work with on a regular basis. And, let's face it, many of our staff members as well. Dr. Ricks highlighted the different mental health/wellness trends - both in and out of the workplace - in the wake of the pandemic. Increased agitation, harder to focus, feeling pulled in multiple directions, being asked to do more with less. Sound familiar? We're living in a state of hyperarousal and hypo-arousal in part due to: the pandemic, social and civil unrest, COVID/pandemic fatigue. We are ALL experiencing and living through trauma.

We covered the 3 Types of Stress: Physical, Chemical & Emotional. In our current state of less time...less resources... less rest, this daily stress can become chronic stress. This stress reduces the immune system, and when our body's defense system for stress is constantly left on throughout the day, it eventually burns out. We were given some helpful tips on determining whether STRESS or BURNOUT is being experienced, and then learned the 5 Stages of Burnout: subtle dissatisfaction, subconscious disregard, conscious numbing, anxious exhaustion, and full-blown trauma.

What are the causes of BURNOUT?

- Workload - load doesn't match capacity
- Perceived lack of control
- Reward - does it match time and effort
- Community - relationships and communication
- Fairness - equitable treatment
- Values mismatch

In order to prevent burnout, creating Boundaries is key. In order to create boundaries - Be clear on your 'WHY', Learn to say "no", Block your calendar, and Limit the amount of access others have to you via email and text. Balance is "an alignment between the use of time and personal and professional goals and priorities—not necessarily equal distribution of time between professional and personal activities, but rather general satisfaction with one's life". (Berry, 2010)

We are at our best when we're balanced in the four main areas: Physical (Health), Mental (Focus), Spiritual (Purpose) & Emotional (Happiness). Dr. Ricks left us with some practical strategies for immediate use in our efforts towards achieving balance.

An important note for organizations: While most companies focus on wellness practices that are individual, it is important to examine and shift the culture of the workplace. If everyone is burnt out, it's time to look at the environment and adjust norms and expectations that may be responsible!

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"Walls keep everybody out. Boundaries teach people where the door is"

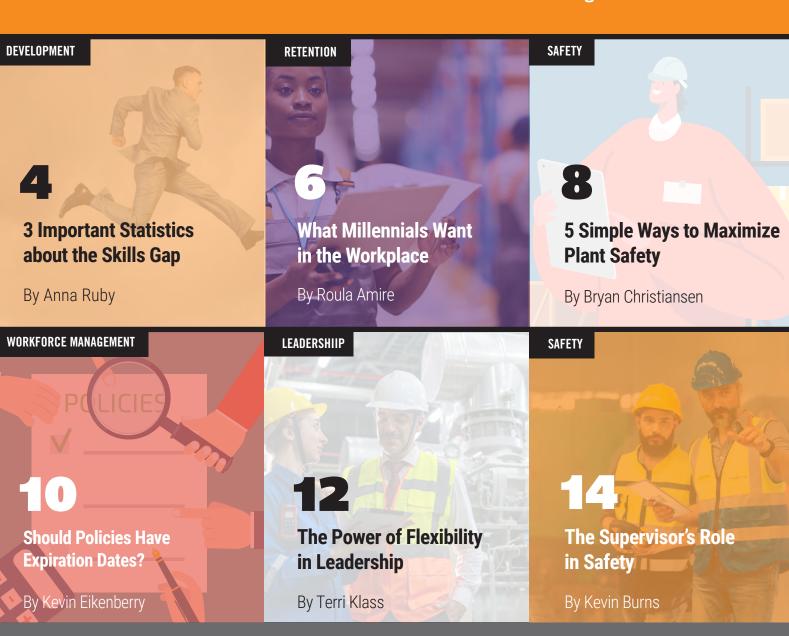**- Mark Groves**

Best Regards,

Kathy Hartung

Kathy Hartung, CEO

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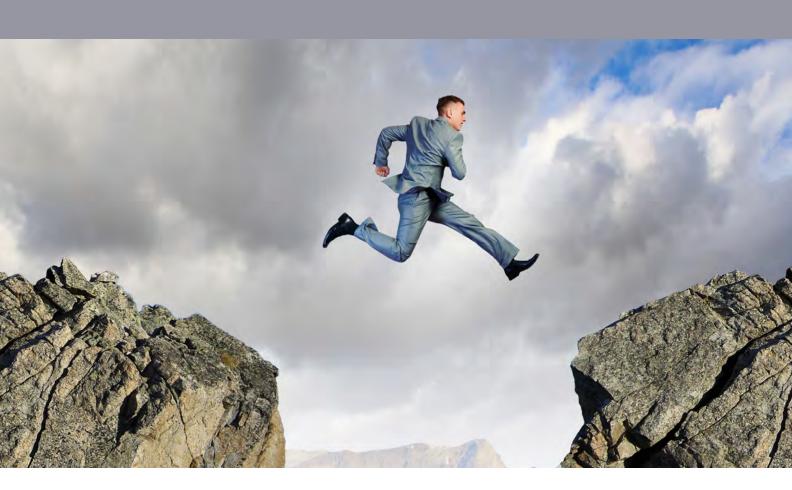
3 IMPORTANT STATISTICS ABOUT THE SKILLS GAP

BY ANNA RUBY

An organization has a skills gap when a tension exists between what it needs to accomplish and what its employees are capable of doing. To some degree, most organizations find themselves in this situation today, thanks to factors such as the retirement of older workers, economic changes, and the continued lightning-fast evolution in technology. By examining some key data points about the skills gap, though, companies can be better prepared to understand its significance and take steps to address it.

1

The skills gap could create an $8.5 trillion revenue deficit by 2030

A study by Korn Ferry found that the skills gap could lead to an $8.5 trillion deficit in global revenue by 2030, with the United States suffering a hefty portion ($1.748 trillion) of that loss on its own.[1] This is a significant amount of money for companies to leave on the table, particularly when many are already scrambling to reinvent themselves in a postpandemic, remote-friendly world.

A skills gap isn't the same as a people gap: there are plenty of job seekers right now, but companies still struggle to find candidates with the skills they need. To address the skills gap, leaders must rethink not only how they hire and train their workers but also what professional development they use to keep their top talent engaged while ensuring that organizations' skills needs are filled. With employees already indicating that professional growth opportunities can make or break a decision to come on board and stay long-term with a new company, companies cannot afford to underestimate the value of investing in skills and workforce training.

2 Less than half of workers feel supported by their companies' skill development opportunities

It's clear that professional development is a major differentiator in efforts to retain top talent, yet many companies still fail to offer those opportunities to their employees. A large portion of the workforce feels that their organizations do not support their efforts to achieve professional growth. In fact, only 47 percent of the employees surveyed in one recent study indicated that they "think that their company is making a significant investment in their professional development."[2] This low number indicates a missed opportunity for employers, especially those that struggle to fill positions as the skills gap worsens.

In particular, companies will need to explore technology training for all employees, not just those in the IT department. Digital transformation has created more demand for technology skills, even within middle-skill jobs. In addition, employers also desperately need employees who have mastery in soft skills such as communication, problem solving, and conflict management.

Because technology changes rapidly, a new employee's technical skills can become outdated just a few years—or even a few months—into their tenure. At the same time, it's challenging to find well-developed soft skills in new hires, particularly those new to the job market. With these two possible shortfalls in mind, companies have more incentive than ever to provide skills training tailored to their current employees' needs and career paths.

3 Nearly half of companies have no strategic plan to address skills gaps internally

Although an organization can make significant strides toward reducing skills gaps by taking a strategic approach to human resources, a significant number of companies fail to do this. (In fact, in 46 percent of organizations, "HR is primarily an operational department, with little or no strategic outlook or role."[3]) Organizations can address skills gaps more strategically by partnering with talent management and career advancement firms that have extensive experience in developing internal advancement opportunities for current employees.

In addition to reducing the skills gap (especially in areas such as technology skills and soft skills), this approach can yield several other benefits:

It helps a company build a workforce to meet its current needs without having to compete for "unicorn" candidates.

It reduces employee churn, which can cost a company anywhere "from one-half to two times the employee's annual salary."[4]

When a company does need to make an external hire, it can offer professional growth opportunities as a workplace differentiator.

The growing skills gap doesn't have to be an unsolvable problem. Talent leaders can take charge through strategic hiring practices and a clear professional development strategy. This approach also offers myriad opportunities for employers to innovate improved plans for hiring and internal mobility. ■

Anna Ruby is a content creator at iCIMS.

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What Millennials Want in the Workplace

BY ROULA AMIRE

Millennials, the largest generation currently in the workforce, place a high value on having a sense of purpose in their work. Just as purpose can bring them great satisfaction, the lack of purpose can drive them to look for new jobs. Organizations that make an effort to give their younger workers a sense of purpose experience higher retention, pride, and endorsement with this cohort.

For Millennials (and their younger Generation Z colleagues), purpose affects how they see their future. They're willing to walk away from jobs that lack meaning. When Millennials believe their work has purpose—that it's more than "just a job"—they are three times more likely to stay. Organizations are not meeting this need as much as they should, though: recent survey research by Great Place to Work found that only 79 percent of Millennials believe that their work has meaning (compared to 90 percent of Baby Boomers).[1]

Millennials aren't unique in wanting meaning in their work. Purpose is a key driver for all generations in the workplace. That said, Millennials and Generation Z are less likely to stay at their jobs than Baby Boomers and Generation X. Even at great workplaces, only 81 percent of Millennials and 77 percent of Generation Z say they intend to work at their jobs for a long time (compared to 90 percent of Baby Boomers). At an average U.S. workplace, only 52 percent of employees (regardless of generation) plan to stay.

Although purpose might be the biggest gap in employee experience for younger workers, it's not the only area that needs work. Giving workers a sense of purpose is good, but organizations should also take steps to address Millennials' concerns and interests in four other key areas identified in research by Great Place to Work:

PROFIT SHARING. More than any other generation, Millennials feel that they do not receive a fair share of profits, ranking 8 percentage points lower than Baby Boomers and 7 points lower than Generation X on this issue. (Profit sharing is the lowest of all measures of the overall workplace experience for Millennials.)

FAIR PAY. Many Millennials feel they are not paid fairly, with this generation ranking 8 percentage points lower than Baby Boomers on this issue. Millennials and Generation Z are tied, with 71 percent of both generations saying they receive fair pay. (Fair pay is the second lowest of all measures of Millennials' workplace experience.)

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS. More than any other generation, Millennials lack clarity around expectations. For organizations that want to outperform their competitors and experience strong business outcomes, clarity isn't a "nice to have" but a "must have." One study found that companies whose employees experienced purpose at work and believed their leaders set clear direction and expectations outperformed the stock market by 6.9 percent.[2]

WORK–LIFE BALANCE. Looking across generations, Millennials trail Baby Boomers by 6 percentage points (at 79 percent) in work–life balance and by 5 percentage points (also at 79 percent) in feeling that their workplaces are psychologically and emotionally healthy.

Millennials will continue to make up a significant portion of the workforce for the foreseeable future. In order to benefit from this generation's contributions, organizations need to provide Millennials with the workplaces they want. ■

Roula Amire is the content director at Great Place to Work. For more insights on workplace culture, visit www.greatplacetowork.com.

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all figures in this article are from research conducted by Great Place to Work. For more information, visit www.greatplacetowork.com.
2. Claudine Madras Gartenberg, Andrea Prat, and George Serafeim. 2018. "Corporate Purpose and Financial Performance." Organization Science, 30(1): 1–18,

When Millennials believe their work has purpose—that it's more than "just a job"—they are three times more likely to stay.

5 SIMPLE WAYS

More often than not, a facility's safety is not the first thing that comes to mind when considering what an organization must have in order to achieve and maintain consistent production. Digging a little deeper, however, reveals that safety actually emerges from the same conditions that make for efficient production. Five practices, in particular, can have a huge impact on safety.

1 ONGOING SAFETY-FOCUSED TRAINING

All machine operators and maintenance technicians should complete annual mandatory training in which every employee goes through the same safety training exercises with each machine at the facility. (Note that, because machines constantly change as technology evolves, all employees—even those who have been working at the plant for a long time—should undergo this training.) This process can ensure that everyone stays up to date on the safest way to use the equipment. In addition, a safety test administered at the end of the training can help to confirm that personnel understand their own experience levels.

Ongoing safety training might seem like wasted time that's stolen from normal production. But it's an important aspect of doing business. Accidents that are often avoidable can cause huge declines in output through long delays. This alone should be reason enough for managers to dedicate time to safety awareness training.

2 HIGH-PERFORMING ASSETS

The old adage, "You can hurt yourself far worse with a dull knife than with a sharp one" applies not just to cutlery but to heavy machinery, too. New machines work with ease and can get the job done fast, but after enough wear and tear every machine reaches its breaking point. Companies that run their equipment past its recommended limits and don't pay close attention to its performance and condition are asking for trouble in the form of an endless list of problems that create hazards for both the user and those around the machine.

Proper lubricants can keep machines functioning at their highest levels for longer periods of time. One of the quickest ways to run down a machine is to fail to oil or grease it regularly, which leads to a machine that not only functions in unpredictable ways but also breaks down unexpectedly and even endangers its operator. Predictive maintenance and other maintenance strategies can increase the reliability and availability of critical assets. By better understanding equipment and being able to identify when it will begin to wear down, operators will know how to prevent machine breakdowns. Ultimately, machines that are operated in the optimum manner by people who know how to interact with them are highly unlikely to cause safety problems.

3 TIDY AND ORGANIZED FACILITIES

Racing the clock is not an uncommon practice, but preventable accidents can occur when many people are operating large machines and each individual is trying to work at the quickest possible speed to make progress on a busy schedule. Empty boxes that obstruct a lane, wires and tape that are left out after use, and spilled liquids that aren't immediately cleaned up are just a few

TO MAXIMIZE PLANT SAFETY

BY BRYAN CHRISTIANSEN

examples of the types of hazards that result when, during the pressure of the workday, organizing and cleaning tasks get pushed back.

Such delays can create significant safety concerns, and a facility's safety increases tenfold the moment an operation makes cleanliness and order a top priority. Acting on spills and accidents as soon as they happen can mitigate the hazard almost completely. When each team member does their part to maintain an organized workplace, everyone can have more peace of mind. Waiting for someone to get seriously injured before introducing necessary changes is simply bad practice.

4 REVIEWING THE FACILITY LAYOUT FOR POSSIBLE DANGERS

Some employees who have worked at a facility for years may know where everything is, but many workers (old and new) might not be very familiar with its layout and contents. Reviewing several key elements can help identify possible areas of concern:

- Verify that there is quality lighting in every area of the facility, especially around signs.
- Ensure that each sign's message is fully understood by all employees, so that

everyone knows what safety precautions to take.
- In a facility with piping systems, each pipe's contents should be carefully labeled. Damaged pipes should be repaired or replaced immediately.
- In a facility with chemicals, each worker must have sufficient understanding of the hazards and risks involved in the unfortunate event of a chemical leak, as well as knowledge of what to do in the event of an accident and chemical exposure.
- Ensure that the facility has adequate floor markings, which can alert personnel of hazardous zones that are unsafe to enter and of the presence of dangerous elements (such as chemicals).

5 ROUTINE MACHINERY AND BUILDING SAFETY CHECKS

Organizations should devote a large portion of a day at the beginning or end of each month to assessing whether critical safety protocols are being followed:

- Employees are using protective equipment at all times.
- Daily proactive maintenance checks are being performed.

- Walkways and stairwells are free of debris.
- Emergency exits are unlocked and easily accessible.
- Stray cords are put away.
- Liquids are dried and cleaned from all surfaces.
- All chipped concrete and holes have been covered or smoothed out.

LESSONS LEARNED

Safety is the backbone of all plants. A lack of safety results in accidents and machine failures, which in turn lead to delays and injuries. Good safety practices, however, enable efficient and consistent output, which is the goal of all organizations. A facility that keeps safety at the heart of every decision—and always expects the worst and prepares accordingly—will enjoy successful operations. ■

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SHOULD POLICIES HAVE EXPIRATION DATES?

BY KEVIN EIKENBERRY

Although workplace policies are generally well-intentioned, they often elicit less-than-positive responses that range from silent eye-rolling to loud complaints about how policies don't apply to a given situation. Given the derision and frustration often associated with them, should policies have expiration dates? In a word, yes.

However well-devised and thought through, policies often have unintended or unforeseen consequences. For example, people find loopholes to circumvent policies, either because of personal preferences or to intentionally skirt the intended improvement. Sometimes a policy rewards the wrong result, prompting ineffective behavior. Occasionally policy creates a new problem that is even more detrimental than the one it intended to solve. If a policy has an expiration date or must be renewed after a review, adjustments could be made to address such unforeseen outcomes.

There's also the issue of relevance. The Internet is full of memes about ridiculous old laws that are supposedly still on the books. In Memphis, for example, a woman can't drive unless she's preceded by a man waving a red flag.[1] And in New Hampshire, lightning rod salespeople must have a license.[2] Such laws may have been appropriate for past cultural contexts, but today, they are clearly outdated and irrelevant.

These obvious examples raise important questions about the role of policies in today's work environment. For example, how many of a company's policies don't make sense now that people aren't all working in the office anymore? By assigning expiration or review dates to company policies (and frequently asking whether a policy is helping or hindering results), an organization will ensure that its policies continue to make sense in an evolving world and workplace.

Finally, when an organization's culture is changing—or management wants to change it—existing policies and expectations can make it unduly hard for change to take effect. Expiration dates make it more possible to review company policies for their relevance and effectiveness in light of ongoing (or desired) cultural change in the organization.

When policies are added but never expire, the number of policies will continue to grow. Sooner or later (likely sooner), this glut of policies will stifle innovation and initiative and place the focus on enforcement or compliance rather than on getting results. To counter the overproliferation of company policies, an organization can take the following actions:

- Limit the overall number of policies. Focusing on guidelines and philosophies more than edicts allows for better communication, more flexibility, and a stronger organizational culture.
- Involve more people in the creation of policies. This is the best way to build understanding and commitment and to reduce the chances of unintended consequences.
- Set a trial period. A pilot or test period for a new policy makes it possible to see if it achieves the intended results.
- Set an expiration or review date on all policies. Reviewing all policies on a regular basis ensures that they are relevant and help the organization reach its goals.

The future of work is changing. To navigate those changes successfully, companies need to be sure they have in place policies that are timely, relevant, and appropriate. ■

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The Power of Flexibility

Business leaders have learned many lessons during this never-ending pandemic. They have learned that although colleagues miss each other, employees can work from anywhere. They have upgraded their technology skills to be able to connect with others more productively. They have recognized the importance of having teammates check in with each other to make sure everyone is mentally and physically healthy. They have even embraced learning about everyone's crazy pets. But perhaps the greatest lesson they have learned is the great need for flexibility in their workplaces.

FLEXIBILITY RECOGNIZES THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH TEAM MEMBER

When it comes to blending their professional and personal lives, all leaders make different choices in creating their best schedules and workflows. One might want to have breaks during midday and hop on to work later in the evening, whereas another might prefer to keep their nights open for personal time. One might feel isolated and want to meet with their team in person more often in order to build relationships with them, whereas another might thrive more when working at home than in a noisy office.

Just as each leader contributes a unique set of skills and gifts to their work world, each of their employees brings their own unique contributions to the table. Being flexible about how each team member shows up—which includes being open-minded about people's different personal challenges and welcoming diversity—makes it more likely that employees will be fully present and focused on their work.

FLEXIBILITY HELPS LEADERS DEVELOP THEIR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Effective leaders know that emotional intelligence (EQ) is a critical skill for success. Leaders can use flexibility to grow their EQ by practicing ways to be more self-aware of their needs for flexibility, to exhibit more understanding of team members' desires for flexibility in their own work lives, to be less judgmental when a teammate makes a request (such as asking to work in their home office that day), and to be in control of their emotions and careful not to blurt out hurtful thoughts.

in Leadership

BY TERRI KLASS

FLEXIBILITY CULTIVATES KINDER AND HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE TEAMS

When flexibility is seen as an important leadership trait and being flexible is encouraged in dealing with people, kindness and more compassionate interactions can result. When team members treat each other with respect, there will be greater collaboration and richer deliverables as people rise to the occasion to fulfill the greater vision.

FLEXIBILITY BUILDS LEADERSHIP SKILLS

When leaders commit to becoming more flexible, many key leadership skills can emerge. They can become stronger and clearer communicators, for example, or able to delegate more effectively (and with more impact). They can become better at playing to team members' individual strengths, see their influence grow, and help develop future leaders.

FLEXIBILITY CREATES A CULTURE OF POSITIVITY

A flexible approach enables leaders to build teams whose members better understand each other and interact with dignity, positivity, and trust. By leading with an eye to considering and accommodating others' professional and personal needs, leaders can create trustworthy teams that, in turn, exhibit their own flexibility and help build a culture of positivity. ∎

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.terriklassconsulting.com.

THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE IN SAFETY

BY KEVIN BURNS

> ## AS A COACH, THE SUPERVISOR MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE TEAM IS LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WITH A VERY SPECIFIC SET OF SKILLS TO HELP THEM.

There's a fundamental shift that occurs the moment a front-facing employee becomes their crew's supervisor—and the quicker the new manager understands that shift, the quicker they will get the buy-in of their team.

Odds are good that new supervisor was previously the rock star employee of the team. Likely they were a top performer with some pretty decent experience and even better results. Their employer saw this talent and, wanting other employees to be more like the rock star, promoted that individual to supervisor so they could help the others.

But that promotion changed everything. The moment that employee became a supervisor is the moment they stopped being the star player and became the coach of their team.

The team doesn't care how good their supervisor used to be at their former job. What's most important to those team members is how good they are going to be with their new supervisor as their coach. They want to know how their supervisor is going to help them to be better, more trusted, more respected, and more prepared for promotion down the road.

As a coach, the supervisor must understand that the team is looking for someone with a very specific set of skills to help them. Like any good coach, the supervisor's job is to improve the individual performance of each team member by helping them develop better skill sets, by caring about their contributions, and by recognizing their great results.

And as a coach, the supervisor needs to make the team's safety their top concern. When team members are safe, they work better. When team members feel safe, valued, and cared about, they give better effort. The supervisor's role is to help employees get what they want from the job so they can turn around and deliver what the company needs.

But as the coach, the supervisor must go first. More rules and reminders won't create safety in the workplace. That arises only from employee buy-in, which comes around when coaches support their teams and lead by example. ■

Kevin Burns is the president and CEO of KevBurns Learning, where he works with smart, caring companies to energize safety culture, build teamwork, and get employee buy-in. He is the author of PeopleWork: The Human Touch in Workplace Safety and can be reached at kevin@kevburns.com.

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