

# THE RESOURCE

# HR INSIGHTS

VOL. XII, ISSUE II

magazine

*from the eyes of industry leaders*

How  
**Micromanagement  
Hurts Organizations**



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A Hybrid Work System  
Built to Last

Crossboarding Internal  
Talent Moves

Top Recruitment Marketing  
Trends for 2023

This Year, Stamp Out  
Workplace Toxicity

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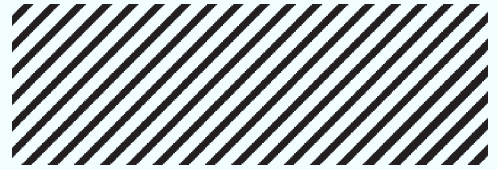
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**PUBLISHER &  
EDITORIAL DIRECTORS**

Mamu Media

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

James Moul

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Marsha Brofka-Berends

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Juan Betancourt

Kate Bischoff

Kevin Eikenberry

Rachel Findlay

Brian Formato

the Staff at  
Great Place to Work

**DESIGN**

Matt Coleman

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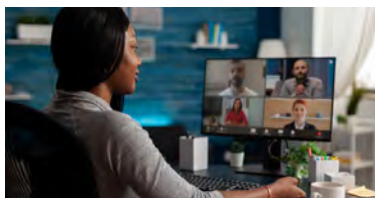
# TOP RECRUITMENT MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2023

BY RACHEL FINDLAY



Recruitment marketing was a big topic of conversation in recruitment circles in 2022. But just how important will it be going forward? And can it solve the challenges that recruitment teams are likely to face in 2023? Here are some of the changes and trends to expect in the coming year.

## CANDIDATES WILL CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK



In 2022, recruitment teams and business leaders across the globe learned how to drive business growth while encouraging a flexible approach to work. For many

job seekers (63 percent), “a top factor in their decision to accept a job offer is whether the job is remote, hybrid, or in-person.”<sup>1</sup> In light of this data, companies that aren’t encouraging a flexible work approach could see their employer brands suffer.

With job markets no longer restricted to companies’ local areas, remote work has led to further globalization. Candidates are applying for jobs across the world, and organizations are seeing employees leave for opportunities that offer higher salaries, a better quality of life, and more flexibility. Employee retention has been a major theme of 2022, with many recruiters switching their attention from recruiting new talent to engaging existing employees. Diversity hiring remains top of mind for employers and job seekers.

In one recent survey of job seekers and employees, 78 percent of respondents said that “a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers.”<sup>2</sup> A diverse and inclusive workforce is no longer an option for employers but a requirement. Building a strong employer brand through recruitment marketing can help a company achieve this.

## MORE RECRUITMENT TEAMS WILL EMBRACE MARKETING AUTOMATION TO SNAG TOP TALENT FASTER

Top candidates rarely stay on the market for long and usually land new jobs quickly—which means that organizations with long processes and laborious recruitment strategies are missing out on opportunities to attract them. Competition for talent is fierce, and recruiters need a new approach to help cut time to hire.



Marketing automation technology, such as engagement scoring and trackable links, can enable a company to track candidate engagement across its digital footprint and see what content candidates engage with the most. This insight can help recruitment teams tailor their messaging (based on what candidates have interacted with in the past) so they can more accurately target best-fit candidates and show them what they want to see. It also lets a company know which candidates are interested in its employer brand, so it doesn’t need to spend valuable human time cold-calling candidates to find out who’s interested in a role. Filtering candidates on a real-time engagement score enables organizations to significantly cut their time to hire and time to shortlist.

## PERFECTING ENTRY-LEVEL RECRUITMENT WILL HELP EASE TALENT SHORTAGES

As the competition for labor intensifies, organizations across the globe are taking steps to bridge gaps in acute skills shortages. As a new generation of talent enters the workforce, business leaders are realizing the benefits of attracting and engaging entry-level talent through the early careers market. Marketing automation will play a pivotal role in this area, too, by helping recruiters automate their candidate nurturing at scale.



As 2023 rolls out, the business world will need to pay close attention to new trends in recruitment. By harnessing the power of new technologies and adapting to employee-driven shifts in the labor market, companies will be ready to respond quickly and effectively to the challenges and opportunities ahead. ■

*Rachel Findlay is a content creator for Candidate.ID, an iCIMS company. iCIMS Inc. is 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](http://www.icims.com).*

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# How to Create a Feedback-Friendly Team Environment

BY JUAN BETANCOURT



Whether it's positive or negative, receiving feedback is one of the best ways for people to know if they're doing something right or wrong. Feedback plays a key role in a healthy workplace culture, where it fosters the growth of individuals, teams, and the organization and where employee voices are valued. Unfortunately, many businesses lack guidelines about when or how their employees receive this information.

To become more effective and more fulfilled at work, people need a keen understanding of their impact on others and the extent to which they're achieving their goals. Direct feedback is the most efficient way for them to obtain this data and learn from it. Typically, this information takes one of three forms:

- **Appreciation.** Recognition for great work connects and motivates people and, because intrinsic motivation is one of the critical factors for higher performance, plays a vital role in any organization.

- **Coaching.** Helping someone expand their knowledge, skills, and capabilities to achieve continuous improvement also provides opportunities to address concerns, feelings, or ideas and thus helps balance and strengthen relationships.
- **Evaluation.** By measuring someone against a set of standards, these more formal assessments help align expectations and inform decision making.

## The Value of Feedback

Even people who aren't interested in or skilled at giving or receiving feedback will participate in the process and improve when they're working in a feedback-rich environment. (At the same time, even the most ardent and capable feedback champions will give up if the organizational or team culture doesn't support their efforts.) In addition to helping more reserved team members improve, feedback carries with it a slew of benefits. Here are three of the most important.

## Improved Use of the Company's Time and Money

Companies spend a tremendous amount of time and money conducting performance appraisals each year. Yet managers are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with how their companies conduct annual reviews, and the vast majority of HR leaders believe that the process doesn't yield accurate information. Moreover, most managers spend a huge portion of their time on activities related to reviews—which cuts into the time they could be using for other tasks. Supplementing performance reviews with ongoing, real-time feedback, however, can ease the pressure and expense of the annual review. After all, a performance review is really just an aggregation of all the feedback data an employee should have received throughout the year.

## Better Performance

Imagine the loss in productivity that takes place over twelve months when an employee doesn't receive ongoing feedback on their efforts throughout the year. Reserving feedback for an annual performance review means missing opportunities when employees could be improving year-round. Performance increases when employees enjoy their work, understand their goals, and know the values and competencies of their roles. The link between effective feedback and productivity has been well established. (For example, one study found that "69 percent of employees say they would work harder if they felt recognized.") Continuous feedback helps align goals, clarifies expectations, and motivates employees. It also creates a positive workplace dedicated to encouraging people to be better, thus improving their engagement and performance.

## Strengthened Interpersonal Relationships

Meaningful workplace relationships form when employees engage in open feedback and dialogue with their colleagues, receive recognition for their contributions to a job well done, and get help meeting their goals. Fostering these types of relationships among employees drives both improved collaboration within and across teams as well as retention.

## How to Build a Continuous Feedback Culture

Once a foundation of feedback has been established, each feedback conversation helps sustain it. To foster an environment of both personal and professional growth, people need to feel safe about giving and receiving feedback. A feedback culture emerges from fluid, two-way exchanges between employees as well as between employees and management. The end goal is to create a safe space in which employees feel comfortable

*To become more effective and more fulfilled at work, people need a keen understanding of their impact on others and the extent to which they're achieving their goals.*

voicing their concerns, suggestions, and advancement plans and employers are equally able to express constructive feedback.

In a healthy feedback culture, feedback is the norm rather than a signal that something is wrong—which means that when improvements are needed, asking for change doesn't come off as awkward or out of the blue for either staff or employers. Instead, managers are able to enhance business processes while empowering employees to excel in their roles.

Here are five strategies companies can employ to create a continuous feedback culture in the workplace:

- During onboarding, performance reviews, one-on-one meetings with employees, town halls, and department meetings, set and reinforce expectations for giving, receiving, and using constructive feedback.
- Train people to focus on the quality of the feedback and to understand the difference between good feedback and bad feedback. Simply encouraging people to say "good job" won't improve employee performance or build an effective feedback culture. Building a culture of feedback starts with providing meaningful feedback—that is, feedback that is behavior-based (not trait-based), forward-looking (not backward-looking), objective, continuous, and direct and takes place in real time.
- Create multiple channels for giving and receiving feedback. Possibilities include newsletters, emails, surveys, town halls, and conversations during office hours.

Some people like to write out their thoughts, whereas others prefer to vocalize them, so be sure to offer several options for soliciting and providing feedback.

- Couple feedback with recognition so that employees have positive associations with feedback, which can reinforce the kind of behaviors that help move the organization.
- Make feedback routine so it becomes expected. Ensure that managers are having frequent feedback conversations and check-ins with their direct reports, and encourage employees to ask for and share feedback regularly. Hold employees accountable by incorporating feedback giving and receiving KPIs.

## Use Feedback to Drive Success

In general, frequent and incomplete (but directionally correct) feedback is more effective than infrequent, detailed feedback. Consistency and iteration are key to good feedback: when asking for or giving feedback, keep in mind the 30/60/90 framework, which states that feedback works best when a task is 30 percent, 60 percent, and then 90 percent complete. By transforming its workplace culture into one built on continuous feedback, an organization can propel its teams to approach tasks from a different perspective and find new solutions to the company's biggest challenges. ■

*Juan Betancourt is the chief executive officer of Humantelligence, whose solutions help organizations accurately measure and manage culture at every level of an organization. Recently named a 2022 Top 30 HR Tech Influencer by Recooty and a 2021 Top 100 HR Tech Influencer by HR Executive, Betancourt is an expert in managing and hiring for culture fit and in helping organizations leverage culture analytics to build agile,*

# How Micromanagement Hurts Organizations

BY KEVIN EIKENBERRY







early everyone has been micromanaged at some point in their careers—and no one ever loves it. No one ever lists micromanagement as one of the top skills of great leaders. More than a bad habit for individual leaders, micromanagement can create several big problems within an organization, including some that might not readily be associated with it. To determine whether they're doing too much micromanaging, leaders should ask themselves the following questions:

**“What is the trust level between my team members and me?”** Although leaders micromanage for plenty of reasons, their lack of trust in the ability of team members to do a task (or to do higher value or higher consequence tasks) is a common one. Even if a lack of trust isn't the major reason for micromanagement, it is often seen by team members as the reason. When employees ask, “Why won't they let me do my job?” they often answer that question themselves with “They don't trust me.”

**“How would I rate the confidence level of my team members?”** People who are regularly questioned about their work, told exactly what to do, or feel like they are being watched regularly will likely be less confident. When people don't have a chance to do anything new or of higher value, how can their confidence grow?

**“Are my team members developing and growing as fast as I would like?”** People grow by having new experiences and having opportunities to succeed (and fail, too). When people are being micromanaged, these things aren't happening.

**“How engaged are my people?”** Many factors contribute to employee engagement, but managers who reflect on their own careers will usually remember that whenever they felt micromanaged, their personal engagement levels fell.

**“How do I feel about the level of accountability I see?”** People feel accountable for things they have a sense of ownership over. But when every task is examined and every move is questioned, how much ownership can they feel?

**“Am I happy with the level of initiative my team members show?”** Most leaders and organizations want team members who are proactively solving problems,



looking at opportunities, and generally taking initiative. How likely is someone to do any of those when they feel micromanaged?

**“How much turnover do I have?”** As the old adage goes, “People don't quit jobs—they quit bosses.” When someone feels that their boss doesn't let them grow and develop or that they can't trust their boss, they are far more likely to leave. More often than many managers realize, feeling micromanaged is a root cause of many employee departures.

As managers consider which of these problems they are facing, they should ask themselves where micromanagement might be a factor. Once they isolate the situations in which micromanagement is hurting the organization and treat it as a systemic problem that needs to be addressed (rather than as an isolated incident), their teams will be more engaged, happier, and more successful. ■

*Kevin Eikenberry is the chief potential officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group, a leadership and learning consulting company that has been helping organizations, teams, and individuals reach their potential since 1993. His specialties include leadership, teams and teamwork, organizational culture, facilitating change, and organizational learning. He can be reached at [info@kevineikenberry.com](mailto:info@kevineikenberry.com).*



# A HYBRID WORK SY

For many companies, work will never look the same. And we believe that is a good thing.—DJ Casto, Synchrony

As a return to in-person work faces continued scrutiny, workers' relationships to the corporate office and the future of work have never been more uncertain. Many employees who have spent the past two years working remotely are reluctant to return to the office on a full-time basis, even as their employers offer in-person benefits. Instead, many employees hope to find a middle ground in which both salaried workers and hourly workers can retain the flexibility that virtual work affords without risking the cohesion of the company as a whole.

## REDEFINING THE WORKPLACE

The success of Synchrony, a Connecticut-based consumer financial company, is one heartening case study for flexible work. Synchrony learned early in the pandemic that the hybrid model can flourish and drive success by amplifying employee satisfaction. In March 2020 the company moved nearly its entire workforce home to better protect employees from COVID-19. In doing so, it recognized that it needed to transform how employees worked, how the company supported its people, and how workers connected and engaged with one another.

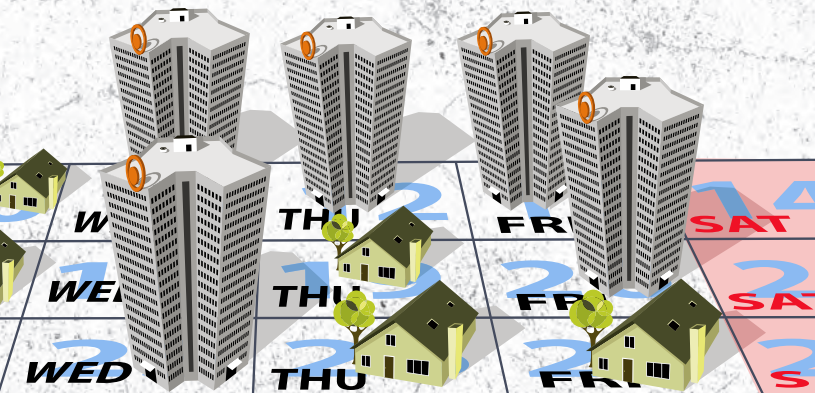
“We found that people could still be innovative,” recalls DJ Casto, Synchrony’s executive vice president and chief of human resources. “We were actually making decisions faster, and we were leveling the playing field in a sense because it no longer mattered if you were in a conference room or on the phone.” These results—combined with a company survey revealing that 85 percent of its workforce wanted some form of remote work after the pandemic—pushed the company to move away from traditional offices to a new model that gives employees who want to work at home the option to do so while still ensuring that groups can



come together at a physical office location when needed.

The use of these “hubs” for brainstorming sessions, networking, cultural events, and other business activities enables staff to retain the flexibility to work from home when desired. Synchrony’s innovative hub approach has had a significant impact on its workplace culture. Workers appreciate the option for hybrid work, and in a recent survey conducted by Great Place to Work, 93 percent of its employees stated that this new system gives them the flexibility they need.

Flexible scheduling (such as flexible monthly schedules and split schedules) was another huge win for employees, even among hourly workers who do not typically have the option to influence their own schedules. (For example, Casto says, “If parents need to take care of their





# SYSTEM BUILT TO LAST

BY THE STAFF AT GREAT PLACE TO WORK



children during a certain part of the day, they can adapt their time to what works best for them while meeting the needs of the business.”) Other initiatives such as “Flexible Fridays”—which encourage holding few meetings on Friday mornings and none in the afternoons—have also helped.

## BUILDING SOMETHING SPECIAL TOGETHER

Still, a degree of pioneering was required to put this groundbreaking model of flexible work into place. To build a model of hybrid work that truly met the needs of all workers, Synchrony recognized that it needed to proactively check in with its employees to determine what was working and what needed adjustment. Once the company became comfortable with the idea that some ideas would not be successful, it was able to adopt an

agile approach while seeking feedback and responding to employees. “Everyone across the organization knew we were building something special together,” says Casto. In doing so, they discovered vital components to ensure that a hybrid work model could succeed.

For example, continuous, proactive listening is an important element of building and optimizing systems of flexible work. “We worked with employees to codesign and experiment with flexible work options that lead to creative solutions,” he says. “Start with a pilot and constantly iterate and adapt. Stay close to the data to validate ways the new model supports all employees.”

Investment in the right technology and intentional coaching have also been vital to the success of these programs. “Moving toward a coaching style of leadership ensures that everyone actively takes part in new ways of working,” Casto explains. “Managers must build a continuous feedback loop that energizes employees to be innovative and nimble and to work to maintain connections in a digital or hybrid environment.” This means ongoing, honest conversations and clarity around expectations and outcomes, as well as a willingness to test, learn, adapt, and fail.

## LOOKING FORWARD

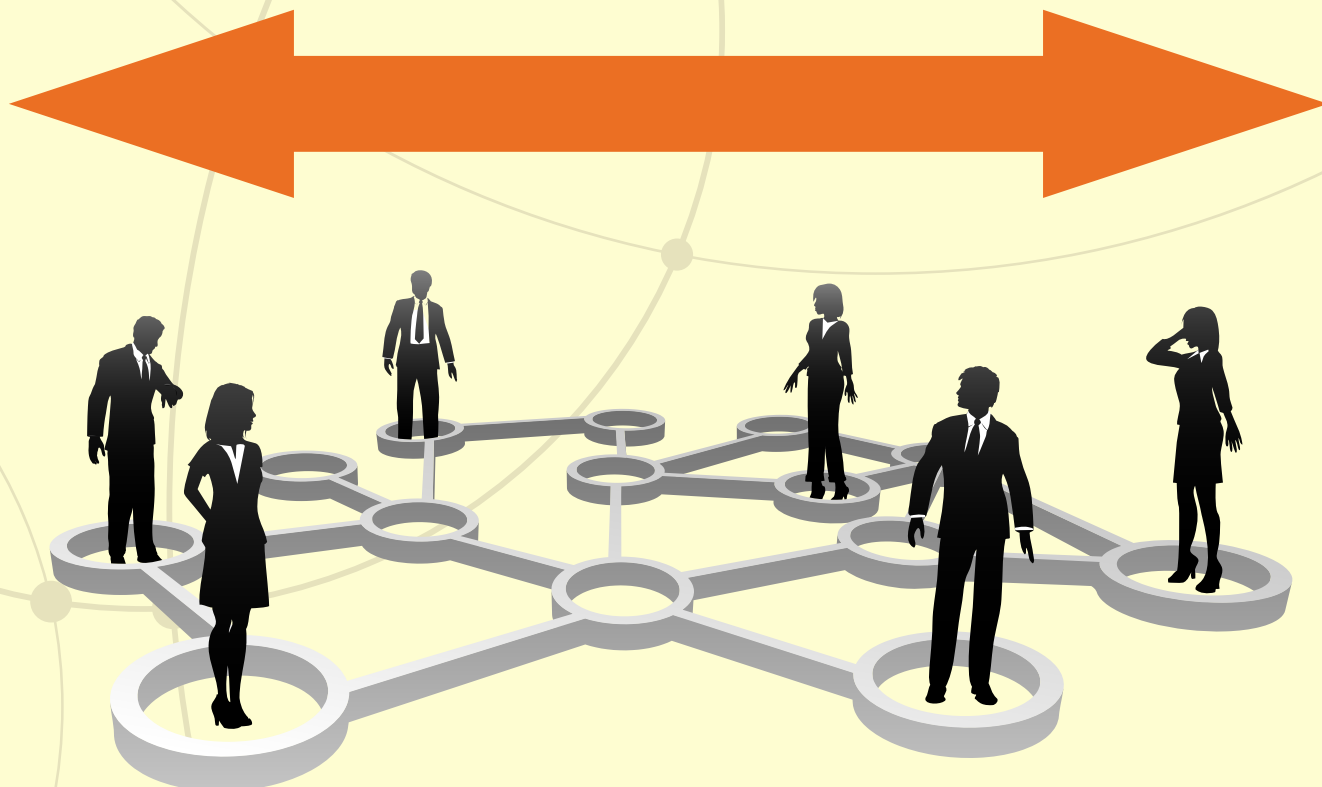
The Great Resignation highlighted employees’ drive to speak up for what they want and to take action to get it. “Now more than ever,” Casto observes, “employees value the ability to continue working while caring for themselves and their families without worrying about sacrificing one over the other.” A company’s ability to attract new talent and retain current workers will depend on its willingness to embrace hybrid work. ■

*This article was paid for by UKG and produced by FORTUNE Brand Studio. Fortune editorial staff was not involved in its creation or production.*



# CROSS-BOARDING INTERNAL TALENT MOVES

BY BRIAN FORMATO



It looks like 2023 will be a year of contractions in the labor market. Companies are conducting layoffs, planning layoffs, or freezing their head counts in anticipation of the shrinking revenue growth forecast for this year. With tougher economic conditions ahead, organizations are redeploying and reassigning head count, and some (e.g., Amazon, Microsoft, Netflix, Ford, Twitter, Stripe) already started this process through big layoffs in late 2022.

During the hiring frenzy over the past few years, many companies came to recognize the importance of effective onboarding to employee engagement and retention. During the so-called war for talent, it was critical to make new hires feel special and to assimilate them quickly into the company or risk having them accept other offers. Although fewer job openings today might shift leverage back to the employer, effective onboarding is still extremely important—particularly when internal talent moves are involved.

## WHAT IS CROSS-BOARDING?

Onboarding is an organization's first chance to show new employees why it does what it does and to set them up for success within the company culture. Onboarding develops the organization's brand and can help build a positive reputation for the company.

This same function is critical to cross-boarding, which is the act of onboarding internal hires. When an employee changes jobs within the organization to a new department,



a new function, or a new manager, they should go through a cross-boarding process that introduces this internal transfer to their new team and sets them up for success.

Cross-boarding becomes even more critical when widespread layoffs and overall marketplace fears create stress and anxiety among employees. When an organization enacts layoffs and redeploys its remaining talent, the employees who remain with the organization often experience survivor's guilt as they feel remorse and mourn the loss of their colleagues. Under these circumstances, moving to new teams and departments can be traumatic for some employees.

### 3 ELEMENTS TO CROSS-BOARDING SUCCESS

Whether an employee is thrilled about their new role within a company or approaches it with trepidation, a well-orchestrated move will set them up for success in the new role. To achieve the most important goals of the process, making the transferred employee feel welcome and valued, managers should implement three key elements in their cross-boarding programs.

**A warm welcome.** The employee's new direct manager should be present on day one and, ideally, should be the first person to greet the transferring employee when they arrive at the workplace. If the new team doesn't all work in the same on-site location, the first day should start with a video call in which the manager introduces the employee to their teammates. Welcome efforts aren't limited to managers, though: someone's new colleagues can help

them assimilate by telling them about team norms, for example, or by including them in any fun activities the team does together.

**Clear goals.** The transferring employee must have clear deliverables in the new role, with goals that include both quantitative and qualitative metrics. It is important to differentiate between their previous role and their new one: the new manager should outline what is different and how things will operate.

**A culture of feedback.** From the beginning, managers should make it clear that feedback is a two-way street. They should offer direct feedback (both praise and recommendations for corrective action) and, at the same time, encourage the employee to provide their own feedback. Scheduling weekly one-on-one meetings helps create and maintain an ongoing dialogue.

The ultimate goal of cross-boarding is to help transferred employees feel like they are part of the team. Engaged employees provide discretionary effort that can be shaped a great deal by how they feel. An organization that plans to move talent around in 2023 should be deliberate about the change management and how it wants employees to feel in their new roles. By keeping these considerations in mind, a company can create a culture in which employees embrace opportunities to move internally rather than feel like pawns being moved around on a chessboard. ■

*Brian Formato is the founder of Groove Management, a leadership development and executive coaching firm, and the creator of LeaderSurf, an adventurous development program for business leaders of all backgrounds, industries, and corners of the world who want to break old habits and create lasting change. He can be reached at [bformato@groovemanagement.com](mailto:bformato@groovemanagement.com).*



# 2023 EMPLOYMENT LAWS:

## What Employers Need to Know

BY KATE BISCHOFF



With the 2022 midterm elections finally over, employment law is poised to undergo some changes in 2023. Thanks to the narrowly divided Congress, these changes are much more likely to take place on the state and local levels than on the national level (but the U.S. Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board are still likely to rattle some human resources cages this year). Here are four employment law changes that employers should be aware of during the coming year.

### PAID LEAVE

**The issue:** Paid leave is a top priority for many state legislative bodies. The programs most legislators are considering are not employer funded or employer administered, but rather more of a form of unemployment-like program funding with a state agency handling eligibility and funding determinations.

**How this affects HR:** Imagine a situation in which an employee who needs time off to care for a sick family member submits notice to the employer under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and simultaneously applies for paid leave under the state's program. Although

the employer is responsible for handling all the FMLA determinations, the state determines what amount the employee will receive and handles all payments. This reduces the financial and administrative burden on the employer and (more particularly) on HR, which simply has to provide a website or phone number for the employee to contact. This program is already on the books in several states (such as California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Oregon), and other states (such as Michigan and Minnesota) may adopt it soon.

**On the federal level:** Don't expect any form of paid leave to pass the House and

Senate. Although a handful of Republican representatives voted in 2022 to give rail workers seven sick days to prevent a countrywide strike, it is highly unlikely that any form of paid leave—including sick leave—will pass the current Congress.

### LABOR LAW

**The issue:** Every HR professional should have their sights on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in 2023, even if their workforce is not unionized. With 71 percent of Americans favoring labor unions; large unionizing national campaigns with Amazon, Apple, and Starbucks; and an active General Counsel urging the expansion of worker rights, labor





law is squarely in the spotlight. The NLRB has already signaled changes to the joint-employer rule, expansion of union recognition, and the potential to extend rights to nonunion workers to have a representative present during investigative interviews that could lead to discipline.

**How this affects HR:** The NLRB applies not only to unionized workplaces but to every workplace.

**Noteworthy:** The NLRB's General Counsel is concerned about the level of surveillance employers are undertaking, especially during remote work. Surveillance that could capture employees engaging in unionizing activity or other concerted protected communications could run afoul of the National Labor Relations Act, drawing the ire of the NLRB.

## OVERTIME

**This issue:** The Department of Labor (DOL) has announced that one of its top priorities is to increase the number of employees eligible for overtime. Over the summer of 2022, the department held listening sessions with stakeholders in an effort to form a strategy around overtime. Although the DOL's original target of October 2022 for an announcement about its proposed changes passed without any proposed regulation changes issued, this does not

mean that the department won't take action eventually.

**How this affects HR:** The DOL has limited options to increase overtime eligibility. Its most likely option for increasing the number of employees earning overtime is to raise the salary threshold from \$684 per week to a higher number. (This is similar to what the Trump administration's DOL did in 2019 but is not close to the number the Obama administration had sought in 2016.) Making this change would not be too burdensome on HR departments but would require some work to implement and communicate across positions.

**Noteworthy:** The DOL's second-most likely option to increase overtime eligibility is to dramatically change the duties tests used to determine if a position is exempt from overtime. It's unlikely that the department will choose this option, though, because it would create chaos in HR departments across the country as everyone reevaluated their positions.

## SALARY TRANSPARENCY

**The issue:** A handful of states have already required employers to post the salary range of positions in their job announcements. The National Labor Relations Act already prohibits an employer from disciplining employees for discussing their salaries.

**How this affects HR:** Although some commentators consider the posting of salary ranges to be a company's death knell, many employers see salary

transparency as a good thing attracting more applicants. Regardless of how individual organizations feel about it, though, this requirement is coming.

**Noteworthy:** Because pay equity remains a problem, federal agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Department of Labor, and the Office of Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) are likely to take this issue seriously.

Employment law changes never really slow down, and 2023 promises to bring many new developments! It is never easy to stay 100 percent compliant 100 percent of the time. However, companies that sign up for newsletters and alerts from legislative committees and watch the trends in states such as New York and California (and review their own policies through those lenses) are more likely to be prepared for new programs and legislation. ■

*An enthusiastic management-side employment attorney and SHRM-SCP/SPHR-certified HR professional, Kate Bischoff advises organizations in a wide range of industries on employment law and human resources issues. She can be reached at [kate@k8bisch.com](mailto:kate@k8bisch.com).*

*This post originally appeared on UKG's corporate blog, The People Purpose Blog. To learn more about creating a positive workplace culture and to hear from experts on HR, payroll, talent, and more, visit [ukg.com/people-purpose-blog](http://ukg.com/people-purpose-blog).*



# What Does a Balanced Team of Leaders Look Like?

BY TERRI KLASS



As they grow throughout their careers, leaders find themselves part of many different types of teams. Some teams run smoothly, whereas others can feel fairly dysfunctional. It's useful to understand what makes a team highly productive and what creates strong bonds among its members. Why are some teams more appealing—and why do others make their members want to jump ship?

A team at its best is unstoppable in how it responds to daily challenges (and even crises) in large part because each member of that team has the potential to lead from wherever they are, regardless of their title or position. Capable of achieving great things, a balanced team of leaders has several distinguishing characteristics.

## FOUNDATION OF TRUST

Trust lies at the root of any healthy relationship: without it, a team cannot succeed. When team members have faith in one another to be honest and feel they can depend on each other, they build a strong foundation of trust that allows individuals to share honest feedback and be vulnerable. In a culture of trust, each person brings their authentic self to





"A TEAM AT ITS BEST IS UNSTOPPABLE IN HOW IT RESPONDS TO DAILY CHALLENGES IN LARGE PART BECAUSE EACH MEMBER OF THAT TEAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO LEAD, REGARDLESS OF THEIR TITLE OR POSITION."

the workspace, follows through on their promises, is approachable and open to different opinions, and never has a hidden agenda.

### CLEAR VISION

Before team members can row their oars to move in the same direction, they must know where the team is headed. This vision must be precisely communicated so that all members can understand and honor it. Spending time to review the vision with the entire team of leaders, ask for their feedback, and address their concerns will result in less confusion.

### RESPECT FOR EACH MEMBER

Respect is a two-way street, and a balanced team understands the power of respectful connections and prioritizes helping team members see the value in both earning respect and showing respect. Leaders cultivate a culture of respect by being open-minded and not judgmental, listening with the goal of achieving true understanding, showing compassion

and kindness, and stepping up when things get tough.

### DIVERSITY OF STRENGTHS

The key to designing a balanced team (and reaching more effective outcomes) is making sure that different talents and strengths are represented on that team. For example, one person may be stronger at data analysis and can drill down important information and inferences from the numbers, whereas another might be a natural presenter or people person. Every skill and talent plays a critical role in achieving meaningful results, and strong and balanced teams value diversity in those areas.

### GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Leader and team development is greatly improved when learning is treated as a real priority. Through professional development opportunities, managers can show team members how much their contributions are valued. In addition to establishing formal

mentorship programs, managers can encourage team members to share their failures and what lessons they learned. They can also hire a coach to work with leaders who may benefit from coaching and ask team members about their career dreams and interests. Professional development can also include offering leadership training in areas such as communication, team building, problem solving, and decision making.

All managers should take some time to assess the leadership within their teams. With the right approach, any team can be developed into a balanced team of leaders. By identifying each person's strengths and giving them opportunities for more leadership growth, organizations can create competent, confident teams. ■

*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](http://www.terriklassconsulting.com).*

# This Year, Stamp Out Workplace Toxicity

BY JAMES MOUL

Workplace toxicity has been around for a long time, even if it hasn't always been known by that name. Most people have experienced some form of it—either directly or indirectly—but just because it's widespread doesn't mean it's a good thing. As more and more people decide they will no longer tolerate toxicity in their workplaces, organizations are also realizing that workplaces that are socially healthy are also happier, more productive spaces.

If you're still dealing with workplace toxicity in your company, it's time to transform your company culture to eliminate it.

## FIRST, LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS.

Each workplace is different, of course, but toxic workplaces usually exhibit some (and often all) of the following characteristics:

- **Gossip, social cliques,** and exclusionary behavior. People who work together don't have to be best friends, but they should treat each other with respect. Someone who feels isolated by their colleagues probably won't be happy at work—and therefore probably won't be very engaged there, either. And when

casual conversation and sharing information shifts to gossip and rumor mongering, negativity takes center stage.

- **High turnover.** Here's a solid fact: when a workplace is toxic, people don't stick around there. This is probably not an earth-shattering revelation to you, but it bears repeating because too often, managers fail to give company culture enough weight when analyzing the causes of employee turnover.

## • Unmotivated co-workers.

Workplace toxicity can cause employees to give up. If they don't feel appreciated or valued, or if they struggle to see a positive future for themselves at a company, they might figure "Why bother?" and throw in the towel on giving their best effort.

## NEXT, ASK EMPLOYEES FOR THEIR THOUGHTS.

Once you've identified the characteristics and behaviors that are making your workplace toxic, talk to your employees about them. Do they see those things too? What do they think about the culture of your organization? Do they have suggestions for improving it?

Don't just gather their feedback,

though: act on it, too. At the very least, take their recommendations seriously and consider them thoughtfully. Be open-minded and willing to implement those that seem like they'll be beneficial for both employees and the organization.

## TAKE DRASTIC ACTION WHEN NECESSARY.

A toxic workplace never improves on its own. When an employee's behavior is creating a hostile work environment for others, some kind of intervention is always necessary. This can take the form of pulling the employee aside for a brief conversation, for example, or even issuing formal reprimands. In extreme situations (such as a workplace bully whose toxicity goes beyond being merely unpleasant to being unsafe or harmful) it can take the form of terminating the employee.

## ACTIVELY BUILD A POSITIVE CULTURE.

All organizations should prioritize creating a healthy company culture. Whether a company is trying to recover from the effects of a toxic workplace that has been addressed by the measures listed above or is trying to avoid a descent into toxicity in the first



place, a focus on the positive is essential. Team events that help everyone remember, "We're all in this together" can emphasize and reinforce the collaboration, kindness, and generosity that are hallmarks of great workplaces.

The movement toward actively working to create nontoxic workplaces is definitely gaining traction. Trends in the business world are often short-lived or even ill-advised. But this is one instance in which everyone should be trying to hop on the bandwagon because there are zero downsides to rooting toxicity from a workplace. It's a win-win situation for employees and organizations alike—so get to work on it right away! ■

*James Moul is a copywriter with Haley Marketing Group and the editor in chief of HR Insights. He can be reached at [jmoul@haleymarketing.com](mailto:jmoul@haleymarketing.com).*

## RECIPE

# Arugula Pesto

Lettuces and greens thrive in the cool weather of spring, and farmers' stands and grocery store shelves are usually bursting with them around this time of year. Don't limit yourself to salads, though: arugula, the peppery and piquant green known as rocket in many other parts of the world, lends itself to a delightful preparation that shows off its fresh flavors and brings a burst of bright spring color to your table.

**YIELD:** 2 cups (about 4 servings) **TIME:** 10 min.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- 2 large cloves of garlic
- 2 tsp pine nuts
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 cups of arugula
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup freshly grated parmesan



### DIRECTIONS:

- In a food processor, chop the garlic until it's well pulverized.
- Add the pine nuts and salt and process until fairly smooth.
- Add the arugula and process until it's finely chopped, then slowly add the olive oil while the machine is running.
- Add the cheese and pulse a couple of times to stir it in, but don't overmix.

### NOTES:

- Pesto and pasta are one classic combination, but feel free to drizzle this bright-green sauce over other foods. (Pesto on roasted potatoes? Sure! Pesto on toast? Why not!)
- Walnuts or almonds are great substitutes for pine nuts.

### Nutrition Facts

Amount per Serving	
<b>Calories:</b>	305 cal
<b>Fat:</b>	31.5 g
<b>Dietary fiber:</b>	0.2 g
<b>Sugars:</b>	0.5 g



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