

THE RESOURCE

# INSIGHTS

VOL. XIII, ISSUE IV

magazine

*from the eyes of industry leaders*



## ***How Can I Get My Team More Engaged in Training?***

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Remote Work Compliance Risks

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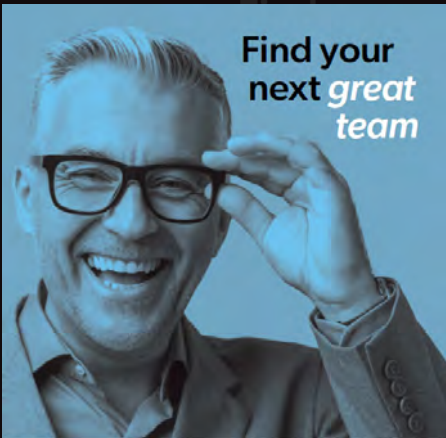
**8 Ways** Payroll Automation  
Saves Time and Money

# THE RESOURCE

## *can show you the way*

We are all searching for it — the next opportunity to learn, grow, thrive. Whether you are a company looking for your next gamechangers, eager-to-learn up-and-comers, and team players. Or you are an individual looking for the next step forward in income, career or life. We are here with a different approach that combines unique insight into the available workforce and an in-depth understanding of organizations, culture, and employee needs.

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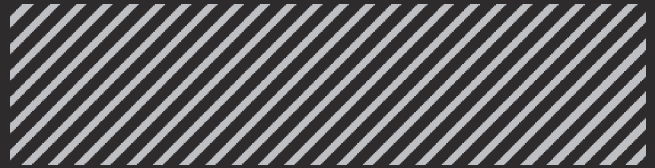
**Custom Direct Hiring:** This isn't hiring as usual. This is an adaptive, flexible solution that is structured to help create and build a workforce tailor-made just for your business. We work to match you with candidates that fit your role and your company to get them on board fast.

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**Staffing:** We do the searching, recruiting and pre-screening to successfully fill a full spectrum of light industrial, clerical and other roles, with a focus on reducing risk and improving ROI.





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## WAYS PAYROLL AUTOMATION SAVES TIME AND MONEY

BY DANIELLE CRONQUIST

**A**utomated tasks—like calendar auto-syncing or automatic bill pay—might not seem like a big deal, but they can save you a lot of hassle. Automated payroll software works the same way. It can help your organization save time and make payroll a breeze.

According to a recent survey<sup>1</sup>, small business owners say processing payroll is one of the most time-draining HR activities. Most reported spending five hours per pay period calculating taxes, filing information, and allocating funding. Some people even spend roughly 21 days every year on these activities, which could be spent on more important tasks.

Just imagine what you and your team could accomplish in that time.

Read on to learn more about payroll automation and how it can make a big difference in the way your organization handles everyday tasks.

### WHAT IS PAYROLL AUTOMATION?

Payroll software automates routine processes, so paying your employees feels simpler each pay period. It can save time and effort on headache-inducing duties like filing taxes, processing direct deposits, generating reports, and calculating withholdings.

Payroll managers don't have endless

time to crunch numbers and manage spreadsheets. Many have other responsibilities, like recruiting and hiring, employee relations, training and development, and benefits management. Payroll may also fall to an executive assistant or office personnel, so managers can spend time on other tasks. Here's a breakdown of everything a payroll manager is in charge of (excluding all the other duties beyond payroll):

### NEW HIRE TASKS

- ▶ Demographic information
- ▶ Bank information
- ▶ Pay schedules
- ▶ Withholdings
- ▶ Benefit deductions
- ▶ Weekly tasks
- ▶ Timesheet calculations
- ▶ PTO and holiday hours adjustments
- ▶ Overtime pay and wage garnishments
- ▶ Payroll submissions
- ▶ Employee pay stub and check distribution
- ▶ Mid-cycle payroll corrections
- ▶ Periodic tasks
- ▶ Payroll reports
- ▶ Open enrollment benefit changes
- ▶ Workers' compensation
- ▶ Federal, state, and local tax filing
- ▶ Employee tax form filing and distribution

An automated payroll system can't do everything for you, but it can help—a lot. If you're questioning whether your expensive payroll software is worth the cost or asking yourself if it's time for your organization to get automated, explore the many advantages of an automated payroll system.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING PAYROLL SOFTWARE?

Automating your payroll process doesn't just make things easier. Let's dig into some of the specific benefits of using payroll software to streamline HR processes.

#### 1. Reduce Errors

A person's pay isn't something you want to mess up. More than half of American workers live paycheck to paycheck<sup>2</sup>, so payroll mistakes can cost you and your employees. Plus, it may only take one or two errors for someone to lose trust in their organization and begin looking for a more reliable job.

Just like calculators are a bit better at math than our human brains, payroll software is better at calculating the correct deductions, overtime pay, PTO, and commissions that affect an employee's pay. And if you aren't manually entering data, there's no risk of mistyping a number or copying something over incorrectly.

## 2. Save Time

Automating some of the many tasks that fill a payroll employee's plate can save a significant amount of time. For example, the right system could cut payroll from a four-day task down to 20 minutes. And that's just one example—think about the time savings for your business if you automated timesheet tracking, tax management, or forecasting budgets!

## 3. Improve Data Security

Paperwork and spreadsheets aren't very secure places to keep important payroll data. With an automated payroll system, your data is encrypted, so no one (besides you and your team) can easily access it. Additionally, these online systems make it simple to update passwords, send reminders for security training, and authenticate users' identities, ensuring all information is protected. After all, it's just as important to protect sensitive employee data as it is to safeguard your customers' data.

## 4. Pull Payroll Reporting Easily

Making strategic payroll decisions or predicting labor costs is easier with a bit of automated help. What's not easy is digging through all your manual work to track down your payroll information and assemble it into a report by hand. Many automated payroll software platforms allow you to create downloadable reports, so you can feel confident that everything is running smoothly and you're making the correct decisions for your organization.

## 5. Simplify Tax Filing

Taxes are complicated. The U.S. has thousands of tax jurisdictions and the rules change regularly. If your organization operates in multiple states, you have even more to keep track of and errors can cost you. Automated payroll tracks updates in tax policy, makes sure you meet all the correct deadlines, and calculates withholding tax for individual employees. This way, you can feel confident your taxes are filed correctly and on time.

## 6. Maintain Complete Records

Payroll software can also help you stay compliant with U.S. laws. The IRS requires organizations to keep tax records for at least four years, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires employers to keep three years' worth

of payroll records. They should include hours worked, payment rates, pay dates, and more, depending on state laws. Payroll software keeps this data organized so you can stay compliant, spot errors more easily, and be better prepared for a possible audit.

## 7. Enable Employee Self-Service With a Payroll Portal

Giving employees the autonomy to view their paychecks easily and update their personal information can help streamline your payroll process, keep extra tasks off your to-do list, and limit errors. With payroll software, many solutions allow employees to do things like:

- ▶ Edit their personal information
- ▶ View and print pay stubs
- ▶ Update their direct deposit details
- ▶ View benefits statements
- ▶ Monitor deductions
- ▶ Access and print W-2 and 1099 forms

Fewer emails, shoulder taps, and pings throughout the day can make a payroll manager's life a lot easier.

## 8. Save on Payroll Processing Costs

An automated payroll system might scare off some businesses with its price tag, but your payroll performance metrics may reveal that a more efficient system could make up for the initial investment in other ways. Many of the previously mentioned benefits of automated payroll contribute to an overall lower cost for your organization. When you eliminate the most expensive errors, you can drop your costs in the long run. Plus, as they say, time is money—which is especially true for businesses.

## HOW TO RUN PAYROLL USING PAYROLL SOFTWARE

You have a few options for running your payroll. In a BambooHR State of Payroll survey with 500 respondents, 48% of organizations reported that they use third-party software, 24% said they use homegrown payroll software, and 27% said they opted to outsource the task entirely by using a local accountant, national accounting firm, or professional employer organization (PEO).

If you're looking to automate your payroll process, partnering with a third-

party system is likely the best choice. However, one of the most important features you should look for in a third-party system is that it communicates with your HRIS so employee information like wages, hours, account numbers, and withholdings are all stored in one place. That means you can further reduce the risk of errors by cutting down on the need for double entry.

Essentially, you get all the automated payroll features that make it easier to run your business, plus a simplified system.

## WHEN SHOULD I START USING PAYROLL SOFTWARE?

If you've just hired employee number five, doing payroll manually might cut it for now, but adopting an automated payroll system early on that can grow with your company can be greatly beneficial. For example, implementing payroll software after you've hired your first employee can help you avoid common errors and delays noted in some of the most recent high-profile mishaps. Automated payroll processes set your organization up for future success, enabling you to spend more time meeting business goals and creating a positive employee experience.

If you're still manually running your payroll each period, it's time to automate. Start researching different automated payroll systems and crunching the numbers to estimate the ROI. You'll find the benefits of automated payroll can eliminate those manual processes that take away from more important tasks. ■

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# 5 Ways to Support Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming People in the Workplace

BY RUBY STORM GREEN



A recent study by Gallup found that 7.6% of U.S. adults<sup>1</sup> identify as LGBTQ+, double the number in 2012. To put this in perspective, that is more than the number of people who identify as Asian American. More so, one in five Gen Z adults<sup>2</sup> identify as LGBTQ+.

With this comes an increase in awareness of equity for transgender (trans) and gender non-conforming (GNC) employees and colleagues, as trans people often struggle with disclosing their identity at work and more than half of trans employees are not comfortable being out at work.<sup>3</sup>

When employees feel like they have to hide a part of themselves at work, the energy spent putting on a “mask” is diverted from engaging in work and bringing game-changing ideas to your company.

The Human Rights Campaign defines transgender as “An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth.”<sup>4</sup>

Gender non-conforming is “A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.” Some examples of gender non-

conforming identities are nonbinary, gender fluid, and genderqueer.

**Disclaimer:** the term “trans” is used in this post as an umbrella term for both transgender and GNC individuals. Note that not all nonbinary and gender non-conforming people identify as transgender.

Creating an equitable and inclusive workplace for trans employees is not only the right thing to do, it also empowers them to contribute more to the organization.

Many organizations struggle with where to begin when it comes to establishing an inclusive culture for trans employees. These five best practices provide a jumping-off point to ensure that trans employees feel welcomed and celebrated at work.

## 1. Revise your organization's application process and internal documentation

Discrimination against trans people can begin as early as the application process. Asking for people's preferred name and pronoun in applications can help to signal your organization as inclusive and allows the employee the opportunity to be referred to by their chosen name instead of their legal name. It can also help normalize articulating pronouns throughout the organization.

When passing a resume from an initial HR or recruiting contact to a hiring manager, it is important to refer to the applicant by their chosen name, which may not necessarily be their legal name.

It can also be beneficial to conduct the first-round interview by phone, as video and in-person interviews leave more room for bias, both conscious and unconscious. Creating a straightforward process for both new and existing trans employees to change their email addresses and screen names to their chosen name instead of their legal name will help the employee to bring their whole self to work.

## 2. Display pronouns in email signatures and screen names

Trans employees must feel like their workplace is a psychologically safe place to work before coming out to their employers.

Being misgendered is a constant struggle for many trans people and can contribute to a feeling of exclusion and alienation. It can also be embarrassing for both parties to misgender someone and can create tension.

Encouraging employees to put their pronouns in email signatures and video call screen names helps to alleviate the burden on trans

employees to vocalize their pronouns and be vulnerable in professional settings.

There must also be buy-in from managers and executives when it comes to putting pronouns in email signatures and screen names, which will increase the trust that trans employees have in management.

Articulating gender pronouns signals allyship and demonstrates respect and inclusivity. Making pronouns visible provides a way for trans employees to give their pronouns easily and can serve as a helpful reminder for cis-gender employees who may struggle with using different pronouns.

It is vital to create a culture of accountability so that employees feel comfortable speaking out and correcting their colleagues if they misgender someone or make a transphobic remark.

This can be as simple as saying “actually, this person uses they/ them pronouns.” Although it may feel uncomfortable to correct a coworker, it is far worse for the person who is being misgendered. Having hard conversations and addressing inequities at the organization can go a long way.

### 3. Mandate gender awareness trainings for managers and HR teams

Managers and HR employees play a big part in creating team culture and signaling inclusivity. When managers do not have the resources and training to treat their trans employees equitably, they are often unable to lead their team in supporting trans employees.

Creating a formalized annual training program for managers that educates them is crucial for implementing a culture of accountability. This training should include education on local and

federal laws protecting trans people, how to support an employee through a transition, and how to hold others accountable.

### 4. Establish gender neutral restrooms

Trans people often experience violence when using public restrooms that do not correlate with their assigned sex at birth. Simply choosing a restroom can mean a choice between feeling affirmed and avoiding potential harassment and violence.

While your employees may not fear violence at work, the issue of gender and restroom use can still create anxiety or conflict among employees in general. Introducing gender neutral restrooms signals to trans employees that they have the right to feel comfortable within the organization in general.

### 5. Provide support for employees who are transitioning

Coming out as transgender in the workplace can be frightening. Creating a framework for trans employees to safely come out at work and experience psychological and emotional safety is vital.

As a 2015 study of transgender people found: “More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents who had a job in the past year took steps to avoid mistreatment in the workplace, such as hiding or delaying their gender transition or quitting their job.”<sup>5</sup>

There is often a legitimate fear of retaliation, including job loss, harassment, or even assault. Specifying the protections that transgender employees can expect at work and ensuring awareness of these protections can help employees feel more comfortable coming out at work.



### Other types of support include providing:

- ▶ Guidelines for applicants, new hires, and transitioning employees.
- ▶ Information on state-by-state non-discrimination laws.
- ▶ Information on how to apply for a new passport/driver's license/Social Security card
- ▶ Lists of additional resources, such as local support groups.

Being inclusive towards transgender and gender non-conforming employees does not have to be costly. Ultimately, inclusive measures will be beneficial for the company as a whole by unlocking the full potential of trans employees.

### Listening is the first step

These tactical actions to support trans employees are only effective if it is reinforced by accountability, values and culture around supporting people as individuals. Leaders must analyze their employee experience survey feedback to understand if their culture efforts are working, and then make change from there—especially if they learn that their employees are afraid to be out at work. ■

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# Does Your RECRUITMENT MARKETING STRATEGY Generate Hot Leads?

BY ALEX OLIVER

Imagine you have two candidates with identical experience and qualifications. The first is highly motivated. She's familiar with your organization and ready for a hiring conversation. The second is open to changing jobs. She somewhat knows your brand, but she generally likes where she's at. She's also not sure about the risks of starting a new job in an uncertain economy. She can be won over, but she's not quite there yet.

## WHO IS THE BETTER CANDIDATE?

In reality, these aren't two different candidates: they're the same person. The only thing separating them is time. And an effective engagement strategy.

## WHAT IS A "HOT LEAD"?

Hot leads are candidates you know are highly qualified and have expressed strong interest in joining your organization. Having a lot of hot leads is every talent acquisition team's dream. They make the hiring process easy.

The truth is these candidates are "hot" because all the groundwork has already been done. They're sold on your brand and ready to make a move, and you're a fan of

their skills and experience. The hiring process for these candidates is often fast. Make them an offer, and you're reasonably certain they'll accept.

This can only happen when organizations have an effective, ongoing recruitment marketing strategy to keep candidates engaged until the right opportunity presents itself.

## WHAT AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT MARKETING STRATEGY LOOKS LIKE

An easy way to turn potential candidates into hire-ready candidates is through behavior-based campaigns. Behavior-based campaigns automatically share content with people in your talent database based on what they interact with individually—creating a highly personalized experience. Logic trees are set in advance, so the process runs on its own. This makes it possible to engage many candidates over time, without the need for recruiters to manually follow up with every single person.

They can also be customized for specific roles or departments. For example, niche roles that are hard to fill, such as engineers and orthodontists, might get their own campaign. Higher volume roles, such as line cooks or retail associates, might get another.

Once a candidate interacts with your campaign enough, they pass the threshold to be considered a "hot lead" which means they are labeled with a "highly engaged" engagement score.

To supplement email campaigns, advanced recruitment marketing platforms should also support a wide variety of channels, such as chat, video, and more.

## CONTENT THAT TURNS COLD CANDIDATES HOT

Just like in consumer marketing campaigns you get in your own inbox, a major driver for success with behavior-based recruitment marketing campaigns is to create quality high-touch, personalized experiences. People want to feel like they have an inside track into your company.



**Here are a few ideas for engaging content:**

- Recaps of company events, such as picnics and teambuilding exercises
- News about major milestones and product launches
- Personal stories from current employees, including accomplishments and career journeys
- In-depth looks at specific departments and individual roles
- Employees sharing their perspectives on organizational culture and values via video
- On-the-ground interviews at industry events and conferences
- Messages from executives and team leaders
- History of the organization, including past products and branding

Note that not every candidate in your talent pool is going to turn “hot” right away. For many, this takes time. Candidate engagement is a process, not a destination. You’ll likely find that many people receiving your campaigns won’t engage or respond for some time. That’s okay. Keep these candidates warm by sharing content about your brand until they start to engage. Once they do, send them more specific content that aligns with their skills, experience, potential future department and interests.

**TECHNOLOGY TO  
PUT YOUR RECRUITMENT  
MARKETING CAMPAIGNS  
INTO ACTION**

The right recruitment marketing strategy – one that focuses on turning talent into “hot leads” – can help you increase applicant conversion, hire faster, and ensure new hires are excited and motivated. ■

*As a content creator at iCIMS, Alex Oliver is well-versed in content and digital marketing from B2B and B2C organizations big and small.*



# How To Combine Human

BY JESSICA MILLER-MERRELL

**T**he world changed in November 2022 when ChatGPT launched, and we've never looked back.

Whether it's producing a bank of content or condensing meeting notes, AI can help you do all sorts of wonderful things. But what about the world of hiring and recruitment where decisions made in the interview room can have far-reaching ramifications in the real world? Let's take a look at a few of the applications of AI in the hiring world and discuss what they could mean for your HR team.

## SEARCHING A MOUNTAIN OF CVS IS QUICKER

If you want to leverage AI to help your HR people discover the right hires for your business, using it to scan huge piles of CVs from applicants is the way to start. In the past you would have to employ an external recruiter or hand over much-needed in-house resources to get the job done. The problem is that there are only so many hours in the day and even the most diligent of employees will feel the pressure.

Settling for a subset of candidates who seem 'good enough' to interview before you've reached the bottom of the pile is both common and natural. While there's nothing wrong with wanting to be able to free up valuable in-house team members, what if you do so at the expense of missing out on incredible talent that just happens to be lower down the pile? Using AI to scan through CVs on autopilot is a smart way to address the first stage of recruitment: filtering out unsuitable candidates.

## TARGETING SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE IS FASTER

Continuing the same theme of scanning and searching at scale and pace, you can also use AI hiring tools to find specific skills within a CV. This allows you to home in on the types of candidates you want to interview, allowing you to streamline the hiring process.

AI could be used to pinpoint things such as experience at a competitor, a history of working in a specific geographic location, or even personality types shown by the writing style. The interesting thing about this rapidly evolving area is that it opens up a whole host of potential new ways to start filtering and grading applicants and interview candidates. The more granular you can get with your search, the more likely you are to find the right fit for your corporate culture. Exactly what you want to hear when it's time to tie things together and get a new project moving.

## IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS ARE STILL ESSENTIAL

No matter how good AI is at the initial sifting and filtering, there is no substitute for an in-person interview where you can see what you think with your own eyes. The key thing to remember here is that while AI will search based on tangible details, the intangibles will still be virtually untouched. The way someone conducts themselves in a meeting, or how they answer a question when they don't know the answer, for example, will tell you a lot about their character.

That said, AI can also be a useful sounding board when you want to

draft up key questions to ask. Simply by getting a dozen different ways to phrase one of your standard queries, you can get new insights into how to get more information from a candidate.

## USING AI AS THE ANSWER IS NOT ENOUGH

There are some who are suggesting that AI chatbots can conduct interviews with human candidates at scale, and that this is the future. While the idea is certainly an interesting one, it doesn't guarantee anything like the level of insight that an experienced human interviewer will be able to provide. The problem is that no matter how well you teach the chatbot to mimic how you ask questions, it still won't be able to form the same opinion as you about the





# and AI Hiring Practices



fit of any given candidate. AI can do many things, but it's not set to replace human recruitment across the board any time soon.

## A HYBRID APPROACH WILL DELIVER OPTIMAL RESULTS

Using AI to streamline and scale the first vetting stage in your recruitment process is the way to go, you then hand the data over to the human interviewers. Think of it as a way to focus on using your in-house resources on higher value tasks that humans really do need to be involved in. That way you'll be able to see where the gaps that AI cannot fill are and why they exist in the first place.

By adopting a hybrid approach to recruitment, you'll also be able to

give experienced interviewers better qualified, more relevant candidates to work with. And because you'll be able to do this in a fraction of the time, you'll be speeding up the process while improving the quality of the end result. Exactly what you want to hear when you're considering realigning your hiring processes with the new AI tech that is out there.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Hiring people is all about using your experience as an HR professional and augmenting it with the power of AI. Simple things like asking them if they like to work in a team and what their goals are would both be key questions. You may also want to ask how they spend their free time to get

a sense of how their personality will fit into your working culture; reading, playing online casino games and staying active are all answers that reveal how they could integrate into your team on day one.

Rather than become beholden to AI, use it to streamline what you're already doing well. It is a great tool for accelerating repetitive manual processes, but not one you should rely on blindly when you want to make important strategic decisions. After all, is there a decision that is more important to your business than the people it contains? ■

*Jessica Miller-Merrell is a workplace change agent focused on human resources and talent acquisition. She's also the founder of Workology (formerly Blogging4Jobs) and can be contacted on Twitter at @jmillmerrel.*







# What About the Experience of Work?

BY KEVIN EIKENBERRY

**I**t's not a typo. I'm not talking about the importance of work experience. I'm talking about the experience of work, meaning how we experience our work and those we work with. Have you thought about this for yourself and your team? I propose that leaders must take an experiential focus as they look at work and the workplace. And that when they do, they have a chance to change everything for the better.

## The Importance of Experience

In *Future Shock*, Alvin Toffler wrote about the importance of those who create experiences. 25 years ago, Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore wrote *The Experience Economy* and codified how businesses could drive for and create loyalty by focusing on and improving the experience customers have with products and services.

This idea seems far from insightful now, as so many of the gifts we give are experiences, and the products we love, we love because of how they make us feel.

While leaders have thought extensively about these ideas with customers, far fewer have thought about this in terms of their employees. That is the idea behind the experience of work.

In organizations from sports, to entertainment, to restaurants, to call centers, to your local manufacturing plant and corner store, businesses are seeking to attract and retain talent. The efforts we make for team members look more and more like how we work to attract and retain customers.

If experience is valuable to a customer, it certainly is (or could be) to team members.

## Is the Experience of Work Just Engagement?

Employee engagement has been studied, poked at, and measured for the last 25 years. Most of this work has been helpful. Ultimately, though, employee engagement is a choice individuals make—do I choose to engage in my work or not?—not something leaders can manage.

The experience of work is related to engagement in that it includes many of the factors that influence the engagement choice. Here is a partial list:

- **Culture.** Do people have a positive feeling and experience with how things are done at work?
- **Inclusion.** Do people feel included socially, collaboratively and in work processes?

- **Relationships.** Do people like and “click” with those they work with (including their boss)?
- **Success and Meaning.** Do people find they are achieving things of value?
- **Value.** Do people feel they are valued for their contribution and who they are?
- **Enjoyment.** Do they like their work, or are they counting the minutes until the weekend?

Simply put, if we want employees to choose engagement, we need to think more about the experience of work. Because the more positively people feel about their experience of work, the more likely they will be engaged, stay engaged, and remain on your team.

## What Can We Do?

There is more that we need to do than can be explored in a short article. But once you see the power of experience, as a leader, you will start focusing differently. Start with these four things:

1. **Bring it up.** Talk to people about how they are experiencing work. Waiting for exit interviews is far too late!
2. **Create more psychological safety.** The feeling of safety itself is a positive experience, but the safer people feel, the more likely your questions about the experience of work will be answered honestly.
3. **Look for smiles.** If there are smiles and laughter, it is likely a good sign. A quiet and tense environment likely is less so.
4. **Build relationships yourself.** Be both a model to others and build them with members of your team. This extra-curricular is part of your job.

As a leader, you are a curator of the experience of work. Once you realize that, you will see your work differently and begin to create better results—and experiences. ■

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# How Can I Get My Team More Engaged in Training?

BY STRATEGIC HR

**I**t's no secret that training and development offerings are one of the key tools that employers can use today to retain the talent they already have. Per Forbes<sup>1</sup>, 70 percent of employees would leave their current employer for another organization that has a reputation of developing and training their people.

But don't worry. The good news is there are ways to find that middle ground between what your employees want to know and what you, as the employer, need them to know.

## **First, Complete a Training Needs Analysis**

A training needs analysis can be a good place to start. Is the training you are offering meeting the organization's needs? This analysis can be both based on the internal needs of the organization, asking questions such as:

- » What skills are team members missing?
- » What software or hardware do they need to know?
- » Are there industry standards that need to be met?
- » And based on the soft skill and development needs of your employees, questions can look like:
  - What soft skills do employees need to have to grow professionally in the long term?
  - Are there skills that they'd like to learn in order to be eligible for promotions or growth?

If you're able to clearly outline the why behind the training, you're more likely to see engagement (and maybe even excitement) when it comes to learning new information and skills. Additionally, should the team have input into what topics are covered, you're more likely to get a team that actively participates in training sessions rather than running away from it.

## **Carve Out the Time**

Whether it's learning a new skill that will make their current job easier, or learning a topic that will help them achieve their long-term goals, it is essential to gain the employee's buy-in to step away from their job for the duration of the training. When possible, offer some assistance in covering their workload so they can best focus on the training session instead of being distracted by the work accumulating while they're away.

For example, consider asking other team members to cover extra shifts with overtime, or provide a dedicated time when everyone is engaged with training rather than being on the floor. Alternatively, if you work in a professional or consulting organization, it could involve adjusting billable expectations so team members aren't penalized for their time away.



## Create Interactive & Engaging Programs

Research has shown that learning through multimodal concepts allows the individual to engage their brain in different ways, making it more likely the concepts will be retained and applied. Whether creating a training program yourself or working with an outside vendor, we recommend utilizing a variety of avenues, such as:

- » Videos
- » Role Playing
- » Mobile Apps
- » Scavenger Hunts
- » One-on-One Discussions

This variety increases the likelihood the program considers individual learning styles and will be more likely to be remembered. Minimizing extensive time of pure lecture is the key to effective training.

## Empower Your Team to Contribute

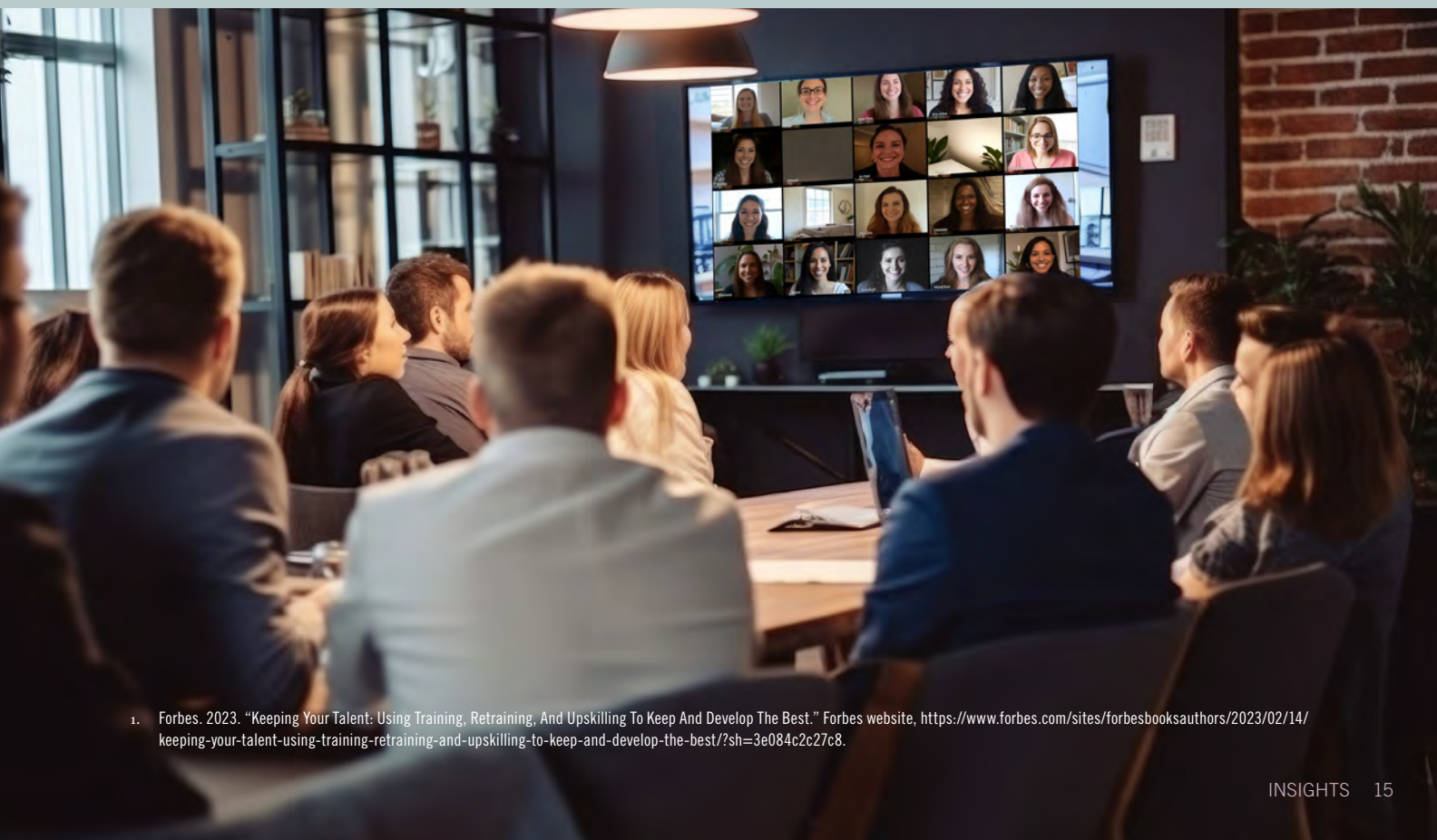
If building or contracting out training feels daunting, whether that's due to time or finances, don't forget the fantastic talent and resources that you have at your fingertips—your team!

Generational studies have shown that older generations, such as baby boomers and Gen Xers, are eager to find opportunities to share their knowledge with younger generations to prevent recreating the wheel. Consider empowering all generations of your team by creating programs such as internal mentoring programs, where lessons and teaching can go both up and down the ladder.

Encourage your team to share their specialized knowledge through “Lunch n’ Learns” or learning breakfasts. This can highlight and leverage team members’ knowledge and skills with the potential to increase future collaboration as well.

Whether done internally or through an outside vendor, training your team means making an investment. Make sure the training is adding value to both the employees and the organization. Whether it's learning a new skill that will make their current job easier or a topic that will help them achieve their long-term goals, it is essential to gain the employee's buy-in and to offer the necessary support so the training doesn't feel like an undue burden. ■

*Strategic HR Inc.'s mission is to be a strategic partner providing custom human resources business solutions to help our clients attract, support, develop, and retain a competitive workforce and achieve their business objectives. For more information, visit [strategichrinc.com](https://strategichrinc.com).*



1. Forbes. 2023. “Keeping Your Talent: Using Training, Retraining, And Upskilling To Keep And Develop The Best.” Forbes website, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbooksauthors/2023/02/14/keeping-your-talent-using-training-retraining-and-upskilling-to-keep-and-develop-the-best/?sh=3e084c2c27c8>.

# Hush Trips: How to Minimize Remote Work Compliance Risks

BY COLLEEN RYNNE

**W**ith the ebb and flow of remote work, employees are embracing the freedom to truly work wherever they have an internet connection. Enter the age of the “hush trip.” A hush trip is when an employee works from a location other than their designated work location without first informing their employers.

Managers are increasingly likely to encounter an employee celebrating National Great Outdoors Month by working from a beach or a ski resort as employees crave the ability to better balance work with personal time. In fact, a 2023 study<sup>1</sup> found 44% of Gen Z employees have taken a hush trip, with 45% of the Gen Z respondents saying their trip was never discovered. These hush trips, however, can bring about compliance implications for employees and employers.

If your company is considering allowing employees to work from anywhere, or if you discovered an employee took a hush trip, keep in mind these compliance implications.

## Take taxes into consideration for extended hush trips

The famous quote, “In this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes,” by Benjamin Franklin, remains true for hush trips. States have their own guidelines on when non-residents owe income tax based on length of time worked in the state.

For example, Arizona and Hawaii

require non-residents to file income returns with the state if an individual works there for at least 60 days in a year. However, Maine's threshold kicks in at 12 days per year. States may also have a threshold as to how much income is earned within the state to require withholding. Again, the threshold will vary by state, and can be further complicated by definitions of taxable income that also vary by state. Employees should be aware of the taxation rules for each state they visit so they are not caught unaware during tax season.

## Wage and hour compliance varies by location

Ensuring wage and hour compliance becomes more complicated due to a hush trip. Each state has its own rules for wage and hour compliance, including overtime obligations, overtime exemptions, and meal and

rest break rules. For example, a few states have daily overtime rules, including Alaska, California, Colorado, and Nevada. Even between Alaska, California, Colorado, and Nevada, the daily overtime rules vary. For example, employees in Alaska, California, and Nevada may be entitled to overtime if they work more than 8 hours in a single day. In Colorado, employees may be entitled to overtime pay if they work more than 12 consecutive hours, 12 hours in a day, or 40 hours in a week. If you have employees working from these states, your company could be required to pay the employee overtime.





To mitigate unexpected wage and hour issues, employers can take the following steps:

- ▶ **Reiterate policies** regarding recording all time worked and compliance with meal breaks even when working remotely.
- ▶ **Update policies** to reflect examples of remote work time.
- ▶ **Implement attestations** through your timekeeping systems regarding meal breaks and recordation of all hours worked.
- ▶ **Train managers** to ensure they do not inappropriately alter employee timecards and ensure that all time is recorded if they have knowledge that an employee works overtime.

## Rules about safety apply wherever your employees go

Safety issues may arise during hush trips. OSHA requires employers to provide a safe working environment. The responsibility to provide a safe working environment includes a safe environment for remote employees. If an employee suffers a work-related injury, the injury must be recorded on the OSHA 300 log. Whether or not the injury is “work-related” when suffered on a hush trip is difficult to determine and will be fact-specific. For example, if an employee injured themselves by dropping a box of work documents on their foot, the injury is likely work-related. However, if the individual suffered the injury while taking care of their children, even during work hours, the injury is likely not work-related. While OSHA will not hold an employer liable for work-related injuries occurring in home offices, and arguably, during a hush trip, the injury must still be recorded.

Open communication, including clear instructions on the importance of a safe office, even a remote office, can reduce the risk of an injury occurring. Employers should provide instructions and handouts on the safe setup of a remote office, including the safe use of equipment. Employers



A ***hush trip*** is when an employee works from a location other than their designated work location, without first informing their employers.

should also provide a clear method to report injuries, including a hotline number and an electronic reporting means. Employers can require employees to sign off on periodic safety checklists, which may include the possibly of a remote location. Lastly, train employees on your policies and processes to ensure all employees understand expectations and requirements for maintaining a safe workplace.

## Take steps to ensure data privacy and security

Public WiFi, shared accommodations, and public transit bring data privacy and security concerns. Employees on hush trips may inadvertently expose sensitive and confidential data through unsecured networks, loss or theft of their company devices, or phishing scams. A data breach could be costly, with the average cost of a data breach hitting \$4.45 million in 2023<sup>2</sup>. Companies do not want to be in the position of finding out about an employee's hush trip at the time of a data breach.

Companies can take steps to protect themselves and their data, even if an employee is on a hush trip.

- ▶ **Strong Security Policies:** Have clear and comprehensive policies that cover remote work and travel. Ensure employees understand the expectations and consequences of non-compliance.
- ▶ **Training:** Regularly train employees about your policies and cybersecurity best practices, including recognizing phishing scams and securing devices.

- ▶ **Secure Access:** Require the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) when accessing company systems remotely.

## How to make remote work successful for your organization

By fostering a transparent and supportive work environment, employers can empower employees to enjoy the benefits of remote work while minimizing potential issues involving taxation, wage & hour, data security, and injury to employees. Remember to:

- ▶ **Establish Clear Remote Work Policies:** Outline expectations for communication, work hours, performance standards, and safety considerations.
- ▶ **Promote Well-Being:** Encourage employees to take their vacation time with a complete break from work and email.
- ▶ **Embrace Flexibility:** Consider allowing “bleisure” travel, where employees can extend business trips for leisure.
- ▶ **Prioritize Cybersecurity:** Educate employees about safe online practices and provide resources like VPNs for secure connections.

Whether or not your company allows remote work, you can take steps to minimize compliance risks in the event a hush trip is taken. ■

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# WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE OFFICE IT SPECIALIST

BY JAMES MOUL

Ever wonder what a day in the life of the office IT pro looks like? Picture this: it's Monday morning, and just as they take their first sip of coffee, they're greeted by a flood of urgent emails about crashed systems, forgotten passwords, and a printer that won't cooperate.

Sound familiar? While we might chuckle at these daily tech dramas, there's more to the IT department than meets the eye. In fact, buried beneath those troubleshooting skills lies a treasure trove of valuable lessons waiting to be discovered.

## ADAPTABILITY

Your IT specialist's superpower is adaptability. In the blink of an eye, they can roll out a new software update or revamp the network security, all while sifting through a mountain of support tickets. The lesson: Embrace change and be nimble in the face of evolving technologies.

## PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

When tech crises hit, who do you turn to? The calm, methodical problem-solver extraordinaire that is the IT support person. Remember that time the server crashed during a crucial presentation? Their step-by-step approach saved the day, reminding us to tackle challenges with a clear head and a structured plan.

## PATIENCE AND COMMUNICATION

Ever struggled with tech jargon? Your IT whiz has the patience of a saint. Whether teaching the basics of cloud storage or troubleshooting Wi-Fi woes, they navigate with clarity and humor. What's the lesson? Effective communication and a little patience go a long way in fostering understanding.

In the world of business, wisdom often hides in unexpected places. When it comes to IT, it's about a lot more than just rebooting systems or troubleshooting software. Your IT department is a goldmine of skills and insights—insights we can all benefit from. Let's raise a virtual toast to the unsung heroes of tech support. They're not just fixing problems; they're shaping our companies. ■

*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

# Zesty Lemon Garlic Shrimp Pasta

This vibrant and refreshing shrimp pasta dish is perfect for a quick weeknight meal or a delightful dinner with friends. The combination of zesty lemon, fragrant garlic, and tender shrimp makes it an irresistible choice.

**YIELD:** 4 servings **TIME:** 25 minutes

### INGREDIENTS:

- ▶ 12 oz spaghetti (or your favorite pasta)
- ▶ 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ▶ 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- ▶ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ▶ 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
- ▶ 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- ▶ 1/4 cup white wine or chicken broth
- ▶ 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste
- ▶ Grated Parmesan cheese for serving (optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

- ▶ Cook the pasta. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and cook according to the package instructions until al dente. Drain and set aside.
- ▶ Prepare the shrimp. While the pasta is cooking, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the shrimp, season with salt and pepper, and cook for 2-3 minutes on each side until they turn pink and opaque. Remove the shrimp from the skillet and set aside.
- ▶ Sauté the garlic. In the same skillet, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the minced garlic and red pepper flakes (if using) and sauté for about 1 minute until the garlic is fragrant and slightly golden.
- ▶ Create the sauce. Add the lemon zest and juice to the skillet, followed by the white wine or chicken broth. Stir well, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Let the sauce simmer for 2-3 minutes to reduce slightly.
- ▶ Combine pasta and shrimp. Return the cooked shrimp to the skillet and add the drained pasta. Toss everything together to coat the pasta and shrimp with the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.
- ▶ Serve. Divide the shrimp pasta among plates and serve hot. Garnish with grated Parmesan cheese if desired.



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