**Archbright™**

**Insights Newsletter**

**February 2019**

**Build a More Engaged Workforce**

By now, we all understand how disengaged, dissatisfied, and disgruntled employees have a detrimental impact in the workplace. Although creating a culture of employee engagement remains a key objective for leadership, it eludes most organizations. Gallup reports the majority of the U.S. workforce is still not engaged.

Engaged employees are more likely to provide discretionary effort, be more collaborative, react more positively to change, persist longer at difficult tasks, and help others. They are also more committed to the organization’s mission and vision.

If you want to increase the level of engagement in your organization but aren’t sure how to begin, Archbright can help.

The first step to building employee engagement is to measure it. Our Engagement and Satisfaction Survey (ESS) is an effective and reliable measurement tool designed to surface underlying dissatisfaction and disengagement within an organization.

Employees complete an online survey that asks a series of questions to measure:

* Executive Leadership Effectiveness
* Supervisory Management Effectiveness
* Communication
* Benefits
* Operational Effectiveness
* Organizational Practices
* Pay
* Employee Development & Recognition
* Work/Life Satisfaction
* Employee Commitment

Once completed, your Organizational Development consultant walks you through the survey findings to ensure you understand the numbers and the story they tell about your organization and your employees. With these results you can then better plan for success.

For more information about how Archbright can help you build employee engagement in your organization, contact us at 206.329.1120, 509.381.1635, or info@archbright.com.

**How investing in learning initiatives improves Employee Engagement**

If you aren’t investing in employee learning programs in a significant way, it might be time to rethink your strategy. LinkedIn’s Top 2018 Workplace Learning Trends report shows that 90% of executives say learning and development is a necessary benefit to the employees at the company, specifically around leadership, communication, and collaboration. To further support that thinking, Archbright has seen our Archbright University classes fill up like

never before.

When you look deeper into the benefits of learning at work, the stats are somewhat compelling. Employees who spend time at work learning are:

• 47% less likely to be stressed

• 39% more likely to feel productive and successful

• 23% more ready to take on additional responsibilities

• 21% more likely to feel confident and happy

We all know a less stressed, more productive, engaged, and happy employee is the goal of us all. And there is data to support that belief. That same LinkedIn research reports

an undeniable 93% of employees would stay at a company longer if it invested in their professional growth.

So if you aren’t investing in employee learning programs in a significant way, I hope you will rethink that. It should be a crucial part of your talent strategy!

Archbright University’s approximately 80 courses (many in leadership, communication, and collaboration) are available in multiple ways: Onsite (we send a trainer to you); at an Archbright Training Facility (you send employees to us); and Online (via virtual classrooms and on-demand). You can browse the catalog and register for classes at Archbright. com or via our new Mobile App (now available through Apple and Google Play) to see if any of our courses meet your organization’s learning and development initiatives.

**Archbright University Symposium in Seattle**

Archbright is pleased to announce our Annual Archbright University Symposium taking place in Seattle on Wednesday, March 20th from 9AM to Noon!

Archbright University helps organizations achieve their learning goals through the corporate university format – a proven way to increase your company’s commitment to employee learning and professional development. We hope you can join us as our instructors cover a selection of our corporate university

offerings. Check out our speaker bios and more information on this year’s symposium topics at Archbright.com.

Seats fill up fast and are limited to 2 people per organization.

Register today!

This year’s presentations include:

* Supervisory Skills

Presented by Forest Woodley, Sr. Consultant, Archbright University

* Civil Treatment for Employees & Leaders Presented by Rita Carson, Sr. Consultant, Archbright University
* Building Interpersonal Awareness with DiSC® Presented by Tom Norwood, Sr. Consultant, Archbright University
* Crucial Conversations®

Presented by Holly Eckert-Lewis, Sr. Consultant, Archbright University

Spend your morning with us. Mingle with other HR professionals! Meet the Archbright University team.

When: Wednesday, March 20 | 9 am to Noon

Check in will begin at 8:30 am

Where: Museum of Flight, View Lounge | Seattle

Cost: FREE

**My life would have been so much easier if I had this class 19 years ago as a new manager.”—Supervisory Skills participant**

Supervisory Skills covers the essential skills that supervisors and managers use every day—

• communication,

• feedback,

• coaching,

• delegation,

• discipline,

• documentation, and

• teamwork.

Designed for those new to their roles as well as those seeking a refresher, the classes are a blend of research, examples, and lots of practice to increase confidence and boost skills.

Supervisory Skills is one of most popular courses we bring to our member locations. If you have a group of ten or more, contact your account executive for more information.

**The Perils of Misclassification and Potential State Law Changes**

Both the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) and state laws provide exemptions from minimum wage and overtime pay requirements. The most commonly used exemptions are known as the “white collar exemptions,” which are the exemptions for employees in executive, administrative, professional, computer, and outside sales positions.

In order to qualify for these exemptions, employees must meet both the: 1) salary basis test; and 2) duties test. If either test is not met, the employee does not qualify for the exemption. For the duties test, the employee must be performing all the required duties in order to qualify for the exemption. Employers must look at the actual duties performed by the employee and not determine an employee’s exempt or non-exempt status based on a job title or job description alone. If an employer is covered by both the FLSA and state law, which most employers are, it is important to remember that the employer must comply with both laws. If the two laws conflict, then the law most beneficial to the employee will apply.

The perils of misclassifying a non-exempt employee as an exempt employee include costly back pay awards for unpaid overtime, monetary penalties, litigation (including the possibility of a class action lawsuit), attorneys’ fees, and bad publicity. Employers should routinely audit their employee classifications to ensure that job positions are classified properly.

The federal government is expected to announce new overtime rules in March. In addition, Washington’s Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) has released an initial pre-draft version of updates to the white collar exemption rules that include significantly raising the salary basis test.

Under the pre-draft proposal to the rules, the salary basis for the white collar exemptions would increase to between 2 and 2.5 times the state minimum wage for a 40 hour workweek, which would range from $1,080/ week to $1,350/week – or $56,160 to $70,200 annually – with an expected effective date in 2020. For these exemptions, the current federal weekly minimum salary requirement is $455/week. The computer professional minimum hourly wage requirement would increase to between 3 and 4 times the minimum wage in 2020, which would equal $40.50/hour to

$54/hour, up from the current federal and Washington hourly wage of

$27.63/hour. These proposed changes will greatly increase the salary requirement in order to meet Washington’s white collar exemptions. The pre-draft proposal also includes a change to how to determine an employee’s primary duty and the employer’s burden with respect to proving an employee’s status. These changes proposed by L&I are

considered to be a “pre-draft” which means L&I is still seeking stakeholder comment and has not technically proposed an official rule change. After L&I considers input regarding the pre-draft rules, they will create “draft rules” and hold public hearings for the general public to submit formal comments before they are finalized.

Our HR Advice and Legal Team is here to help you navigate through these laws and continue to keep you updated on any further developments.

Source: Colleen Mayer, Attorney at Archbright

**Clarity Benefit Solutions Provides List of Popular Employee Benefits That Are on the Rise**

Some employers may find it challenging to find just the right mix of benefits to entice employees to enroll in benefits programs. Fortunately, there are a number of benefits programs that are on the rise that employers should consider offering their employees.

Here are several of them:

1. Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). HSAs are accounts that allow employees to pay for numerous healthcare costs by contributing pre-tax monies through payroll deductions. These costs can include (to pay for expenses such as) co- pays, deductibles, prescription drugs, as well as vision and dental expenses. HSAs follow employees when they change jobs and earn tax-free interest. Plus, unused funds roll over from year to year.

2. Paid Parental Leave. This employee benefit is definitely more popular than it was years ago. Studies show a 10% increase in paid maternity leave in the

last two decades. Adoption, fostering and surrogacy options are also on the rise.

3. Fitness Challenges/Competitions. The past several years have seen an increase in employers offering company-organized fitness challenges and competitions. These promote overall well-being in a positive manner and keep employees engaged in their health.

4. Standing Desks. The ability to stand while working is one of the fastest rising employee benefits, with recent studies reporting long hours of sitting have been linked to diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and certain cancers.

5. Flexible Working Options. There are several flexible working benefits that are promoting work/life balance and increasing employee engagement and productivity.

6. Dress-down Fridays. More and more employers are implementing casual dress, particularly one day a week on Fridays, with other employers offering a more casual work environment during the summer months.

Source: Clarity Benefit Solutions/CCH

**Over Half of Employees Say Health Insurance is Essential to Job Satisfaction**

Over half of employees (55 percent) said that health insurance is the most important benefit in terms of their job satisfaction, according to recent research from small business consultant Clutch. However, the survey found that 23 percent of full-time employees do not receive any benefits from their employers.

“If you offer health insurance, it will benefit you because you’ll have more productive, healthier employees,” said Lisa Oyler, human resources director at Access Development. “People are

a valued asset. Offering these benefits and educating employees on how to utilize them is an investment in workers and in their long- term health.”

However, the survey found differences in how different generations value benefits. Only 44 percent of Millennials (ages 18-34) name health insurance as the most important benefit they receive, while 62 percent of Generation X and baby boomers say it is most crucial. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of Millennials say that

paid vacation time is their top priority, while 14 percent of Generation X and only 12 percent of Baby Boomers say the same. Clutch noted that employers can cater to their younger workers by creating flexible vacation policies that provide a base number of paid vacation days.

The survey also found the following:

• Paid vacation time (65 percent) and health insurance (62 percent) are the most commonly offered benefits.

• Only 21 percent of full-time workers receive paid parental leave, and just 8 percent receive some kind of child care stipend.

• Most employees (52 percent) who are not satisfied with their benefits want more of a benefit they already have, and 14 percent want different benefits altogether.

Source: CCH

**Weathering A Payroll Shortage Using Furloughs and Reduced Workweeks**

Though unemployment continues to remain very low, not every business is thriving and even those that are very successful sometimes struggle to make payroll. In such cases, layoffs are often the go-to solution. Faced with a short-term cash shortage, however, employers may consider implementing full or partial-week furloughs or reduced workweeks with a corresponding reduction in pay. For Non-Exempt employees, businesses generally may implement these measures. For Exempt employees, it is more complicated.

Exempt employees subject to the salary basis requirement are entitled to be paid their salary for any workweek in which they are “ready, willing and able” to work and in which they perform any work. If such an employee does not receive their full salary for a week in which they work, the employee likely will lose their exempt status and be entitled to overtime pay.

Full-Week Furlough: Under Federal and state law, employers do not have to pay an exempt employee for any week in which the employee performs no work. The greatest risk to implementing such a measure is that the employee may perform some amount of work, however small, which then would trigger the employer’s obligation to pay them their full salary for the entire week. To avoid this situation,

we recommend employers clearly and directly instruct employees to perform no work during the week they are furloughed. This instruction should be followed up in writing, with that writing signed by the employee, if possible.

Partial Week Furlough/Reduced Workweek: Under Federal law, an employer may prospectively and with notice reduce an exempt employee’s work week and salary if the reduction is: (i) bona fide in response to long-term business needs or economic conditions,

and (ii) not done with the purpose of circumventing the salary basis requirement. Oregon and Idaho follow Federal law on this front; in Washington this approach would likely pass scrutiny, though the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries has not issued an opinion in this regard and employers should proceed with caution.

Under Federal and state law, employers who institute a partial workweek reduction or furlough due to a temporary or occasional lack of work or slowdown may not reduce an exempt employee’s salary accordingly. This means, for example, that a manufacturer that has a temporary shortage of materials cannot reduce its exempt employees’ schedule and pay.

Eligible Archbright members are encouraged to contact an Archbright HR Advisor or Legal Counsel for assistance navigating through the complex decisions surrounding furloughs and reduced workweeks. Members with access to the HR Toolkit are encouraged to review the KeyNote Exempt Employee Furloughs and Reduced Workweeks.

Source: Ami De Celle, Attorney at Archbright

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**Driver Safety in the Workplace**

Driver safety is integral in today’s world. Many Americans drive to and from work daily. On top of that, there is a large group of individuals that make this their occupation. Statistically, this line of work is one of, if not the most, dangerous line of work there is. The repercussions of ignoring safe driving procedures can be catastrophic.

According to The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), automobile accidents are the most common reason for worker deaths in the United States for ages 16-24. In 2017, there were 37,133 overall automobile deaths in the US alone (3rd most common reason for death in the US). There are many variables as to why this happens; and there is no one answer in mitigating or dramatically reducing the amount of automobile deaths.

One thing to consider is the fact that young drivers lack the experience, maturity and sometimes knowledge that many older drivers possess. NIOSH also cites poor impulse control, difficulty responding appropriately to traffic hazards, a false sense of security with their driving ability, inconsistent seat belt use and distracted driving.

As an employer, what are some precautions you can take to keep your drivers safe, as well as others sharing the road?

• Consider the age of your driving workforce. It is recommended to set a minimum age of 18 and older.

• Offer Safe Driving courses to employees, free of cost – provide initial training, as well as safety refresher training based on competency.

• Have inclement weather policies to ensure drivers are not driving in hazardous conditions.

• Provide clear corrective action standards to ensure employees understand the consequences of not following these procedures.

For employers to ensure compliance, they must have drivers inspect their vehicles prior to their shift. Vehicles must be maintained to manufacturer specifications and only maintained by qualified personnel. Also, ensure you test and retire vehicles that have become hazardous.

Today, technology is an integrated part of our lives and can be difficult to not use in an automobile. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have divided distractive driving into three categories: visual, manual, and cognitive. Visual distractions can include but are not limited to: text messages or your vehicle’s navigation program. Manual distraction occurs when you choose to pick up

a beverage, piece of food, or use cosmetic products while driving. Cognitive distractions involve your brain’s inability to multi-task – such as talking on your phone or daydreaming.

The most important thing an employer can do to protect their employees is consistently enforcing safe driving policies and ensuring they understand the consequences for not adhering to them. If cell phones must be used for navigation, employees should be provided a phone mount and the phone should have all other notifications off while the vehicle is in operation.

Employees are your most valuable asset. Protecting your assets is key to keeping Workers’ Compensation premiums low, increasing production, and having the peace of mind that you did as much as you possibly could to protect your employees from one of the most dangerous jobs in today’s workforce. Stay safe out there!

Please join us Thursday, February 21st during our Monthly Safety Webinar to learn more about Analyzing Injury Trends. For questions or more information, please contact your Safety & Loss Control Consultant at 206.329.1120, 509.381.1635, or email safety@archbright.com.

**Please Notify Us of Staff Changes.** Please take a moment to contact us to correct any staffing changes for your organization, including email addresses. Email us at info@archbright.com.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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