**Archbright™**

**Insights Newsletter**

**July 2021**

**Our Employee Engagement Survey: Prepare for What’s Next**

Gallup reports U.S. employee engagement increased to 39% in January with 14% of employees actively disengaged. After a difficult 2020 this seems like cause for celebration, however Gallup cautions that manager engagement levels have declined.\*

Teams with engaged managers are more likely to be engaged.

Now that pandemic restrictions are lifting, understanding the engagement levels of your employees and managers can help you prepare for whatever comes next.

Archbright’s Employee Engagement Survey (EES) is a measurement tool designed to uncover underlying disengagement within your organization and provide hard data which you can use to develop an action plan to resolve any issues found through the process.

We make it easy.

* We send an email to your employees, inviting them to participate on their computer or mobile device.
* Once the survey closes, we analyze the data. We then walk you and your team through the survey’s results.
* After that, you’ll receive online access to your engagement data for reporting.

Through this process, you’ll learn the unique set of drivers responsible for any disengagement in your organization. You can then strategize how to improve employee engagement and, in turn, performance. To find out more, please reach out to your Account Executive, or contact us at info@archbright.com, 206.329.1120, or 509.381.1635

\*https://www.gallup.com/workplace/330017/employee-engagement-rises-following-wild-2020.aspx.

**2021 Washington’s Best Workplaces**

I am thrilled to announce that this year, 10 Archbright members have been named as Washington’s Best Workplaces by the Puget Sound Business Journal!

I want to extend a BIG congratulations to

* Applied Technical Services
* Continental Mills
* Heritage Bank
* JPC Architects
* Kitsap Bank
* MN Custom Homes
* Salal Credit Union
* Schuchart
* Thrive Communities
* Wimmer Solutions

The Business Journal partners with Quantum Workplace and surveys thousands of employees throughout the state. The survey asks questions about company culture and employee work experience. Washington’s Best Workplaces then recognizes the 80 highest ranked companies based on the survey results scored by Quantum.

We are excited to share that Archbright is once again included on the list!

The final rankings will be revealed in the Washington’s Best Workplaces special section of the Puget Sound Business Journal to be published in the Aug. 27 print edition.

Congrats again to these very deserving members!

**Save the Date for HR Leadership 2021: Making Work Human**

Mark your calendars now! This year’s HR Leadership conference is coming up on Friday, 9/17, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM PDT. It is a virtual event, so your employees from all over can easily attend. And as a member, you will receive a discounted rate.

Archbright along with other employer associations nationwide, host this event to bring together a lineup of presenters that will inspire and guide you.

We’re excited to welcome this year’s speakers: Erik Mosely, Co-founder & CEO of Workhuman, Seth Mattison, Founder & CEO of FutureSight Labs, and Alison Levine, Leadership Expert, and Polar Explorer and Mountaineer.

We’ll send out an email when registration is live with information about your member discount, and we’ll also post the registration link on Archbright.com and LinkedIn.

**Time is Ticking on Our Regional Benefits Survey**

If your company hasn’t yet submitted its responses to the 2021 Regional Benefits Survey, there’s still time to participate! This survey is open once each year and collects valuable data to show employers how their benefits compare to other companies in the Pacific Northwest.

As a thank you to those who participate in this survey:

* Archbright members will receive the survey report for FREE when published.
* Non-members will receive 50% off of the survey report purchase price.

The survey closes on July 16, 2021, so don’t delay. After the deadline, the surveys will be available for purchase at applicable membership tiered discounts on Archbright.com.

**mozzo Mobile**

Have you checked out mozzo Mobile yet?

If you are a mozzo user, stay connected with mozzo Mobile. Use mozzo’s features like Community, Advisor Chat, Video Training Library, and the Resource Library. All you need to do is use your mozzo credentials to sign in to your account on the app and you’re good to go!

You can download the app from the App Store or Google Play.

**The Power of Private Team Training**

Archbright University has a wide variety of public classes. Not only does attending a public class provide professional development and networking opportunities for participants across all industries, it also creates opportunities for leaders to preview a course before bringing it to their organization as a Private Team Training.

With the uprooting of many employees during COVID-19, there is an increased need to upskill and reskill teams. A private team training offers this as well as the perfect platform for new teams to connect.

Benefits of a Private Team Training:

* Classes are facilitated at a member site, reducing travel time for participants.
* Courses can be customized to train specific member policies or procedures.
* Participants benefit from learning together, through focused and valuable collaboration time.

Some of the most requested Archbright University courses for private team trainings are:

* Building Interpersonal Awareness with DiSC (Offered publicly on August 2nd for leaders to preview)
* Conflict to Collaboration (Offered publicly on July 9th and September 20th for leaders to preview)
* Emotional Intelligence at Work (Offered publicly on September 21st for leaders to preview)

For more information on scheduling a custom private team training, either in-person or virtually, please reach out to your Archbright Account Executive.

*Amy Bachmann | Director, Archbright University*

After nearly a year and a half of public classes and private team trainings being facilitated virtually, Archbright University’s 2021 training catalog of Leadership, Safety, and HR classes are back to being taught in-person, starting this summer! We will continue to offer these courses virtually to accommodate members with employees across the country.

**June 2021 COVID-19 Updates**

**Masks |** As stated in the May 13th Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance for fully vaccinated individuals, which was subsequently adopted by Washington and Oregon, fully vaccinated employees are no longer required to wear masks or physically distance at work unless their employer requires it. If an employer chooses to allow fully vaccinated employees to forgo the mask and physical distancing, they must verify employee vaccination status.

Health screening checks for staff and visitors upon arrival are still required for most businesses in Washington and some sectors in Oregon. Many employers use this screening process as an opportunity to ask employees to either prove or attest their vaccination status if they plan to ease mask requirements for fully vaccinated individuals. Archbright offers a *COVID-19 Daily Screening Questionnaire* containing vaccination attestation language on the Archbright website, under COVID Resources, or in our mozzo Resource Library.

Employers may still require masks for all employees who enter the worksite, vaccinated or not, and unvaccinated individuals must continue to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing.

**Vaccines: Require or Incentivize? |** As Washington and Oregon relax masking requirements for vaccinated individuals, employers may consider requiring vaccinations or offer incentives to employees who get vaccinated.

Employers are permitted to mandate that all employees are vaccinated prior to entering the workplace. However, employees may request an accommodation due to a disability or a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance.

As with any employment policy, employers that have a vaccine requirement must ensure that the requirement does not have a disparate impact on—or disproportionately exclude—employees based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Employers should keep in mind that because some individuals or demographic groups may face greater barriers to receiving a COVID-19 vaccination than others, some employees may be more likely to be negatively impacted by a vaccination requirement.

The EEOC’s guidance permits incentives provided any rewards or penalty is not so substantial as to be coercive. Since vaccinations require employees to answer disability-related screening questions, a significant incentive could make employees feel pressured to disclose protected medical information. However, this incentive limitation doesn’t apply if an employer offers an incentive to employees to voluntarily provide documentation or other confirmation that they received a COVID-19 vaccination from a third-party provider that is not their employer or an agent of their employer.

**Updated OSHA COVID-19 Guidance |** On June 10, OSHA published its updated COVID-19 guidance for all industries, including an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) for healthcare workers. OSHA’s updated guidance for all industries is intended to assist employers and protect unvaccinated and “at-risk” employees regardless of vaccination status from workplace exposure to COVID-19, who are not covered under the ETS. At-risk employees include individuals who are fully vaccinated but cannot have a full immune response to vaccinations due to underlying conditions. Highlights from the guidance include:

* Unless required by state, local, or other laws, most employers no longer need to take steps to protect their fully vaccinated workers who are not otherwise at-risk from a COVID-19 exposure. However, it is still recommended that employers maintain a COVID-19 Prevention Plan.
* Employers are encouraged to grant paid time off to employees to get vaccinated.
* Employers should continue to educate workers on their COVID-19 policies and prevention techniques, including physical distancing and wearing face coverings for those not fully vaccinated or who are at-risk, and situations where workers need to stay home.

The mandated ETS provides additional restrictions and applies to those who work in healthcare services such as nurses, onsite healthcare support services such as billing, and ambulatory care such as inpatient therapy.

Employers following current Washington and Oregon State COVID-19 guidance summarized above will be in compliance with this new OSHA guidance. However, if the state guidance is modified or relaxed after a projected re-opening, employers should follow the OSHA guidance to avoid a citation.

As employers know, the COVID-19 guidance as it relates to the workplace is constantly changing! Archbright will continue to monitor all COVID-19 regulatory changes and will update members with new information as it becomes available.

**Washington Enacts New Labor Standards Law for Public Health Emergencies**

In May, Gov. Jay Inslee signed the Health Emergency Labor Standards Act (HELSA), which offers additional protections to “frontline employees” during public health emergencies, codifies certain provisions of the High-Risk Employee Proclamation, and mandates case-reporting and notification procedures for employers when new public health emergencies are declared. The new law takes effect immediately and will add sections to the Industrial Insurance Act, RCW 51.32, and the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act, RCW 49.17.

Presumption of Workplace Exposure for Frontline Employees | The new law creates a rebuttable presumption that an employee who contracts an infectious or contagious disease did so through work, so long as the worker is a frontline employee, the disease is the subject of a public health emergency, and the disease is transmitted through respiratory droplets or aerosols, or through a contaminated surface. If these criteria are met, any corresponding Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) claim will be deemed work-related unless the employer proves otherwise. Employers can rebut this presumption by showing that the employee was working from home during the exposure timeframe or that they contracted the disease due to activities outside of work. Frontline employees include:

* First responders (e.g., law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMTs)
* Food processing, manufacturing, farming, meat packing, and distribution workers
* Maintenance, janitorial, or food service workers at facilities that treat patients with the disease
* Public transit operators
* Childcare workers at licensed facilities
* Retail workers in stores open to the public, with in-person contact with the public
* Hotel, motel, or other transient accommodation workers
* Restaurant workers
* Home care aides and health care aides
* Corrections officers and support employees who work at correctional institutions
* Educational employees and support staff who are physically present at school, in vehicles, or students’ homes
* Higher educational employees required to be present on campus
* Public library workers

Harmonizing with OSHA Recordkeeping | Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) recently created guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic that gives employers more flexibility in determining that a disease case is non-work related for recordkeeping purposes. The employer simply must determine, based on a reasonable investigation using information available to them, that it was more likely that the employee contracted the disease outside of work than at work.

This discrepancy highlights the possibility that L&I might accept a disease claim under the new law that presumes work-relatedness for infectious or contagious disease claims but may not qualify as a recordable incident under OSHA’s guidelines for work-relatedness of COVID-19 cases currently. In such cases, employers are not required to record disease claims on their OSHA 300 logs but would still be responsible for any costs related to the potential worker’s compensation claim.

“High Risk” Employee Protections | HELSA makes permanent some of the emergency protections under the Governor’s High-Risk Employee Proclamation. During times of a declared public health emergency, employers may not terminate, permanently replace, or “in any manner discriminate” against a “high-risk” employee because the employee is seeking an accommodation that protects them from a risk of exposure or utilizes available leave if the employee cannot be otherwise accommodated. A “high-risk” employee is one who, “[d]ue to age or an underlying health condition, is at a high-risk of severe illness from the disease that is the subject of the public health emergency” and who a medical provider recommends removal from the workplace because of their high-risk of severe illness.

Reporting and Notice Requirements | During a public health emergency, employers with more than 50 employees at a worksite must notify L&I within 24 hours of confirming that ten or more employees tested positive for the infectious disease. The report cannot contain any names or personal identifying information. Finally, when an employer receives notice of potential exposure to the infectious or contagious disease, it must provide written notice of the exposure to all employees and subcontracted employees who were on the premises at the time.

Conclusion | Although the new law is, in some ways, forward-thinking for the next pandemic, we are currently experiencing a qualifying public health emergency, and therefore, the law is in effect.

*Korin Judge, Safety Consultant | Beth Touschner, Attorney*

**HR FAQ**

**Question:** We are planning to open our office back up to employees to work onsite. Employees have been asking if they can bring food to share with coworkers. Is it advisable to allow potlucks? If so, what precautions should we take to ensure that we don’t spread any virus or illness?

Answer: Organizing a potluck or allowing employees to bring their favorite treats to the office is a great way to bring people back together after being isolated for so long. But there are some precautions employers should take to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. We recommend establishing and communicating guidelines with employees as soon as possible so nobody is left wondering about the proper protocol. Here are some suggested guidelines you may consider adopting in your workplace:

* If you’re offering food at a meeting or event, consider serving individual, pre-packaged boxes or bags instead of a buffet or   
  family-style meal.
* For potlucks or shared food items, use disposable utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are washed with dish soap and hot water, or in a dishwasher.
* Individuals should use gloves while serving and wash their hands after removing and disposing of their gloves.
* Avoid splitting portions and don’t share bites or sips. Go on, take the whole donut!
* Wipe down all surfaces before and after the meal with a disinfecting cleaner or wipe.
* Unvaccinated employees who are required to wear a mask may remove masks to eat but should socially distance while mask-less.

*Lindsey Sosa | Content Manager*

**Get to Know Lindsey Sosa**

You may be familiar with Lindsey in her previous role as an HR Consultant, but recently she became one of Archbright’s Content Managers. Read below to find out all about Lindsey and her new role:

* As Content Manager what are your responsibilities?

I maintain all of the HR documentation in our Resource Library on mozzo, write blogs and articles, oversee the handbook review process, and stay on top of constantly evolving HR regulations at the local, state, and federal levels. Before becoming a Content Manager, I was an HR Consultant and worked with members on various HR assignments.

* How long have you been at Archbright?

I joined the team in November 2018.

* What are you most excited to accomplish in your new role?

I’m an organization geek. I love taking inventory of data and content, finding a logical method of organization that works for myself and members, and making it easily accessible for all. I’m excited to apply that organizational zest to the mozzo Resource Library and other content locations, as well as help improve communication and resource sharing between service delivery teams.

* What do you like most about working at Archbright?

The people. It’s truly incredible how friendly and encouraging people are at Archbright, across all levels of the organization. And we have a lot of foodies who work here, so the potlucks are pretty legendary too.

* What do you like to do when you’re not working?

Over the past couple years, I’ve become pretty passionate about growing my own food and living more sustainably. We recently moved to a place with more land, so I’ve gone a bit overboard with my fruit and veggie garden, expanding our chicken flock, composting, and cooking things from scratch. Maybe some day I will convince my husband to let me get a milk cow…

* What is one thing you can’t live without?

My family–of the human and fur variety! That includes my sassy 5-year old daughter and longhaired dachshund Charlie.

**Check Out the New Resources Available in the Resource Library**

The mozzo Resource Library is a rich knowledgebase of hundreds of forms, sample policies, written programs, training materials, and more. All resources are vetted by our HR, safety, and legal experts and available to members at anytime. We continuously edit and add to the library to ensure the materials are up-to-date and relevant. New and updated resources include:

* Stay Interviews Keynote
* Employment Offer Letter Samples
* COVID-19 Screening Form
* Vaccine Policy
* Meal/Rest Period Keynote, Policy and Form
* Weingarten Rights Keynote
* Union In House Liability Keynote
* Light Duty Job Offer Template
* Light Duty Job Offer Template - Spanish
* Emergency Action Plan
* First Aid and CPR Policy
* Hazard Communication Written Program
* Training Roster
* Confined Space Entry Program
* Confined Space Quickstart
* Hazard Communication Quickstart

If there is a resource that you would like to see added to the library, please let us know at info@archbright.com.

Also don’t forget you can now access the Resource Library in mozzo Mobile, our new app available exclusively for mozzo members in the App Store and Google Play!

**Wildfire Smoke and the Workplace**

After long wet and gloomy winters, nothing beats summer in the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, summer is also a typical time for wildfires, and with fire comes smoke. Wildfire smoke leads to extremely poor air quality and can impact the Air Quality Index (AQI), usually starting in July and lasting well into September. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that susceptible groups, such as older adults, children, pregnant women, and those with health conditions, limit their outdoor physical activities when the AQI is above 100. Wildfire smoke contains hazardous chemicals that can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, causing wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, headaches, worsening of allergies, and aggravation of existing medical conditions. When AQI exceeds 150, exposure to outdoor conditions should be limited to one hour.

Employers may be wondering how to help protect their workers both indoors and outdoors from hazardous conditions during the wildfire season.

The first thing employers should do is stay informed about changes to the air quality. Online resources with current and forecasted air quality for Washington and Oregon are available. When outdoor air is heading towards unhealthy levels, employers should consider how long employees will be working outside, how physically demanding the work is, how hot it is, and if workers are high-risk due to preexisting health conditions. When outdoor air quality is considered unhealthy or hazardous, employers can reduce risks by relocating workers to less smoky areas, rescheduling work, reducing the level and duration of physically demanding work, and provide structures that supply filtered air. Work vehicles should be equipped with air conditioning, and employees should be encouraged to recirculate the air with the vents and windows shut. Remember to check and replace the cabin air filters regularly.

Wildfire smoke can also be harmful to indoor workers. Public health agencies typically advise the public to close their windows and set air conditioners to ‘recirculation mode’ if possible to reduce the intake of pollutants. However, this differs from the advice for most workplaces; employers should avoid eliminating or substantially reducing the outdoor air supply as hazards from manufacturing or COVID-19 could increase from recirculated air. Instead, employers should ensure HVAC systems are working correctly, and air filters are clean and properly seated. Employers should also utilize the highest-rated filters supported by the system, and filters should be inspected and may need replacement more often. An HVAC technician can also ensure that air pressure in the building remains slightly positive, which will help prevent smoke from getting pulled into the building. Portable High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) cleaners can also improve air quality in small, enclosed spaces. Employers should avoid ozone generators as they can worsen lung disease. Finally, employers can also offer and allow the voluntary use of dust masks such as a KN95 or N95 to help reduce smoke exposure. Cloth face covering and surgical-style masks used for COVID-19 will not protect workers from smoke. Employers permitting respirator use will still need to follow applicable respirator requirements such as medical evaluations and fit testing.

Eligible members are encouraged to contact the Safety Hotline with any questions about wildfire smoke and respirator use.

*Tiffany Knudsen | Safety Content Manager*

**Masks & Heat Stress**

Studies have shown that face coverings alone will not cause someone to overheat, and removing a face covering is not an effective way of reducing body temperature. In situations where face coverings are still required, or employees are wearing masks such as KN95 or N95s to reduce COVID-19 and wildfire smoke exposure, workers can lower their masks below their chin occasionally throughout the day when working alone and during cool-down breaks. Employers should plan to keep additional maks available for workers to swap out as needed if they become wet or soiled.