**Archbright™**

**Insights Newsletter**

**September 2019**

**The 2019 Regional Benefits Survey Is Now Available**

This survey is provided to assist you in evaluating and defining employee benefit offerings.

Formerly known as the Benefits Policies & Trends Survey, the Regional Benefits Survey reports practices related to benefits in the region including: holidays, time off, general compensation trends, health and welfare benefits, and more.

Through our new survey partnership with Cascade Employers, an employer association based in Salem, Oregon, our survey has expanded to include 343 participating organizations. This included 226 (66%) for-profit, 106 (31%) non- profit, and 11 (3%) public sector organizations across Washington and Oregon.

Archbright members who participated in the survey receive the PDF reports for free. If your organization did not participate this year, you may purchase the reports and any applicable membership level discounts apply.

When making benefit and policy decisions, consideration should be given not only to one or several surveys, but to your organization’s philosophy, resources, and the environment in which you operate.

For more information, or to purchase this year’s report, visit the Surveys page at Archbright.com.

**How HR Pros Fight Isolation**

“You can’t be human in isolation.” Desmond Tutu told us this. And, it’s true…even in a work environment.

Isolation leads to workplace stress. In fact, 73% of managers with high levels of workplace isolation also report high levels of workplace stress. In studying this issue of isolation in the workplace, authors Emma Seppälä and Marissa King concluded in their research that burnout at work isn’t just about exhaustion. It’s also about loneliness. They determined that increasing someone’s sense of belonging can help guard against workplace burnout.

As an HR Pro, often the only one in your organization or as a member of a small team, you likely understand the feeling of isolation that comes with being in HR. That’s where Archbright comes in. With your Bronze, Silver, and Gold membership, you get unlimited access to Archbright’s HR Hotline. You can call our pros to get advice…or to bounce off ideas and talk through challenges you can’t share with anyone else! The HR Hotline is one of our most valued services amongst members. Recently, we were told, “Sometimes I need

a seasoned person to be a sounding board or to provide some guidance. It’s great to have that kind of support at my fingertips!” This is one tool you can use to avoid burnout—call your tribe!

How do you access the HR Hotline? There are three ways: 1) Call 206.329.1120 or 509.381.1635, extension 2;

2) Schedule a time via our mobile app (download from Google Play and Apple Store); or 3) Email us at hrhotline@archbright.com.

I started this with a quote, I’d like to end with one too from Helen Keller: “Alone we can do so little; together, we can do so much.” We are here for you…we are your tribe!

**Change is Cool**

Archbright’s Annual Workplace Performance Symposium

is moving to May 2020!

Save the Date for our Two Cities Tour in 2020.

Same great experts with a new schedule and deeper dive into the best practices, hot topics, and emerging trends that impact HR professionals every day.

Two Cities Tour:

May 6th – 8 am to Noon | Spokane May 13th – 8 am to Noon | Seattle

Stay tuned for more details in the coming months!

**Governor’s Industrial Safety & Health Conference**

September 24 – 26 Tacoma Convention Center

Archbright is a proud sponsor of the annual Governor’s Industrial Safety and Health Conference to be held September 24 – 26. The conference provides training and education on the latest tools, technologies, and strategies for workplace safety and health.

Visit us at booth #300, participate in our interactive display around culture and safety, and chat with our team of Safety & Loss Control Consultants.

We hope to see you there!

**Firming Up Employee Soft Skills**

“More than two in five employees say they have left a company because of a lack of learning and development opportunities”, according to LinkedIn’s 2019 Future of Skills report. With the heavy influence of tech on the current workforce there is a particularly strong need for soft skills training. The top five teachable soft skills that employers can benefit from providing most are:

• Critical thinking and problem solving

• Adaptability and flexibility

• Communication

• Leadership

• Innovation and creativity

Archbright University offers a series of courses to target these skills. Our most popular class, Supervisory Skills, provides employees with three full days of instruction where participants actively practice soft skills gained in the class. This course is appropriate for new to mid-level managers and is offered both onsite at Member locations or at our Archbright offices in Seattle.

Need to get a group of new leaders up to speed even faster? Archbright University’s Leadworker Effectiveness provides an overview of soft skills used daily by leads and managers—managing changing relationships with co-workers, establishing open communication, clearly setting expectations and giving feedback to improve performance. This course is also offered virtually, allowing employees to take it online, reducing time away from work. It can also be taught onsite at Member locations in either English or Spanish!

Whatever the training need, Archbright University has it covered. We provide the tools to firm up your employees’ soft skills so they can flex their management muscles in any situation.

Source: Amy Bachmann, Director of Archbright University

**Back to School: Employment of Minors Subject to Reduced Hours of Work**

Under state and federal law, minors (age 14-17) may only work limited hours, and those hours are reduced during the school year.

In general, the school year is Labor Day through June 1. When school begins before Labor Day or ends after June 1, the “school” hours of work will apply. “Non-school weeks” include winter and spring breaks and summer vacation. Those enrolled in alternative schools, including home school arrangements, are subject to these same rules.

Note that the labor laws of most states prohibit employment of minors in hazardous occupations and require a special work permit for the employment of minors. Employers

must follow their state’s meal and rest break requirements for minors. Eligible members are encouraged to refer to Archbright’s Keynote on Hiring and Employing Minor Workers for more details.

Washington

Minors 14-15 years of age may work up to 6 days per week and up to 3 hours per school day, for a maximum of 16 hours per week – and only between 7am and 7pm. Minors 16-17 years

of age may work up to 6 days per week, for a maximum of 20 hours per week between 7am and 10pm.

School year hours of work provisions do not apply to minors who:

• are 16 or 17 years old with their GED, or who have graduated, or are enrolled in college courses while they are still in high school, (for example, students in Running Start programs taking college-level courses that are credited towards a degree and can include liberal arts or technical/professional coursework);

• are named on a valid certificate of marriage; or

• are named as a parent on a valid certificate of birth.

For agricultural jobs, refer to the Department of Labor and Industries Administrative Policy at www.lni.wa.gov/ WorkplaceRights/files/policies/esc41.pdf.

Idaho

Minors under age 14 are prohibited from working during school hours, before 6am and after 9pm, with limited exceptions. However, minors age 14 or 15 are able to work during school hours as long as they meet certain educational standards. Minors under the age of 16 may not work more than 9 hours in any day, 54 hours in any week, or before 6am or after 9pm.

Oregon

Minors 14-15 years of age may work up to 3 hours per school day, for a maximum of 18 hours per week, between 7am and 7pm. Minors 16-17 years of age may work during any hours of the day, up to 44 hours per week.

Oregon prohibits minors of any age from working in certain jobs, such as hazardous types of work or dangerous worksites, or driving that requires the minor to drive on public roads while on the job.

For agricultural jobs, refer to the Bureau of Labor and Industries requirements at www.oregon.gov/boli/WHD/CLU/ pages/w\_clu\_whminag.aspx.

Source: Terry Briscoe, Archbright Attorney

**Top 5 Workplace Challenges to Expect in the Next 5 Years**

As the workplace continues to evolve at a rapid pace, employers and employees are often presented with new technologies and trends that can impact them on a daily basis. Condeco Software surveyed business leaders for the 2019/20 Workplace Report about what they’re planning for and what they expect to be the biggest challenges to their business within the next five years.

1. Integrating technology into the workspace. 50% felt that integrating technology into the workplace, or rather, digitizing the space, was a significant challenge they would face. 60% see digitizing the workspace as the biggest challenge.

2. Adapting to changing employee expectations. 44% felt that adapting to changing employee expectations would be a considerable challenge.

3. Increasing costs of workspaces. Many of us are painfully aware of the current high costs of business real estate. Space comes at a premium, and many organizations are in smaller locales than they’d like, needing to expand, but are unable to.

4. Ensuring sufficient variety of workspaces for employees. Another issue that may well be linked to the high premium on space, they are also concerned about ensuring their workspaces have sufficient variety, to help engage and empower their employees.

5. Ensuring sufficient meeting rooms to meet demand. Finally, the least substantial challenge business leaders expect to face, but perhaps the most universally recognizable one involves meeting rooms. Meetings are an imperative part of all our working lives and 18% of business leaders agree that meeting rooms need an upgrade.

Source: Condeco / CCH

**Seattle Commuter Benefits Law Coming in 2020**

On January 1, 2020, the City of Seattle’s Commuter Benefits Law goes into effect. Although the Offices of Labor Standards will not begin enforcing the law until January 1, 2021, employers should start complying with the law on its effective date.

The law applies to employers in the City of Seattle with 20 or more employees worldwide but excludes tax-exempt organizations and government agencies. The law allows employees to make a monthly pre-tax deduction for transit or vanpool expenses. The purpose of the law is to encourage employees to use transit options other than single occupancy vehicles to reduce both traffic congestion and environmental impact.

Employers can meet their obligations under the law by allowing employees to make monthly payroll deductions before taxes for transit or vanpool expenses up to the full amount allowed by federal law or by offering employees a partially or wholly

employer-paid transit pass. Employers are not obligated to offer pre-tax deductions for parking expenses.

In order to determine whether an employer meets the employee threshold, the employer must determine the average number of employees that worked for compensation for the organization during each week in the prior calendar year. When doing this calculation, employers must count all employees worldwide and employees of all employment statuses (i.e. full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, etc.) but only count those weeks where at least one employee worked. New companies should do this calculation based on the weekly averages for the first 90 days the employer was open for business.

The ordinance applies to all employees who worked an average of 10 hours per week in Seattle in the previous month. The employer must offer this benefit to new employees within 60 days of them commencing employment. The employer must provide the deduction within 30 days of the employee electing to have the expenses deducted.

Employers with unions may also want to notify the union(s) that they are complying with the ordinance. Employers are encouraged to visit the Office of Labor Standards webpage on this ordinance found here: wwwqa.seattle.gov/labor standards/ ordinances/commuter-benefits. Rules are still being developed for the ordinance and have not been finalized.

Source: Colleen Mayer, Archbright Attorney

**HR FAQ**

**Question:** We know that applicants may not be required to disclose salary history in Washington state, but can we still ask an applicant what their salary expectation is?

**Answer:** Occasionally we have employees refuse to accept annual or promotional pay increases because they are concerned about making too much money and losing their government provided health insurance or housing subsidizes. We really want to work with our employees and support their needs, but does this put us at risk? Can we legally do this?

Answer: When your employee is financially struggling it may be challenging to say no to a request that you know is going to place an extra burden on them. There are no specific federal laws that would obligate an employer to give an employee an unwanted pay raise, provided the employer is paying at least minimum wage.

However, federal and state anti-discrimination laws prohibit compensating employees differently on the basis of protected status. To further address the gender compensation gap and ensure pay equity, several state laws have been enacted recently with the express purpose of eliminating pay differentials on the basis of sex and other protected classes. Employers in states with pay equity laws, such as Washington and Oregon,

have increased risk if the employee is not being paid appropriate and equitable pay for the work they are performing as compared to others who are performing the same or similar work. Additionally, it is not advisable for employers to knowingly assist employees in maintaining a lower income to obtain government benefits, avoid wage garnishments, or reduce their income for alimony or child support orders.

The best option in this situation is to offer the employee the option to stay in their current role and pay rate (if the offer is a promotion) or, if your business can accommodate a flexible or reduced schedule, offer the employee a reduced scheduled with appropriately pro-rated pay. If, after careful consideration, you decide to honor the employee’s request, thoroughly document the reasons why the employee has declined the promotion or pay increase in case the employee later complains that they are being paid less than similarly situated employees and obtain the employee’s signature on the documentation.

Each situation should be reviewed carefully on a case by case basis. Eligible members are encouraged to contact an Archbright HR Advisor or legal counsel for assistance.

**Balancing Your Workforce Strategy With Versatile Employees**

Hybrid cars are not the only newest fad - so are hybrid jobs, especially in small to mid-sized businesses. A hybrid job is when an employee is expected to spend a portion of their day or week performing duties that aren’t traditionally included in their primary job. For example, an employee might spend 50% of their time working in a manufacturing shop assembling equipment, and when the work on the floor slows, they may travel to job sites and perform installation of the equipment. Another common scenario in smaller organizations is an Office Manager who performs HR and finance duties, and also maintains the website.

The duties in each role are related, and some of the skills are transferrable, but hybrid jobs require an extra level of versatility and flexibility.

Employees who can transition seamlessly between their primary and secondary responsibilities prove their value during an economic downturn, or even just routine ebbs and flows in business operations.

Creating Hybrid Roles In Your Organization

Hybrid roles need employees who have a diverse skillset and a variety in their work history. Consider expanding your recruiting outreach to non-traditional candidates who can offer that versatility. Non- traditional candidates, like an Account Manager with an entrepreneurial background, or a Drafter who started their career as a Machinist, provide unique perspectives and are more apt to succeed in a hybrid job.

Alternatively, help your existing employees develop invaluable skills that perhaps aren’t traditionally required in their role. Consider this example: on staff is a mechanical engineer with a strong technical aptitude but limited interpersonal skills – your organization could help prepare them for the next step in their career with leadership and/or communication training. Some popular Archbright University classes that could help this employee could be Supervisory Skills, Communicating for Leadership Success, or Emotional Intelligence at Work. These are only a few examples of classes that develop skills that can immediately be applied to their job. Developing current employees is not only more cost effective than hiring from outside the organization, but it boosts employee loyalty, engagement, and productivity.

Today’s workforce is changing. Creating hybrid roles and hiring versatile employees is a winning strategy in this competitive and dynamic market. As an Archbright member, you can also access our services to get started. Archbright Recruiting or HR Consulting provides your organization the extra support you need, when you need it. We can help you find the workforce strategy that works best for you.

Source: Lindsey Sosa, PHR, SHRM-CP, HR Consultant at Archbright

**Safety and Loss Control – Safety Committees**

Are you aware that if you have 11 or more employees on the same shift, at the same time, you must have a safety committee established? If you have 10 or fewer employees, you can choose to have safety meetings instead of a safety committee. All companies can benefit from an organized, engaged safety committee. The success of the committee will depend on the mission, personnel involved, responsibilities assigned, and support from management.

The benefits of having an effective safety committee can include an increased awareness of safety issues, quick response to potentially unsafe conditions, cooperation between employees and management in solving safety issues, and a potential reduction in workers’ compensation insurance premiums (and an increase in Retrospective rebates!)

The primary job of every safety committee is to encourage and maintain a safe work environment. A safety committee should help create a sense of ownership for your employees by allowing them to directly improve safety and reduce injuries within your company while enhancing communication between management and employees. To achieve this, a commitment to safety must become a shared

responsibility between management and employees. Safety committee members are responsible for developing and reviewing safety procedures and policies, investigating and reviewing accidents, and communicating safety issues or policies to employees.

Safety committee meetings are required by the Department of Labor and Industries. The effectiveness of the committee is dependent upon management

and the members of the committee. The structured meeting helps organize ideas, concerns, and plans to remedy the issues brought forth. However, often, the “real work” happens in-between meetings. Challenge committee members to perform audits of other work areas, get input from other employees not currently on the committee, provide safety or “tool-box” talks with a specified topic, and enlist someone to write a Safety

newsletter for the organization. These are just a few ideas to help improve and spread the positive safety culture throughout your company.

Key pillars of a successful safety committee include:

• Define clear goals with immediate and long-term action items. Make the goals realistic and try not to do “too much.”

• Address action items at the next meeting to celebrate successes and address items not completed.

• Allow all committee members to voice their perspective – remember, everyone has something to bring to the table.

• Always be respectful of others. If there is a disagreement, handle it with a solution- driven mind.

• Have fun! Safety may seem like a mundane subject, but it can be enjoyable. It is in how you approach it: be creative, do a different activity at each meeting, provide lunch or snacks. Think about things that will incentivize being a part of the committee.

For questions or more information, please contact your Safety & Loss Control Consultant at 206.329.1120, 509.381.1635, or email safety@archbright.com.

**Monthly Safety Webinar**

Train the Trainer: Slips, Trips & Falls

Thursday, September 19th, 2019 | 2:15 p.m.

Slips, trips and falls can happen anywhere in your operation, possibly resulting in disability or even death. The results of these accidents can be extremely costly to employers and employees. It is important that workers know what they can do to prevent slips, trips and falls in the workplace.

Visit the Safety Webinars page at Archbright.com for registration information. Reserve your seat today!

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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