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HR ELEMENTS®



HR & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter, delivering insights into timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

HR Elements | August 2024

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2. Workplace Culture | Mastering Workplace Communication
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Dear HR Manager,

My team is experiencing issues with a workplace bully. Do you have any advice on addressing this situation?

- Tackling Bullying

Dear Tackling Bullying,

[Bullying is always detrimental.](#) Dealing with a bully at work can be challenging, but promptly addressing the behavior can protect your team's well-being and maintain a productive work environment.

Recognize and document the behavior.

The first step in tackling workplace bullying is to identify the behavior. Bullying can range from subtle actions like failing to give credit or setting a team member up for failure to more overt behaviors like public criticism or sabotaging work. Document each incident meticulously—note the dates, times, specific actions, and any witnesses. This detailed record will be essential if the issue needs to be escalated.

Directly address the bully (if safe).

If you feel it is safe to do so, consider confronting the bully directly. Approach the situation calmly and professionally, making it clear that their behavior is unacceptable. Use specific language to explain how their actions impact others. Set firm boundaries for what will and won't be tolerated moving forward.

Seek support and report the issue.

When confrontation isn't practical or possible, report the behavior to HR. Present your documented evidence and explain the negative impact of the bullying on the team. HR is then responsible for taking appropriate action based on company policies.

Support well-being and explore options.

If the situation persists or escalates, the focus should shift to supporting the well-being of the affected team members. This may include providing access to professional counseling, exploring alternative work arrangements, or, in severe cases, seeking legal advice. Ensuring employees feel safe and supported is paramount in restoring a healthy work environment.

Effectively addressing workplace bullying is vital for maintaining a positive, productive workplace. By taking proactive and deliberate steps, you can work toward a resolution that fosters a safer, more respectful environment for everyone involved.

- HR Manager

Workplace Culture | Mastering Workplace Communication

Effective communication is challenging in today's hybrid work environment. As remote work and digital transformation reshape how we interact, new tools are emerging that can enhance connectivity and collaboration.

Staying Ahead of the Curve

As the workplace continues to evolve, staying ahead means embracing change. It's not just about adopting new technology; it's about ensuring your team is fully on board and capable of using these tools effectively. Training, seeking feedback, and involving employees in adopting tools are critical to successful implementation.

Embracing New Communication Tools

Email has been the cornerstone of workplace communication for decades, but newer, [flexible tools are challenging its dominance](#). For instance, Slack and Microsoft Teams have grown in popularity as they offer real-time messaging, file sharing, and integration with other apps—all in one platform. These tools make it easier to communicate quickly and efficiently and can replace email for some day-to-day interactions.

Another rising trend is [asynchronous communication](#), which allows team members to collaborate simultaneously without needing to be online. Tools like Loom (for video messaging) and Notion (a tool that combines notetaking, task management, and collaboration features) enable more profound, thoughtful interactions without the pressure of immediate response. These platforms help maintain productivity while accommodating different schedules and time zones.

Tackling Communication Challenges

Despite these advances, communication challenges still exist. Many employees need help with unproductive meetings, missed messages, and information overload, which can lead to stress, burnout, and reduced efficiency. Poor communication disrupts workflows and has a tangible impact on productivity.

To tackle these challenges, companies can analyze communication patterns to identify bottlenecks and fine-tune their processes to ensure that their tools enhance rather than hinder productivity.

In a world where communication constantly evolves, mastering new tools and strategies is essential for maintaining a competitive edge. By adopting enhanced communication methods and addressing challenges proactively, businesses can foster a more connected, efficient, and productive work environment.

Employee Benefits | Supporting Working Parents

Raising a family today is no small feat, especially with rising childcare costs and limited support systems. Working parents are under increasing pressure, and this is where employers can make a significant impact. Nike and Frontier Co-op offer unique solutions demonstrating how businesses can effectively support their employees.

Nike: Doubling Parental Leave for Enhanced Support

Nike continues to lead the way in employee well-being by significantly enhancing its parental leave benefits. As of June 2024, [Nike has doubled its paid parental leave](#) from eight to 16 weeks for all U.S.-based employees, including part-time retail staff for the first time. This increase allows new parents more time to bond with their child following birth, adoption, or foster placement.

This change highlights Nike's commitment to supporting its employees throughout their journey to parenthood. Nike fosters a supportive and inclusive environment by extending this benefit to all parents, regardless of their employment status. The company's approach underscores the importance of offering robust parental leave, ensuring all employees feel valued and supported during such an important time in their lives.

Frontier Co-op: Affordable Onsite Childcare and Community Focus

Frontier Co-op takes a different, yet equally impactful, approach to supporting working parents by directly addressing the financial burden of childcare. [The company offers onsite childcare for just \\$2 an hour](#), a benefit significantly reducing employees' financial stress. This affordable childcare option is available for children as young as six weeks, making it easier for parents to return to work without the anxiety of finding and affording reliable care.

Beyond offering affordable childcare, Frontier Co-op emphasizes community and support. The onsite childcare facility creates a sense of community among employees, who often appreciate being close to their children during the workday. This initiative improves job satisfaction and reduces turnover, as employees are more likely to stay with a company that supports their personal needs in such a tangible way.

Unique Approaches, Common Goals

While Nike and Frontier Co-op take different approaches to supporting working parents, both companies demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of their employees. Nike's focus on flexibility and comprehensive leave allows parents to manage their time and responsibilities more effectively. At the same time, Frontier Co-op's affordable childcare solution addresses one of the most significant financial challenges working parents face.

By recognizing the unique needs of their employees and offering tailored support, Nike and Frontier Co-op are not just improving employee satisfaction—they're building cultures where employees and their families can thrive.

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