

The Higher Education Workplace

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Creating Inclusive Communities

Using Stories to Start Conversations Around Diversity on Campus

Page 24

also
in this
issue

12 CUPA-HR's 2017
Higher Ed HR
Awards Recipients

18 Defending Your
Galaxy Against the
Supervillains of
Distraction

30 Step Up Your HR
Communications
Game

36 Performance
Reviews on Trial

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The Higher Education Workplace CONTENTS Fall 2017 VOL. 9, NO. 2



on the cover

24 **Creating Inclusive Communities:** Harnessing the Power of Storytelling to Spark Dialogue Around Diversity and Inclusion on Campus

features

12 **CUPA-HR's 2017 Higher Ed HR Awards Recipients**

18 **Defending Your Galaxy Against the Supervillains of Distraction**

30 **Step Up Your HR Communications Game:** What the Latest Technologies Can Do for You

36 **Performance Reviews on Trial:** Practical Lessons for HR Teams

departments

3 A Word From the President and CEO

4 Fresh Ideas

8 On the Hill

40 CUPA-HR Community

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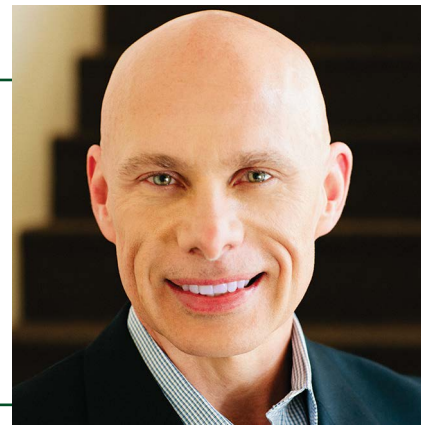
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Free Speech on Campus: Facilitating Civil Debate and Dialogue

By Andy Brantley, CUPA-HR President and Chief Executive Officer



“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Like perhaps many of you, I’ve been in a considerable funk during the last few weeks as I have tried to get my head around the re-emergence and increasing popularity of hate groups across our country. Yes, I know they’ve always been there, but I am struck by how many of them there are (currently 917 according to the Southern Poverty Law Center) and the degree to which their messages of hate and separation are getting voice in the media. I’m also concerned about the dialogue focused on free speech and what does and does not constitute free speech in general; and particularly, how we define and create opportunities for free speech on campus.

In the July/August 2017 issue of the Association of Governing Board’s *Trusteeship* magazine, University of Virginia President Teresa Sullivan provided this perspective: “The danger in shutting out viewpoints that differ from our own is that we create a personal echo chamber in which our deeply held beliefs are continually reinforced by those who share those beliefs. If we follow only the news outlets and social media feeds that align with our opinions, we have no access to the diversity of ideas that we espouse in higher education.”

She went on to say, “The principles of free speech and campus inclusiveness should not be in conflict with each other; rather, they should reinforce each other — more voices, more perspectives from different backgrounds, all free to speak, free to disagree, free to discuss and debate.”

It is critically important that we use Dr. Sullivan’s words to guide our efforts to create campus communities that value all voices and opinions. The challenge, and the opportunity, is for us to emphasize how important it is for these voices and opinions to be offered in an open, collegial, collaborative manner that encourages spirited debate and dialogue. And at the end of the discussion, it’s okay that we agree to disagree.

My campus experiences forever shaped who I am. I grew up in a rural part of middle Georgia. Everyone was either black or white, everyone was Protestant, and those who were gay didn’t dare come out of the closet. From day one of college, I was in residence halls, student leadership groups and classes with individuals from very different backgrounds and experiences. The opportunity to experience difference and to develop lifelong friendships with people who were, thankfully, very different from me literally changed my life. My friends and colleagues today are incredibly wonderful and diverse. And through these incredible people, I learn more about the world around me and more about myself every day.

This issue of *The Higher Education Workplace* magazine features the CUPA-HR Creating Inclusive Communities project (diversity.cupahr.org), and showcases the impactful ways that our colleagues are using these videos, portraits and discussion starters to facilitate dialogue and learning across the country. I hope you will use the project and the implementation examples from your peers as part of your work to make an impact, to make a difference, and to build and sustain community.

While we can choose to sit back and consider the challenges of free speech and hate speech and creating inclusive campus communities to be someone else’s job, I choose not to be complacent. I choose to proactively create spaces for dialogue and debate, spaces where we can learn, engage, connect and sometimes agree to disagree, knowing that in the end we will still be friends and colleagues — and I hope you will join me.

I, for one, will not let hate win.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Brantley". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Andy Brantley | CUPA-HR President and CEO

The Multitasking Mirage

More Is Not Always Better

By Scott Blades

Are you doing more than one thing right now — maybe reading this article while also checking your email, texting a colleague, surfing the web on your phone, working on a report or playing a computer game? Do you feel like you're more productive when you're working on two or more assignments at the same time? Is simultaneously juggling multiple tasks a necessary evil in our fast-paced, modern workplaces where our responsibilities are numerous and our connection to technology is constant?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you're probably a multitasker. You may even think of your ability to multitask as a key strength or a special talent. But before you congratulate yourself for your amazing ability to multitask and get things done, be warned. There is a growing body of research that shows that multitasking actually decreases productivity, impairs your cognitive ability, increases your stress and diminishes your creativity.

Multitasking Defined

Focusing on more than one assignment at a time, repeatedly switching back and forth between two or more activities, or performing a number of unrelated tasks in rapid succession can all be considered multitasking. The problem is that our minds are not wired for this type of overload.

The performance of the human brain breaks down when it attempts to engage in two tasks that require conscious thought at the same time. Granted, there are some things you can do simultaneously without a difference in performance. You can walk and chew gum at the same time. You can fold laundry and sing along to your favorite songs on the radio. You can do chores around the house while carrying on a conversation.

The reason we can pair these types of activities is because one or both don't require much thinking. Walking, eating and cleaning are examples of motor skills you have learned to put on autopilot. However, if you pair two activities that require conscious thought — like responding to emails

while attempting to pay attention during a meeting — your performance on both tasks will suffer.

In a 2001 issue of *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, researchers David E. Meyer, Jeffrey E. Evans and Joshua Rubinstein published an account of what happens in your brain when you try to engage in two cognitive tasks at once. Your cerebral cortex manages what are called “executive controls.” These controls organize the way your brain processes tasks. There are two stages. Stage one is called goal shifting. This is what happens when you shift your focus from one activity to another. The second stage is rule activation. When your brain shifts to the new activity, it has to deactivate the rules of the previous activity and then turn on the rules for the new task.

Therefore, the researchers found, when you engage in multitasking, you're not actually thinking about both tasks at the same time. Instead, you're engaging in “switch-tasking.” You're switching back and forth between two activities and forcing your brain to shift focus repeatedly and turn rules on and off in a rapid-fire fashion. Constantly having to focus and re-focus ultimately drains your time and energy, which impacts your overall performance.

Put Your Brain to the Test

Here's an interesting experiment to try. Grab a stopwatch and open Microsoft Word. Start the timer and then type your first and last name. Beneath your name, type a number for each letter in your name (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) Stop the timer and record your time. In my case, this means I would type “Scott Blades” on the first line, and then type “1234567891011” beneath it. My time for this activity? Nine seconds.

Now, rather than type your name first and the numbers second, try to do both at the same time. On the first line, type the first letter of your name. Then type 1 on the second line. Next, type the second letter of your name on the first line and 2 beneath it, and so forth. When I tried doing both of these simple cognitive tasks simultaneously,

it took me 51 seconds! That's more than five times longer than when I did the tasks separately and back to back.

What the Research Tells Us

The literature on multitasking is loaded with case studies and startling statistics demonstrating how this type of workstyle makes you less effective. According to the research, decreased productivity, impaired cognitive ability, increased stress and diminished creativity are all side effects of multitasking.

Decreased Productivity

The 2001 study mentioned above found that productivity can decrease by as much as 40 percent when individuals repeatedly switch tasks. The study subjects lost significant amounts of time as they switched between multiple activities, and lost even more time as the tasks became increasingly complex.

Impaired Cognitive Ability

In his 2008 book *Brain Rules*, John Medina reports that multitaskers not only take 50 percent longer to accomplish a single task, but they also make up to 50 percent more errors. In a 2009 study, Stanford researcher Clifford Nass challenged 262 college students to complete experiments that involved switching among tasks, filtering irrelevant information and using working memory. Nass and his colleagues were convinced that the frequent multitaskers would outperform their non-multitasking peers in at least some of the categories.

Much to their surprise, they found the opposite. Chronic multitaskers were dreadful at all three activities. Nass and his team discovered that people who frequently multitask — and perceive this as a strength — were actually worse at multitasking than those who like to do one thing at a time. Their inferior performance was because they had more trouble organizing their thinking and filtering out irrelevant information. They were also slower at switching from one task to another.

According to a 2009 study from Western Washington University, people who are busy doing two things at once often don't even see noticeable things right in front of them. In this case, the researchers asked a clown to ride around on a unicycle in a campus square. Seventy-five percent of college students who walked across this square while talking on their cell phones did not even notice the clown. The researchers call this "inattention blindness."

In other words, the cell phone talkers were technically looking at their surroundings, but their brains weren't processing the information around them.

And a study from the University of London suggests that multitasking affects your brain much like smoking marijuana or going without sleep for a night. Participants who multitasked during cognitive tasks dropped as many as 15 IQ points and fell to the average range of an 8-year-old child.

Increased Stress

Multitasking has also been tied to higher stress levels. Gloria Mark and Stephen Vaida of the University of California measured the heart rates of employees with and without continuous access to work-related email. They found that employees who were constantly connected to email stayed in a perpetual "high alert" mode and experienced higher heart rates. Those without the constant stream of emails did less multitasking and were less stressed as a result.

Diminished Creativity

According to a 2010 study from the University of Chicago, multitasking requires a lot of "working memory," or temporary brain storage. If our brains are on overload, we diminish our capacity to daydream and generate imaginative ideas. This in turn degrades our performance as creative problem solvers.

Five Ways to Avoid Multitasking

As modern-day professionals, we can easily fall into the trap of a multitasking work style. We have numerous responsibilities. Our calendars are packed. The phone calls keep coming and emails flow into our inboxes in a steady stream. In this type of environment, where making progress on several fronts is a reality, steering clear of multitasking requires us to implement deliberate systems and habits to increase our productivity and effectiveness. Here are a few strategies for avoiding multitasking:

Set Clear Priorities

A guaranteed way to become overwhelmed and ineffective is to take on too much work and view all of your tasks as equal priorities. Work with your supervisor or a trusted colleague to help you determine what needs your focus now, what can wait and what you can release altogether. Do you have any activities that drain your time and energy and offer little return on your investment? What are some

obligations that you could set free without any long-term, negative consequences? By responsibly reducing the number of things you need to do in a day, you can decrease your need to multitask and, as a result, accomplish more. Stephen Covey refers to this type of prioritizing as learning to say “no” in order to protect the time you’ll need for your bigger burning “yes.”

Chunk Your Time

Rather than constantly switching back and forth between multiple activities every few seconds or every other minute, set aside chunks of time to focus on a specific task or a

According to the research, decreased productivity, impaired cognitive ability, increased stress and diminished creativity are all side effects of multitasking.

group of related tasks. Clifford Nass suggests following a 20-minute rule at minimum. An example of this would be to set aside 20 minutes to pay all of your bills at once rather than pay each one separately as you receive it. Or maybe you set aside an hour to work on that report you need to present at next week’s meeting.

Focusing on a task for 20 minutes at a time or longer will allow you to get into the zone of whatever you’re doing and make progress. Focused effort during chunks of time also eliminates the extra energy it takes to shuffle back and forth between too many things. Consider your responsibilities and identify the types of things you can “batch process.” Block off these chunks of time on your calendar and hold yourself accountable for getting focused and getting finished.

Enter a Lockdown State

When necessary, give yourself permission to focus on a single task for a more extended period of time, like a full morning, an afternoon or even most of a day. Be sure to have your bases covered before doing this. For example, you may need to discuss your strategy with your supervisor and colleagues to work out phone and email coverage.

Entering this type of temporary lockdown state will allow you to get laser-beam focused on a single task and make significant headway. If you can’t go the whole day without checking your email and phone messages, consider doing these activities in two to four batches throughout the day. As discussed in the previous section, chunking these types of tasks is a more effective way to work.

Minimize Distractions in Your Workspace

Does your email client issue sound alerts when you receive messages? You might consider muting your computer to avoid these distractions. Another strategy is to customize your sound alerts for leadership and key customers who might demand a more immediate response. Does your email client tempt you to click on every message by displaying a popup window on your screen? This feature can be disabled so you’re not distracted by a constant stream of emails (many of which you probably don’t need to read right away anyway).

Does your smartphone have a bunch of chirps, chimes and ringtones for every notification you receive from your apps? Research shows that the average person checks his or her phone 150 times a day. Unless you need to rely on your smartphone to do your job, you should consider minimizing or disabling the distracting notifications you receive or keeping your phone on mute.

Watch That Open-Door Policy

To maintain professional relationships, it’s important to be available to others. Having an open-door policy is a great way to establish that you’re approachable and collaborative. But be careful what that open door communicates. Are you really 100 percent available to everyone all of the time? A poorly managed open-door policy can lead to constant interruptions and pull you into a switch-tasking mode. Business research suggests that the average interruption takes anywhere from two to 15 minutes of recovery time, meaning this is about how long it takes you to reorient yourself to what you were working on before the interruption.


If you need to avoid any interruptions for a stretch, shoot an email to your team or put up a friendly “do not disturb”

sign on your office door or cubicle entryway. Scheduling regular check-ins with your supervisor, direct reports and key customers is also a great way to prevent interruptions. By having regular meetings on your calendar, your colleagues will be more likely to hold off on engaging you until your scheduled time together. They'll have less of a need to interrupt you throughout the week and instead bring a list of questions or agenda items to your meeting.

Multitasking Is a Myth

The next time you find yourself multitasking, remember what the research shows:

- You're slowing yourself down.
- You're hurting your brain in a way that is similar to smoking marijuana or going without sleep for a night.
- You're more likely to make errors.
- You're stressing yourself out.
- You're diminishing your chances of coming up with creative ideas.

Multitasking is a myth — a mirage of productivity in the modern-day workplace. There is a better way to work. By setting priorities, chunking your time, engaging in focused work sessions, avoiding distractions and minimizing interruptions, you can elevate your performance and put yourself on the path to greater productivity. 

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Read more about how multitasking and workplace distractions can negatively impact your work, your focus and your productivity in the feature article "Defending Your Galaxy Against the Supervillains of Distraction" on pp. 18-22

Paid Family Leave Is Becoming Increasingly Popular

States Are Passing Laws, But What Will Happen at the Federal Level?

By Josh Ulman, Christi Layman and Basil Thomson

Paid family leave has become an increasingly important topic on the national stage, with the public, Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill, and the White House all in agreement that the United States needs better parental leave options. However, while polls show overwhelming public support for paid family and medical leave, with almost 71 percent of Republicans and 83 percent of Democrats in favor of a paid parental leave policy, there is little if any agreement as to the best policy design, how it should be funded, how long the leave should last, and who should pay for it.

Here, we explore current laws providing leave, proposals in Congress and elsewhere to increase availability of leave, and the prospect of those proposals being enacted into law.

Where We Are Now

The United States remains the only advanced nation that does not have a paid leave policy at the national level. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is the only existing federal law directly addressing parental, family and medical leave. The FMLA was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and provides workers who have worked for their employer at least 1,250 hours in the past year with 12 weeks of unpaid leave, which employees may use to care for a newborn, adopted or foster child, to care for a family member or to attend to the employee's own serious medical condition. However, even this unpaid leave is only accessible to about 60 percent of the workforce, as small employers with fewer than 50 employees are exempt from the requirements of the FMLA.

Proposals in Congress

The issue of paid family and medical leave has been a focal point within Congress. While several bills have been introduced, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's (D-NY) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro's (D-CT) bill, the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, or the FAMILY Act, has the most

support, with 137 cosponsors on the House side and 27 in the Senate. Yet despite this backing, the bill has never been scheduled for committee mark-up, let alone a floor vote in either chamber. The bill was introduced initially in 2013 and then again in 2015.

If passed, the FAMILY Act would establish a national insurance fund paid for by employer and employee contributions of 0.4 percent of a worker's wages. The act would provide eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of paid leave at 66 percent of their wages (up to \$1,000 per week) for the same purposes as the FMLA — namely a personal or family member's medical emergency or to care for a new child. The insurance would be available to both men and women and would be age neutral. Unlike the FMLA, the bill covers workers in all companies, regardless of size.

Most Congressional Republicans, however, are unlikely to support another federal government entitlement without a clear path on how to fund long-term existing programs, like Social Security and Medicare. Thus, Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) has forged a different path, which is set forth in S.344, the Strong Families Act. The bill, which has been introduced since the 113th Congress, is sponsored by Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Angus King (I-ME) and offers a non-refundable, capped tax credit (at \$3,000 per employee per taxable year) for employers providing at least two weeks of paid family leave as defined by the FMLA.

The plan is voluntary and would be available to any size employer. Specifically, the bill provides a 25 percent non-refundable tax credit to the employer for each hour of paid leave provided (the employer must offer paid leave at a 100 percent replacement rate to be eligible for the tax credit). Lastly, the bill is written so that the tax credit will terminate two years following enactment of the law, whereupon the Government Accountability Office (GAO) would complete a study to determine the effectiveness of the tax credit in increasing paid family and medical leave.

The Trump Administration's Proposal

Somewhere in between the Gillibrand and Fischer bills lies the Trump administration's proposal. Ivanka Trump has made it a priority for both herself and her father's administration to create a federal paid family leave program. Under her plan, which materialized in the president's budget proposal, new mothers, fathers and adoptive parents would receive six weeks of maternity or paternity leave to care for a new child. States would be required to finance the program through their unemployment insurance programs, but the federal government would set minimum levels for states to maintain in their unemployment trust funds. States would, however, have flexibility with regards to the design and implementation of the plan.

Many policy experts working with Ms. Trump on this issue have claimed, however, that she is not tied to any of the details in her plan, and she has reportedly said that the paid leave proposal included in President Trump's budget proposal could be considered a "placeholder" for another plan that could garner bipartisan support. She has indicated she is willing to push for a more ambitious proposal as well. This may be necessary as proponents of paid leave say the plan is not generous enough.

Private-Sector Proposals

Most recently, Ms. Trump has expressed interest in a proposal backed by the American Enterprise Institute (a center-right think tank) and Brookings Institute (a center-left think tank). In a report by the think tanks, issued on June 6, 2017, they recommend establishing a federal paid parental leave program for new mothers and fathers. There would be strict eligibility requirements to access the benefit, including requiring employees to have worked for their employer for at least 1,000 hours before being eligible. The plan would be budget-neutral by splitting costs between a payroll tax, cutting government spending and cutting tax expenditures.

The program would offer a 70 percent wage-replacement rate (up to a cap of \$600 per week) for eight weeks. States and private employers would be free to supplement this

leave if they so choose. Job protection provisions would be included in the proposal as well. Lastly, the plan would require an independent study of the policy's effect on workers and businesses after a set period of time to ensure the efficacy of the program.

The authors of the AEI/Brookings plan state that they assessed the three aforementioned proposals when devising their compromise plan. Any action on the AEI/Brookings proposal is some time off however, as it has yet to be introduced as legislation on Capitol Hill.

Other Solutions

With the federal government unable to come to agreement on the best path forward, U.S. employers have stepped in to offer generous voluntary paid-leave programs to some of their employees, and states and localities have taken it upon themselves to pass a variety of differing paid-leave mandates.

While it remains to be seen what lies ahead for paid leave at the federal level, states and localities will continue passing their own mandates, while an increasing number of companies continue to expand their leave benefits to attract top talent.

In the wake of these trends, a group of employers and employer associations, including CUPA-HR, have been working with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) on legislation that would incentivize employers to voluntarily offer paid leave and flexible workplace opportunities by granting employers that do so relief from the increasingly complicated and conflicting web of state and local paid leave requirements. To date, five states and the District of Columbia have passed their own paid family and medical leave policies — California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have plans in place, while New York, Washington and the District of Columbia have yet to implement their policies. In addition, seven states (Arizona, California, Connecticut,

Massachusetts, Oregon, Vermont and Washington), along with over 30 jurisdictions, have passed paid-sick-leave laws. Given that these often-conflicting state laws can be an immense liability for multi-state and multi-jurisdictional employers, the employer groups believe their new legislation will incentivize employers to offer paid leave, as the bill if enacted would preempt state and local paid-sick-leave laws for employers that offer a minimum amount of paid leave and flexible work arrangements.

While polls show overwhelming public support for paid family and medical leave, with around three quarters of Americans supporting the idea, there is little if any agreement as to the best policy design, how it should be funded, how long the leave should last, and who should pay for it.


Specifically, the bill would amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) by adding to the definition of an ERISA plan a "Qualified Flexible Work Arrangement" plan (QFWA plan). Employers would not be required to offer a QFWA plan, but if they choose to the plan would have to offer paid leave and a flexible work arrangement. The paid leave component would require an employer's plan to offer a number of hours of paid leave scaled to the size of the employer and the employee's tenure. Part-time employees would receive a proportional share of paid leave. The employer would also offer at least one flexible work arrangement to each eligible employee

such as a compressed work schedule, flexible scheduling, telecommuting or predictable scheduling. To be considered eligible, an employee must have been employed for at least 12 months by the employer and for at least 1,000 hours of service during the previous 12-month period.

Next Steps

While it remains to be seen what lies ahead for paid leave at the federal level, states and localities will continue passing their own mandates, while an increasing number of

companies continue to expand their leave benefits to attract top talent. In the immediate short term, Mimi Walters (R-CA) is expected to introduce the SHRM bill in the next month or so and begin the process of enlisting lawmakers' support for the legislation. This will be a fairly long process, as Congress and the White House will be focused on fulfilling other big-ticket items such as tax and healthcare reform in the near term. However, given President Trump's support of paid parental

leave, the public's approval of the issue, and businesses' desire to provide benefits without conflicting state and local laws, this is an issue that will continue to pick up steam in the months and years to come. 

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Bryant University

Linda Lulli began her service to CUPA-HR in 2007 when she joined the Eastern Region board of directors. She then went on to serve on the national board for several years, culminating in her appointment as chair for the 2014-15 fiscal year. She also served on or chaired several CUPA-HR task forces and committees and played an integral role in the association's diversity and inclusion initiatives, the Wildfire program for early-career higher ed HR professionals and the Emerging CUPA-HR Leaders program. Lulli has also presented at several chapter, regional and national CUPA-HR conferences, and was awarded Honorary Life Membership in the association earlier this year.

Says University at Buffalo Chief HR Officer Mark Coldren, who served with Lulli on the national board for several years, "Linda's many accomplishments and her distinguished career have been phenomenal. Her time on the CUPA-HR board of directors has made a profound impact on the association, the higher ed HR profession and the institutions we serve."

Lulli worked in human resources at Bryant University for nearly 20 years before her retirement in December 2016.

Distinguished Service Award

Recognizing distinguished service to the association and the profession

Sponsored by Kronos Incorporated



Deborah Benton

Former Employee Relations Manager (Retired), Tulsa
Community College

Deborah Benton served in CUPA-HR leadership roles for 13 years at the chapter, regional and national levels. She began her service to the association in 2003 as secretary-treasurer on the Oklahoma Chapter board of directors and went on to serve as president of the chapter in 2006-07.

She sat on the Southern Region board from 2008 to 2016 and served as chair in 2013-14. She also served two terms on the national board. Additionally, Benton has served on several CUPA-HR committees and as a guide in CUPA-HR's Wildfire program for early-career higher ed HR professionals.

Benton retired in January after 21 years at Tulsa Community College, where she held several HR roles and taught several courses as an adjunct instructor.

Chief Executive HR Champion Award

Honoring a president or chancellor who has demonstrated significant support for HR

Sponsored by Sibson Consulting



Dr. John M. Beehler

President, Jacksonville State University

When Dr. Beehler took the helm of JSU in July 2015, he launched a strategic initiative to enhance the university's management of human capital. This initiative encompasses enhancing the total rewards package for JSU employees; enhancing existing and implementing new and effective employee recognition programs; supporting the life cycle of employees through performance management and professional development opportunities; and creating and promoting a university culture of diversity, inclusion and sensitivity.

To enable HR to be a strategic partner, he created the position of chief HR officer and changed the reporting structure of HR so that the CHRO reports directly to the president's office. He also increased the number of HR staff from four to nine, with each HR staff member working in defined functional areas. Additionally, Dr. Beehler created the university's first office of diversity and inclusion and hired a dedicated director of diversity and inclusion and Title IX coordinator.

"Dr. Beehler has proven to be an outstanding professional, mentor, educator and colleague," says JSU chief HR officer Heidi Louisy. "He has been among the most visible proponents at JSU for the acknowledgement, respect, appreciation and enhancement of the university's human capital and supporting policies, procedures and systems. Under Dr. Beehler's leadership, JSU's HR department is now recognized by the university community as a department of integrity, high performance, flexibility and excellence in service delivery."

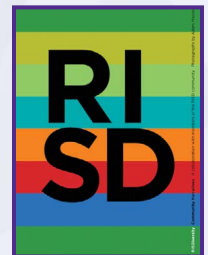
Inclusion Cultivates Excellence Award

Celebrating programs that have made a significant impact with respect to inclusive workplace practices and culture

Rhode Island School of Design

(for its RISDiversity Community Narratives project)

The RISDiversity Community Narratives project was created in 2011 as a joint partnership between the student affairs and HR departments. The goal was to offer faculty, staff and students an opportunity to use their voices to inspire others, make an impact on the campus culture, and examine how a creative community can effectively embrace diversity.



The departments collectively reached out to RISD staff, faculty and students to ask them to participate and share their unique stories. Participants expressed their experiences in a writing workshop and via photo and video sessions. The portraits, combined with handwritten stories by participants, were

then displayed throughout RISD's 51-acre campus. A RISD-sponsored book, website and related videos were also promoted at campus events, which celebrates the six years and 120 stories that make up the project. The RISDiversity project provides a powerful visible representation of the myriad identities that make the RISD campus unique, while promoting shared dialogue around diversity.

"I have been in the minority for a lot of environments I've moved through," says a participating RISD student. "I would like to show that it's okay to be different, and sometimes solitary in your perspectives. I have seen the RISDiversity project all around campus and love stopping to read and reread them. It makes me feel encouraged to know I'm not the only one out there learning to embrace my own essence."

RISD's Community Narratives was the inspiration for CUPA-HR's own Creating Inclusive Communities (CIC) project (read more about CIC and how institutions are using this resource on pp. 24-28). Learn more about the RISDiversity Community Narratives project at <http://diversity.risd.edu/>.

HR Excellence Award

Honoring transformative HR leadership that results in significant organizational change

Sponsored by VALIC



Emory University's learning and organizational development team

Emory University

Learning and Organizational Development Team

Emory's learning and organizational development team has been instrumental in effecting significant and ongoing organizational change within the university over the past several years. The team has redesigned the institution's various leadership development program offerings so that they better align with the university's talent

management strategy; shepherded in a new competency-based performance management process; ramped up the focus on team building across the institution; and, at the request of senior leadership, created and implemented an institution-wide change management process.

These initiatives have led to a stronger pipeline of internal talent; a strategic focus on the development and retention of top talent; increased collaboration and partnerships across the university; and a consistent approach to change management.

Emory's leadership development program is led by eight learning professionals who provide a wealth of knowledge in organizational development, industrial psychology and strategic implementation of the program. The team also works with other colleges and universities to assist them in launching and implementing their own leadership development programs.

HR Innovation Awards

Recognizing models of innovative thinking in higher ed HR



Community College of Allegheny County's Civility Ambassadors

Community College of Allegheny County (for its We Are Civility Program)

In order to promote a campus culture of civility and respect, Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)'s HR team, in partnership with several areas across campus, launched the We Are Civility program in 2016. The program aims to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for all employees and students.

A team of individuals from across the institution (dubbed Civility Ambassadors) serves to create awareness of and help drive the program, which features branded promotional items, a civility pledge, a civility web page with resources and information, recognition and celebration of civility champions on campus and more. To gauge effectiveness, the program is regularly assessed via a series of campus-wide surveys, with results indicating an improvement in employee morale and perceptions of civility and the institution's campus climate since the program launched.

"In most cases, civility doesn't just happen," says Kimberly Manigault, vice president of human resources for CCAC. "It takes direct action and commitment. This choice impacts others and helps promote an inclusive and positive community environment. Choosing to act and promote civility toward each other contributes to a workplace and community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and feel valued."

Florida International University Human Resources Team

In order to maintain a culture of excellence in a time of rapid institutional growth, Florida International University (FIU)'s division of human resources was tasked with providing strategies, tools and programs that would engage the university's highly diverse population of faculty and staff in meaningful ways. The comprehensive plan features four pillar programs to facilitate organizational change — Service Excellence, Leadership Education Advancement Program, Performance Excellence Process and the Classification and Compensation Redesign Project. These programs provide invaluable resources to strengthen leadership skills, foster innovation and facilitate strategic planning.



Florida International University's HR team

Since the program's launch, thousands of employees have completed monthly training and workshops, leading to positive feedback across campus. As FIU continues to navigate ever-evolving challenges, the HR team is presenting optimal solutions that impact the university's bottom line while allowing for necessary growth in areas to better serve students and staff.

Read more about how human resources is helping drive excellence at FIU at www.cupahr.org/FIU.

Want to demonstrate talent management's strategic value on campus?

Our survey says: Make your case with data

Develop a strategic talent management presence using guidance, insights and predictions from 400 higher education professionals, including:

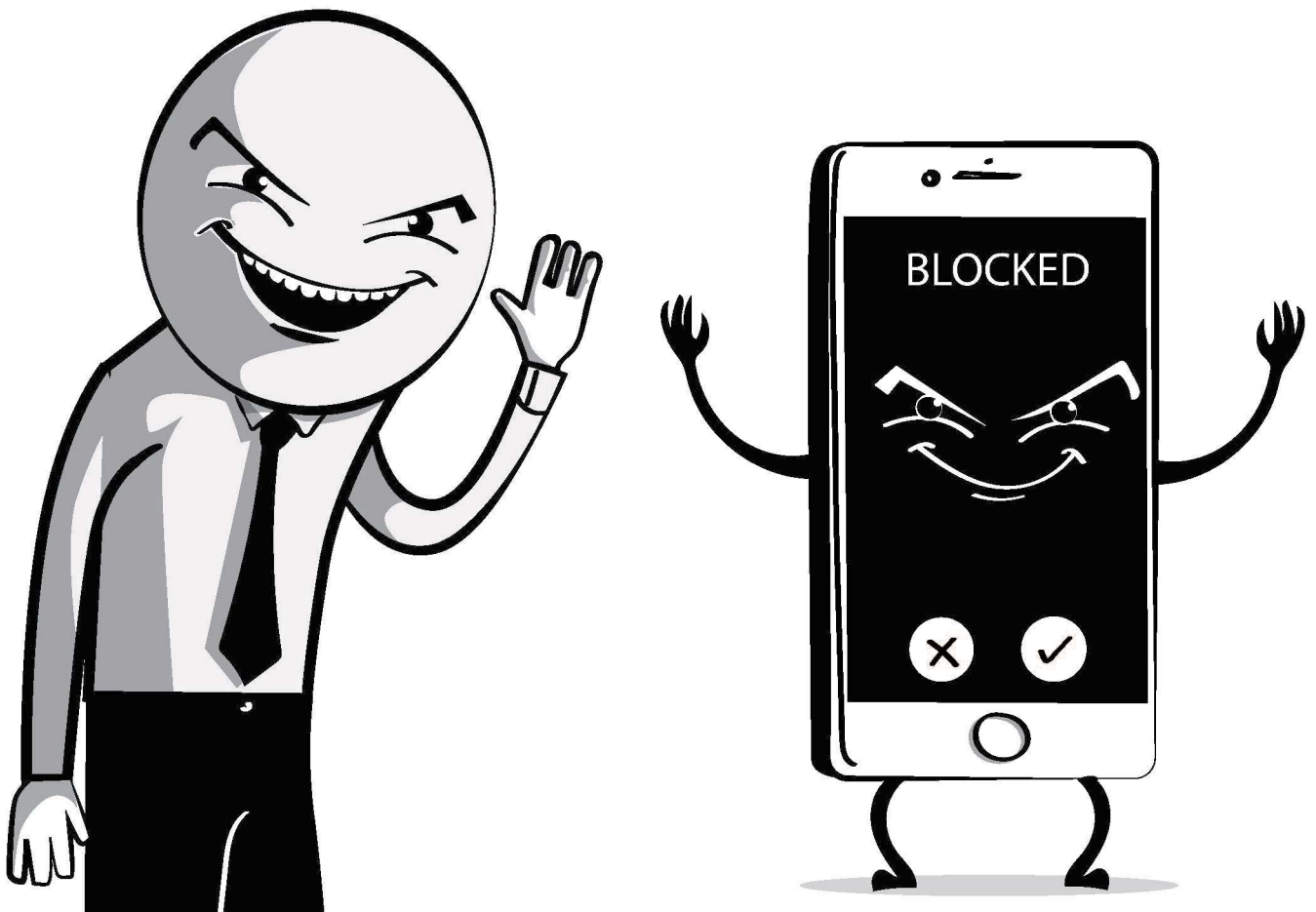
- Talent management teams that track performance are twice as likely to secure the resources they need to succeed.
- Eighty percent of institutions are inadequately staffed to support strategic recruiting initiatives.
- From 2014-2015, faculty job postings increased 5.8 percent, but applicant volume decreased.

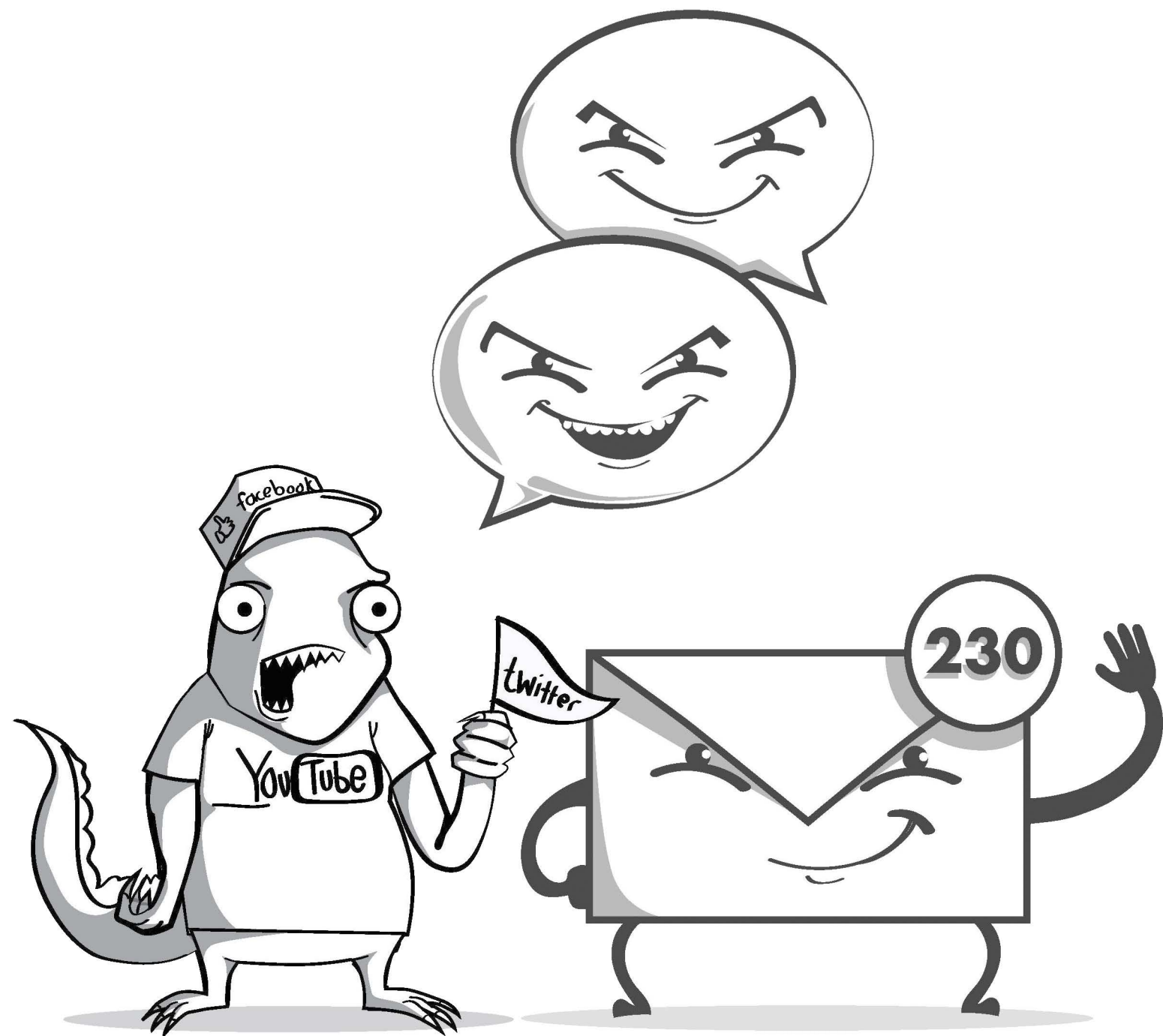


Defending Your Galaxy

Against the Supervillains of Distraction

By Darrell Easley





What would you say if I told you there are supervillains lurking in your workplace right this very minute? They are dangerous and deceptive, and you've no doubt experienced their dastardly deeds at one time or another. They pop up unexpectedly, sometimes in rapid succession, usually several times a day ... and they all share a common goal: to derail your focus and undermine your productivity. I like to call them the supervillains of distraction. Just how detrimental to getting things done are these bad guys? An overview by the American Psychological Association of

several studies on multitasking suggests that individuals are up to 40 percent less productive when they are constantly moving from one task to another. A recent study out of University of California-Irvine found that a typical office worker gets 11 minutes between interruptions, while it takes an average of 23 minutes to return to focus on a task. And a 2012 study by Professor David Strayer of the University of Utah found that only about 2 percent of people are actually good at multitasking; for the other 98 percent, multitasking negatively affects their attention span, concentration and productivity.

The Supervillains Unmasked (and How to Thwart Them)

Now that we know what they aim to do and how they can affect your work, let's take a closer look at some of these supervillains of distraction you might encounter during your work day, and some tactics you can employ to keep them at bay until that report is written, that project is complete or that brainstorming session is over.

Email of Eviiiiil

That's not a typo. When something is really bad, it's "eviiiiil!" This villain's tactic is sheer volume. Sure, it starts out in the morning with a handful of new emails in your inbox, but pretty soon you've amassed scores of messages, and any attempt to organize them becomes null as more and more roll in.

One antidote: Batch process your email during certain periods of time, especially if you're working on an important or time-sensitive project. If the nature of your work is such that you could go several hours without checking email, then check it only once or twice a day, and only respond to time-sensitive messages until you finish the work you're trying to get done.

The Infamous IM and His Sidekick, the Terrible Text

These villains' tactic is the art of surprise ... you never know when they will creep up. And many of us just can't wait to see who is at the other end of that alert.

One antidote: When something absolutely, positively needs your full focus, disable the alerts for this duo. Suddenly, they have no effect.

The Phone of Fury

The Phone of Fury attacks you everywhere — in your office, in your car, at home, on your lunch break, at the

gym. Sometimes this villain can pull you away from the task at hand for many minutes at a time.

One antidote: From time to time, it's okay to turn your ringer off. (One caveat: If your job requires you to answer the phone, be sure to not let the other villains distract you, so that you can give the caller your full attention and provide the support he or she needs.)

The Deadly Drop-By

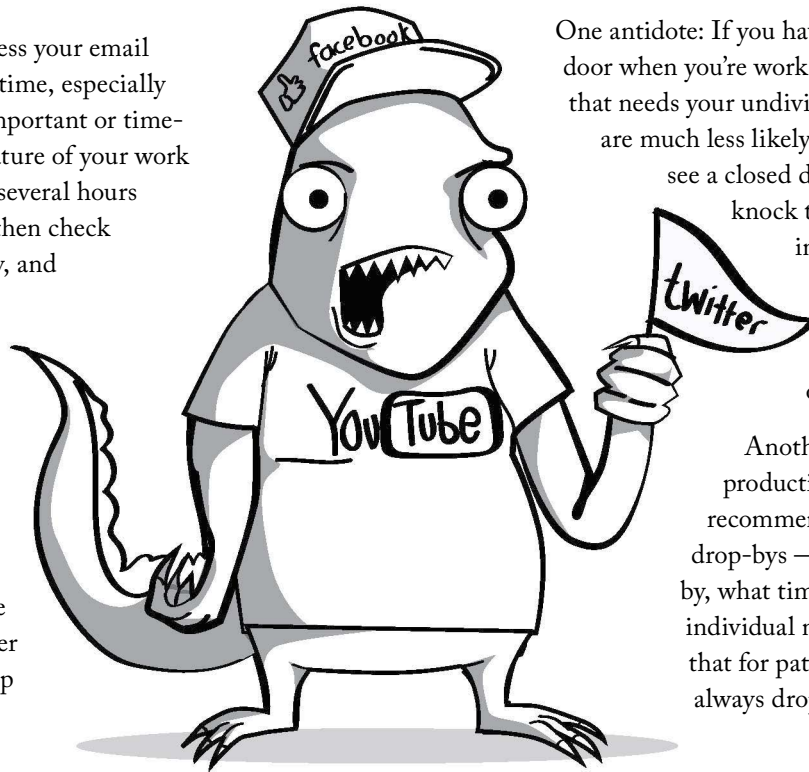
Ever had this happen? You're working diligently on a task, you're in your groove, you're making good progress, and then a coworker drops by with a question, a concern, an idea to bounce off you or just to chat. Whether the drop-by visit was two minutes or 20 minutes, your concentration is now broken and you're off task.

One antidote: If you have an office, close the door when you're working on something that needs your undivided attention. People are much less likely to drop by if they see a closed door and have to knock to enter. If you work in a cubicle, tack a "do not disturb" or "unavailable until 2 p.m." sign on the outside.

Another strategy: Some productivity experts recommend keeping a log of drop-bys — note who dropped by, what time and what the individual needed, and analyze that for patterns. Does Jane always drop by mid-morning on payroll processing days with questions about the new system? There may be something

you can do to alleviate that, like recommend more training.

When I'm working on a task that needs my undivided attention and I get a drop-by, I've found that standing up and remaining standing for the duration of the visit helps cut down on the amount of time the person stays in my office.



One way to combat distractions is to practice deep work, which requires sustained focus and attention.

Social Media Saboteur

This is another bad guy that can get you from multiple angles, sending you down a rabbit hole of internet browsing, Facebook posts and viral memes. The good news is that this time sucker is the only one of the gang that is completely within your control — only you have the final say as to whether or not you click on that video link or check your Twitter feed.

One antidote: Block certain websites, turn off social media notifications, and close out of your web browser for certain periods of time while you work on a time-sensitive task. Just know that there's always going to be a "loophole" with this approach, so it really just comes down to self discipline.

Two Overarching Strategies to Help Keep You on Track

Now that we've identified several of the worst offenders

for derailing your productivity and specific ways to combat each one, let's take a look at two big-picture strategies that can help keep you on task on any given day.

Practice Deep Work

In his book *Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*, Cal Newport delves into how everyday distractions that we sometimes let drive our work (email, social media, the phone ringing off the hook, office buzz) can negatively affect our ability to do what he calls "deep work" — that is, work that requires sustained focus and attention. One way to combat distractions and help us be our most productive, Newport says, is to practice deep work. In the book, he discusses four philosophies for deep work — monastic, bimodal, rhythmic and journalistic. The monastic approach attempts to maximize deep focus by minimizing shallow work. An example of the monastic

approach is an author completely focused on writing a novel. All of his or her working time is spent on this one task, and nothing else. The author sets aside long, uninterrupted chunks of time to complete this singular

task. While this approach works well in some cases, it's probably not realistic for individuals with multiple job duties.

The bimodal

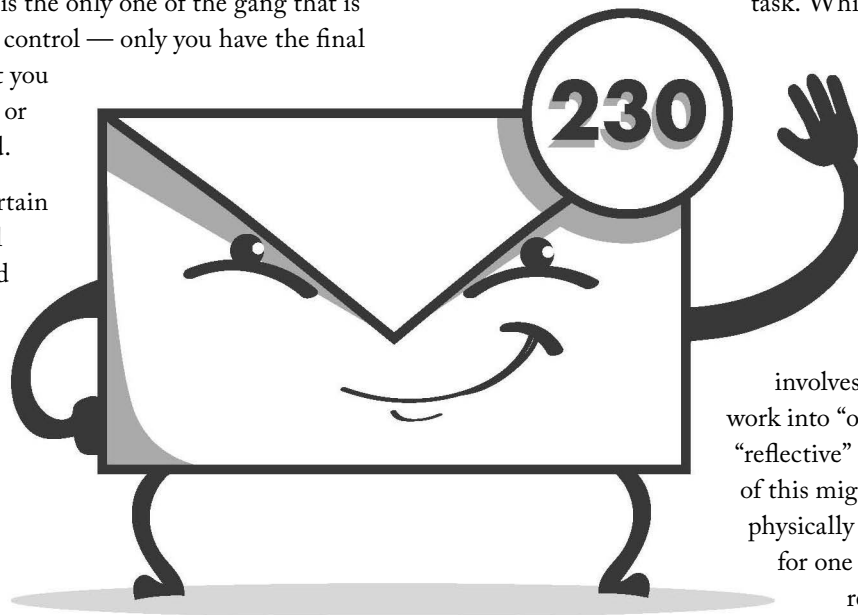
approach involves dividing your work into "open" times and "reflective" times. An example of this might be working physically in your office for one week and then

retreating to a cabin to focus on deep project work for another week. While you might be thinking, "That works for me!," I'm not so sure your supervisor would agree.

Therefore, the rhythmic and

journalistic philosophies are probably better suited for the kind of work we do in human resources. The rhythmic approach to deep work consists of setting aside a consistent timeframe every day or every week to do certain tasks. Maybe you've noticed a certain time of the day or week is quieter for you than others. In this case, you could schedule some focused project work during that block of time each day or week.

The journalistic approach involves shifting to meaningful work when time presents itself. One way to do this would be to look at your weekly schedule and pick a time to work on particular projects. For example, you notice at the beginning of the week that you have a three-hour block of time available on Wednesday morning. You could then schedule a project work session for that time period, and then do your best to minimize distractions.



A recent study out of UC-Irvine found that a typical office worker gets 11 minutes between interruptions, while it takes an average of 23 minutes to return to focus on a task.

And yes, even if you plan to do meaningful work at a certain time, emergencies, fires and a supervisor's or customer's priority can put your best laid plans on the back burner. Just remember, it's okay to be flexible, and it may take a few tries to find an approach that works well for you.

Create Rituals Around Work

Another way to minimize distractions throughout your workday is to create rituals around work. This is especially helpful for project-based or time-sensitive work. Decide beforehand where you will work and for how long. Will you allow yourself to access the internet while working? Some projects may not require it, and some may. Will you turn off your ringer or switch your office phone mode to "unavailable"?


Maybe you close out of Outlook for two hours while you focus on a certain task. Maybe you schedule brain breaks for 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the afternoon. We live in a time where we can find out anything we need to know within a matter of keystrokes, and while there's nothing wrong with that in and of itself, we need to remember the value in just taking time to think about the work we're doing and how we're doing it.

Regardless of what your "ritual" might be, simply having one can help sustain your focus and harness your energy for the task at hand.

Will This Really Work in My Line of Work?

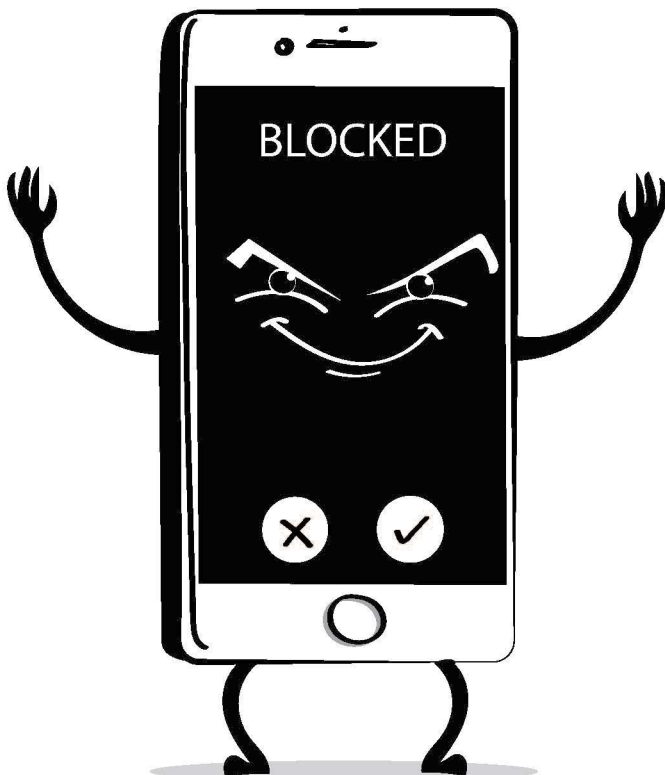
As an HR professional you may be thinking, "But all of the supervillains of distraction you've mentioned here — phone calls, office drop-bys, email — are part of my job. Are you suggesting I only check email a couple of times a day? Do you think it's okay to not answer the phone when it rings? Can I really, in my line of work, sequester myself in my office or cubicle for extended periods of time?"

Of course I'm not suggesting that you never take a phone call or welcome an office visitor. We wouldn't be very friendly or efficient HR departments if we didn't take time to respond to and interact with those we serve and those with whom we work. What I am saying is that if you are in the middle of an important project or task that must get done, give yourself some time for deep work by employing some of the tactics outlined in this article that can help minimize distractions and maximize your focus and productivity. Just make sure your approach works for you personally and aligns with your office culture.

After all, when it comes down to it, a lot of email can wait, most phone messages aren't "return-within-the-hour" urgent, and "The 10 Most Fascinating Card Tricks" video on YouTube will still be there tomorrow. 

Darrell Easley is learning and development manager at Mississippi State University and a member of the 2017-18 Emerging CUPA-HR Leaders program. He can be reached at deasley@hrm.msstate.edu.

Illustrations by Eric Abbot, graphic artist with the office of public affairs at Mississippi State.



A man with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored plaid button-down shirt, is shown from the chest up. He is holding a silver pen in his right hand and looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a solid light blue color.

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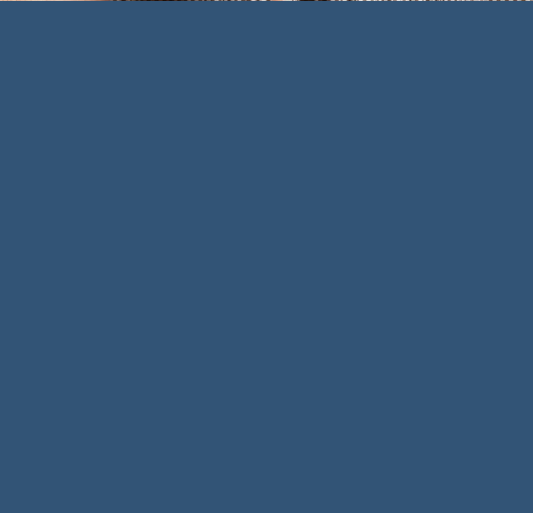
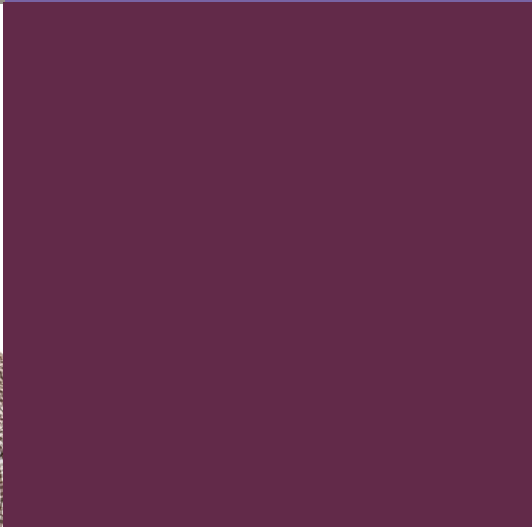
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Creating Inclusive Communities

Harnessing the Power of Storytelling to Spark Dialogue
Around Diversity and Inclusion on Campus



I fight for my son. He's 9, and innocent, and doesn't have an aggressive bone in his body. I fight for him because he won't be able to grow up in the carefree, non-violent world that I did. He sees the good in everyone, sometimes even when they haven't shown him any. Raising a black man is so scary for me; I'm reminded every time I watch the news that I have to not only fight to keep him safe, but fight to keep him informed when there's so much noise around him. I fight to maintain his innocence by keeping as much of that hate and chaos away from him, until he's able to understand and process it for himself...without him losing faith in people and without him losing trust and belief that people can be good...while not being naive to the fact that in the real world everyone is not looking out for his good and interests.



Take a quick look around your office, or your department, or your campus. Every individual you see has a story — traits and characteristics and beliefs and perspectives that make them unique, that shape how they see the world and how they perceive the world to see them, that have influenced who they are, how they live, what they value and how they behave.

What has most shaped your story? Is it your life experiences? Your religion? The color of your skin? Your ethnicity? Your ability? Your sexuality? Your background?

What if we harnessed these different experiences and perspectives and stories to initiate conversations on campus about diversity and inclusion? Through CUPA-HR's Creating Inclusive Communities project, campuses around the country are doing just that.

Storytelling With a Purpose

Launched two years ago, CUPA-HR's Creating Inclusive Communities (CIC) project is a collection of videos and portraits that tell the personal stories of 24 higher education human resources professionals from around the country. They share their joys, their trepidations, their passions, their challenges — their own unique stories — and touch on topics including race and ethnicity, women in leadership roles, LGBTQ issues, microaggressions, poverty, immigrant employees, unconscious bias, bullying and more.

These stories and videos, along with the discussion and facilitator resources that accompany them, are designed to help faculty, staff and administrators understand the value that different experiences and perspectives can bring to the campus community. They are designed to spark dialogue around diversity. And they are a call to action to create more inclusive campus communities.

How Are Campuses Using CIC?

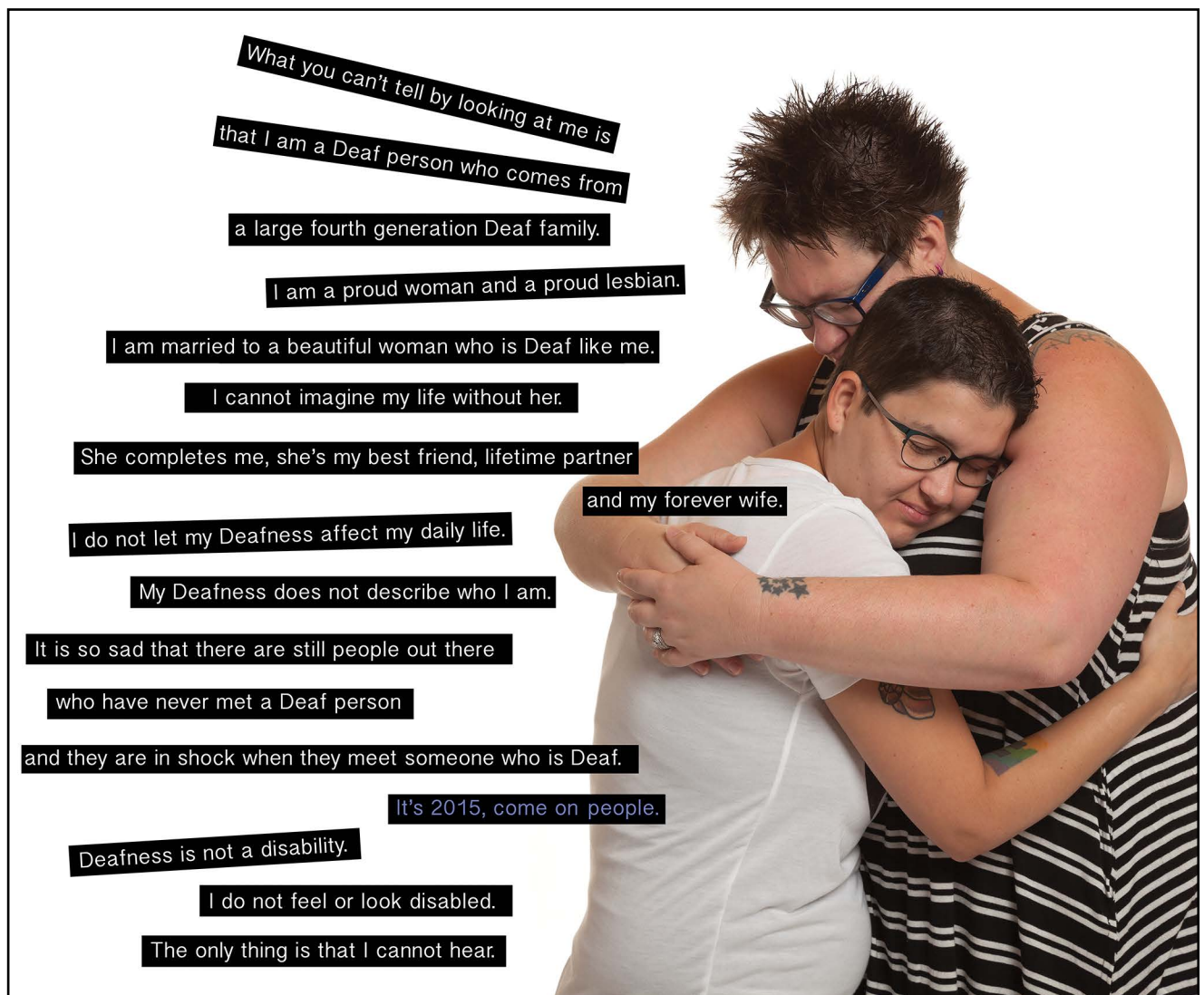
HR organizations on several campuses are using the project in creative ways to engage employees, initiate conversations around DEI and facilitate collaboration. Here's what they're doing:

Facilitating Conversation Within HR: University of Wisconsin-Madison's HR Communities of Practice Office used CIC as a kick-off for discussion around its own diversity and inclusion efforts. Explains HR Competencies Program Coordinator Sarah Carroll, "During a recent meeting of the university's HR representatives, we hung posters of the stories around the room and asked folks to mill around, see which of the stories resonated most with them, and then engage in dialogue in small groups. We used this exercise to foster relationship-building and to kick off subsequent conversation about our office's vision and mission around generating an engagement-inclusion-diversity mindset as we work to facilitate the transition of

HR from a compliance- and transaction-oriented model to one of business partnership."

Feedback from the session was promising, says Carroll. Some of the comments:

- "The stories inspired personal sharing about ourselves, starting from issues raised by the people who were profiled. We were then able to dive more deeply into the challenge of bringing our whole selves to work so that we can be there for our clients, and how our working relationships can be limited without that more complete type of understanding. It was a very rich discussion."
- "The posters definitely helped to provide a starting point for the conversations. It was helpful to read other people's stories to spark thinking about diversity and inclusion and what that might look like. I think having others' anecdotes as a base made it easier to





The year was 2003, when I received my first phone invitation for my first real job interview.... And I was terrified. I wasn't scared because it was my first real interview; I practiced so much public speaking on campus as a student that meeting with a few people at a bank seemed easy. I was terrified because though that employer thought that I may be a "good fit" on paper, they would soon learn at our meeting that I was a Muslim. In 2003 the media had really begun to create a scary narrative as it relates to Muslims. Muslim = Terrorist... Muslim = Un-American... Muslim = Oppression... Muslim = Extremist... and a host of other untruths that were completely unrelated to the Islam that I knew and loved and practiced. I hated myself for being afraid! I wanted to be an advocate and fight the stereotypes and the rhetoric, but I was in such a vulnerable position. So even in my embarrassment, I called my parents for guidance. My parents encouraged me to be myself and recognize that in my career an organization should fully accept who I am...or they are not "a good fit" for me. Even today I am very aware when meeting new people that the first thing that they see is my hijab, which no longer gives me the same level of fear, but instead an opportunity to openly educate.

talk about this topic in a group setting, especially for those who may not want to share their own experiences, or for those who haven't thought much about the topic and need a way to be 'invited' into the conversation."

- "The stories were powerful and reflected how important it is as HR professionals for us to think about our own identities and our own stories so that we can have a better understanding of others and their experiences."

Sharing Across Campus: Many HR organizations have shared the resource campus-wide. In a survey of how institutions are using CIC, several respondents indicated that they'd shared the resource with campus administrators and leadership, hiring managers, search committees, diversity task forces, academic affairs, student services, faculty affairs, the office of institutional equity

and more. Said one survey respondent, "This no-cost resource has helped HR bridge the staff/faculty gap. We've promoted and offered it widely to various groups across campus, which has resulted in increased dialogue and discussion related to diversity and inclusion. And it has allowed us to initiate collaboration amongst various campus groups."

Laurita Thomas, chief HR officer at University of Michigan (who is also one of the individuals featured in the CIC project), has shared the resource widely on her campus. In addition to ensuring that her human resources team has watched the videos, read the stories and engaged in conversation around them, she's also shared CIC with the university's DEI strategic plan implementers (70+ faculty and staff) to use as resources for DEI work in their respective units and with the School of Social Work Women's Leadership program. And UMich's DEI Resources web page includes a link to the CIC project.




And earlier this year, Zajchowski and a colleague facilitated a lunch-and-learn session using the microaggressions video and facilitator guide.

A Companion Piece: Several HR organizations have added CIC to their existing diversity and inclusion programs, using it in search committee training, implicit bias training, individual and departmental consultation services and new-hire orientation.

Making It Personal: The project has also inspired a few institutions to create their own versions using individuals from their campus community, making it that much more powerful and personal.

At Rollins College, two HR team members shared a portion of the CIC project last year at the school's annual campus-wide summit on transforming learning. The summit's theme was on racial justice and focused on race at Rollins, in the nation and throughout the world. "This summit provided the perfect opportunity to introduce CIC to the campus community and encourage them to use it to initiate conversations within their teams, divisions and student organizations," says David Zajchowski, assistant director of HR for talent management at Rollins. "Our chief HR officer, Maria Martinez, is one of the individuals featured in the project, so she was excited to be able to share her story with her colleagues in this way." Zajchowski says the college's diversity advisory council is currently exploring ways in which it can leverage CIC in its work.

Celebrating Our Differences, Connecting Through Our Sameness

Personal stories are powerful. They can help us connect with and better understand one another, they can motivate us, they can inspire us, they can instill in us compassion and empathy, they can help us feel not so alone, and they can open the door for conversations and dialogue we may never have had the opportunity or courage to have engaged in otherwise. By sharing our own stories, and being willing to listen to (and really hear) others' stories, we are better able to bridge divides, see one another for who we really are and celebrate our differences while connecting through our sameness. And all of those things make for a more inclusive, accepting and diverse environment. 

To learn more about CUPA-HR's Creating Inclusive Communities project, visit diversity.cupahr.org. If you're already using this resource on campus, we want to hear how! Tell us at diversity.cupahr.org/share/.

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² UnitedHealthcare Advocate4Me Member Interaction and Issue Management Report (group retiree results), Q1 2017.

³ Group Retiree National PPO plans. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2014 – 2017 H2001 Part C & D Medicare Star Ratings Data for 2015-2018 payment years. Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system. Star Ratings are calculated each year and may change from one year to the next. Insurance coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc., or its affiliates. MT 1147637.0 7/17 ©2017 United HealthCare Services, Inc.





Making a major benefits change? Redesigning your compensation program? Introducing a new wellness program? With the dizzying pace of change in HR these days, the need to capture employees' attention and spur them to action has never been greater. At the same time, the distractions of our connected world are increasing exponentially. This article explores how the latest technologies can help you stand out and engage your employees.

Step Up Your HR Communications Game

What the Latest Technologies Can Do for You

By Kathy Anttila



It's a Brave New World

Ever look around while you're out in public? Maybe not anymore, since you're too busy using your smartphone! But, if you can tear yourself away from it for a moment, you'll notice that almost everyone else is using a smartphone, too.

It's likely that most of your employees — and even your retirees — have a smartphone. And you can safely assume that most use their smartphones to go online, access email, use apps to track everything from calories and exercise to traffic and weather, and check in with friends and family.

With the dizzying pace of change in HR these days, the need to capture employees' attention and spur them to action has never been greater.

One confirmation of how times have changed is employees' attitudes toward texting. Five years ago, almost no employees were willing to allow their organizations to communicate with them via text. Now, many — especially Generation Z — tell us that texts are their preferred method of communication. They don't want emails, they don't want to go to a website, and they certainly don't want anyone calling them.

Tech Trends

Here's a quick summary of the biggest trends we're seeing in new technologies and techniques for HR communications.

Social Media

According to Pew Research Center, 76 percent of adults who go online use some form of social media. Thus, it only makes sense to incorporate social media into your HR communications strategy. A growing number of organizations are going social because it's:

- **Adaptable:** You can make changes via social media much faster than revamping a website.
- **Interactive:** Social media facilitates a real-time, open, two-way information exchange.
- **Location-neutral:** It meets your audience where they are.

- **Low-cost:** The technology is mostly free.
- **Mobile-friendly:** It plays to the vast majority of people who use their phones to go online.
- **Flexible:** It can be delivered through a wide range of communications channels.

We've seen institutions use social media in many creative, powerful ways, particularly in relation to wellness programs. Websites linked to social media such as Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube and Twitter have become common platforms to stimulate interest and engagement through personal stories and shared interest groups.

Video

We've become a world of watchers. As of April 2017, 1 billion unique users visit YouTube every month, which equates to nearly one out of every three people on the internet. While video has been around a long time, technology is enabling many new, low-cost and engaging ways to use it. For example:

- **Testimonials** have been used for many years, but smartphones have made them far easier to manage. These days, employees record and submit their own stories or photos with written comments, rather than an organization having to send out a video crew. (Keep in mind that it's important to have the employee sign a release before you post these clips.)
- **Whiteboard videos** are a growing trend for many organizations. These videos combine simple animation with narration. Often the artist's hand is shown on the screen actually drawing the images. These short programs can be especially helpful for building interest, motivating action and educating at a high level. They're efficient and cost effective, and they're easily watchable on a smartphone.
- **Live streaming** — transmitting a live video feed over the internet to a select audience — has never been easier or more popular. Organizations should think about leveraging this useful communications tool for hard-to-reach audiences. Plus, with this tool, informational enrollment meetings don't have to be constrained to one room at a specific time.

Recognizing Our Totally Connected World

87%

OF U.S. ADULTS
USE THE
INTERNET

1/2

OF U.S. ADULTS
PLAY ONLINE
GAMES

79%

of online U.S. adults use Facebook.

77%

of cell phone users
download apps.

95%

of U.S. adults own a cell phone.
77% of those are smartphone users.

21%

of adults have some sort of
wearable technology.

80%

of online U.S. adults look for
health information through the web.

Sources: www.pewinternet.org, www.mobihealthnews.com

Apps

Since most of your employees are likely using apps, it's important to include them in your HR communications strategy. The tagline "there's an app for that" has never been truer. Many organizations push healthcare-related apps to their employees — apps that help with fitness training, self-management for diabetes and other chronic conditions, weight loss and maintenance, stress management, healthcare provider shopping and more.

Websites

While the vast majority of organizations have a website these days, not all are easily navigable, user friendly or engaging. Here are some key trends in web design to keep in mind:

- Given that so many employees are accessing websites via smartphones, "mobile first" design is being used more and more frequently. This means designing the online experience for mobile devices before

designing it for the desktop. At minimum, websites should be responsively designed, which means they reflow for various screen sizes and resolutions.

- Rather than posting huge PDFs for open enrollment guides and certain other large documents, break information into manageable chunks and use drop-down menus, hide/show text and rollover definitions for easy access.
- Take advantage of Google Analytics or other free measurement tools to gauge the effectiveness of your website.
- Use FAQs, article feeds and event calendars on your home page to stimulate employee interest.

Gamification

As many organizations have realized, games are not just for entertainment anymore. They are often used to inform, educate and, most importantly, motivate desired behaviors.

Why do games work so well? The answer is simple: people like to play games, be on teams, compete against other teams, measure how their teams are doing and, of course, win — even if there’s no prize. It’s simply human nature.

The first and most important consideration for a good game is to identify what behaviors and outcomes you’re trying to encourage. Then, think about games that people like, like the game of “Life,” which features a number of elements that still make a good game today:

- Storytelling
- Clear calls to action and forward progress
- Recognition and rewards for achievements and performance
- Social and teaming opportunities
- Ease of access and use

Keep in mind that you don’t have to develop games from scratch. Many vendors will work with you to develop a game on their platform or to deliver their “off-the-shelf” solutions to your employees. It’s important to remember that the crucial aspect of a game is the key messages and

Since most of your employees are likely using apps, it’s important to include them in your HR communications strategy.

desired behaviors you want it to drive. You can start small and simple with an off-the-shelf solution, but make sure it’s flexible so you can build on it and integrate it into your existing systems over time.

What’s Ahead?

With the rapid pace of technological change, what can we anticipate for HR communications in the future? Here’s a quick look at three emerging trends:

Artificial Intelligence

Personal assistance devices such as Amazon’s Echo and Google Home are becoming increasingly popular, and benefits managers may want to look for ways to incorporate them into the benefits world. Interactive decision-support tools like Ask Alex or Ask Emma are designed to help employees make benefit enrollment decisions. SueAI,

currently in beta, aims to be the Siri or Alexa of HR. Just like Siri, the product will process spoken questions and answer in kind — and it can potentially be customized with benefits content.

Augmented Reality

With this technology — available on smartphones now — a computer algorithm uses sensors and markers to spot the current position of physical objects and determine the location of simulated ones, then renders a picture that appears through the camera. For example, IKEA allows you to determine whether furniture will fit into a room in your house via an iPhone app. Some potential HR applications for AR include animating documents by hovering your phone over them to help with learning and education, developing step-by-step instructions, and finding healthy food options. AR also may be useful for customer service training, particularly in developing support scenarios and guiding representatives on how to respond.

Virtual Reality

This completely immersive technology puts a user into isolated reality. Although institutions are just starting to think about virtual reality applications for HR, one example is using virtual reality to provide job candidates a day-in-the-life experience for a potential position.

To Make the Most of Technology, Start With Strategy

Although it’s tempting to just start using the latest technologies when you have a communications need, it’s critical to remember that the best communications efforts are driven by a carefully developed communications plan. Here are the key elements of the communications planning process (remember, planning should focus on strategy before tactics):


- **Audience Segmentation:** Who are your key audiences (faculty, staff, spouses/partners, job applicants, HR staff)? Are there subgroups within your audiences who share specific characteristics, such as communications needs, media preferences and key motivators? Do you need to develop separate communications and vehicles for these subgroups?
- **Behavioral Messaging:** What behaviors are you trying to drive? How might your audience segments

perceive these behaviors? What messaging will be most effective?

- **Storyline Development:** What's the "why" behind the behaviors you're trying to drive? What will convince your employees to embrace your messages and take action?
- **Participation of Leadership and Other Influencers:** Who has the biggest impact on employee opinions at your institution, including both leaders and others who are vocal and influential? How will you involve them in reinforcing your storyline and messaging? What coaching and outreach is needed to ensure they take ownership?

It's also important to step back and make sure you have the right policies and procedures in place before you take

the leap into new technologies. For example, before you start experimenting with social media, consider developing a social media policy that specifies how you will design, develop, implement and maintain your social media site, security and privacy considerations, usage policies and measurement plans. In addition, be sure to conduct a periodic security risk assessment, as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, regarding potential employee posting of protected health information.

By taking these steps as you move to new technology, you can truly step up your HR communications game. 

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Is Print Dead?

With all this talk about the "latest and greatest," it's important to remember the value of traditional forms of communication. Ironically, five years ago, we heard that print was dead and everyone wanted electronic communications, but now we're finding that people complain they're getting too many emails. To really make sure we get a message across, a judicious use of print still offers many advantages.

A 2015 customer engagement study by True Impact Marketing using neuroscience tools such as brain imaging (EEG) and eye-tracking found that it takes 21 percent more brain power to process a digital message compared to print. Fundamentally, it's much harder for people to focus online because there are too many other distractions. Moreover, technology is not right for every communications task. For example, it falls short of legal requirements when it comes to Summary Plan Descriptions, Summaries of Material Modifications and other required disclosure documents.

Print materials are also more memorable. The True Impact Marketing study found that brand recall was 70 percent higher for direct mail than digital advertising. And motivation scores were 20 percent higher for print, meaning people were more likely to follow up with what they read. Because print materials are tangible, they are more likely to be kept in the house or office. Plus, print can more easily reach the spouse and family, and catch the eye outside of work. Finally, print materials have a greater sense of legitimacy than web content, which is filled with pop-ups, ads and even viruses.



Performance Reviews on Trial

Practical Lessons for HR Teams

By Anna Tavis

We have recently witnessed a media firestorm over the way organizations conduct performance appraisals. A few years ago, a few leading-brand companies dropped performance ratings and shifted their annual performance reviews to a more frequent, manager-centric, feedback-rich process. Subsequently, questions started to surface about whether rating-less performance management was a passing fad or an unavoidable pivot toward a new workplace with a focus on development rather than compliance.

Colorful metaphors were put to work to mark a radical breakaway from the familiar annual appraisal routines.

Catchy headlines such as “Kill Your Performance Ratings,” “Get Rid of Performance Reviews!” “Abolish Performance Appraisals!” and “The Trouble With Grading Employees” attracted the attention of business executives. The language of performance management started to shift, and for some of us it marked the coming of a new age in HR management. History will judge — but for now, this may be one of the most radical leaps forward in organizational practice since the invention of performance management itself.

One thing is certain in the new world of performance management — there is no longer a one-size-fits-all solution.

Historical Context

It is important to remind ourselves of the historical context for performance management. The legacy performance appraisal systems came into existence in the industrial era, when both military and government organizations set the standard. As hierarchies dominated the world order, the goal of managing performance was to exercise control from above and ensure compliance in the ranks. The system was set up to specifically catch those who were failing to deliver. On paper, it was a perfect system to go after the “guilty” and spotlight the “top performers” and “high potentials.” The A, B, C employee calibrations became the norm and spread across most high-performing companies.

While over the past few decades organizations have shifted away from the industrial-style governance models, many of their organizational practices remained stagnant, creating a jarring disconnect — and getting in the way of doing business. Disruption and reinvention have been everywhere in the economy for the past 25 or so years, and it seems as though there may finally be a general consensus that high performance can only be possible through engagement, collaboration and continuous learning for employees at all levels.

A call for the overhaul of the internal appraisal systems first came from the high-tech sector, which is known for its low tolerance for tradition. Professional services followed, with its relentless emphasis on efficiency and return on investment. Now the trend is spreading across other industries, affecting every type of organization, including government, education and the military. A global shift toward a more inclusive, development-focused performance system has been launched, and it appears to be going full-steam ahead.

Early Adopters

Several Fortune 500 companies have taken the lead on revolutionizing performance management, and they’ve reaped the rewards. Take Adobe, for example. Profiled in *Fortune* as the world’s #124 largest capitalization company last year, Adobe ditched annual performance reviews in 2011, replacing them with frequent “check-ins.” This radical HR move has paid unexpected dividends (see “How Adobe Keeps Key Employees From Quitting” in the June 16, 2015 edition of *Fortune*), as the company has

accelerated its product development cycle, improved its market performance and kept its employees engaged and motivated, enabling the company to outcompete its rivals in Silicon Valley’s most intense talent market. Of course, multiple factors have been responsible for Adobe’s success.

A global shift toward a more inclusive, development-focused performance system has been launched, and it appears to be going full-steam ahead.

However, the innovation in how the company manages its people was among the decisive factors. Flexibility, manager support and the focus on teams has helped Adobe lead the way in business as well as with its talent. Within a couple of years after Adobe’s bold move, a few technology pioneers cautiously followed. Then, in 2015, the flood gates opened, ushering in a wave of innovative breakthroughs involving a broad spectrum of companies such as Gap, Cigna, Microsoft, Cisco and the four big accounting firms.

When the announcement about GE dropping performance ratings and launching a new comprehensive performance development process hit the news a couple of years ago, it became official that the trend had grown into a movement (see “Why GE Had to Kill Its Performance Reviews After More Than Three Decades” on Quartz.com). For decades, GE has been an enduring icon of performance excellence, having defined what the “gold standard” for performance management was. When it announced that it was abandoning its annual performance ritual and was embarking on a new performance development agenda using the frequent-feedback, rating-less model, it reinforced the notion that the tide was turning and the next-generation performance management had finally and legitimately arrived.

Today, dozens of organizations are converting their performance management systems into something better, stronger and more strategic.

Research Is Slowly Catching Up With Practice

As the new practice of performance management has evolved and new change management processes have

matured, the next generation of innovative and strategic HR leaders has emerged. It is exciting to witness how the most bold and courageous HR practitioners among us are taking risks, stepping up to the challenge of leading the charge and shaping the future of work.

Evidence is continuing to build in support of broad-scale performance management overhaul. HRPS, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)'s executive network, held an expanded panel discussion on this topic at its 2016 annual conference. HCI and the Conference Board have been holding performance management-centered conferences for the last couple of years, and New York-based NeuroLeadership Institute unveiled its own trend analysis of companies dropping performance ratings. Deloitte partnered with talent management expert Marcus Buckingham to overhaul its performance management system (read about the reasons why in the article “Reinventing Performance Management” in the April 2015 issue of *Harvard Business Review*).

In 2015, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology's Leading Edge Consortium conference centered around trends and research on performance management from the industrial psychology perspective. SHRM has run a series of webinars to shed more light on performance management next practices, and WorldatWork has partnered with the Center for Effective Organizations to contribute their share of research by studying the “before” and “after” of companies that have gone rating-less. And last year *WorldatWork Journal* dedicated an entire issue to the topic of the evolving performance management model.

Research is beginning to flood the market, finally catching up to practice.

What Role Does Technology Play?

The role technology has played in performance management transformation is quite instructive. It was the inflexible and clunky HRIS systems that may have ultimately doomed the old process to failure. The new

Make Small Changes, So You Can Be Change Ready

Even if your organization isn't quite ready to join the performance management revolution, there are some things you can be doing now that will help you more easily move in that direction if or when the time comes.

Start with a review of your organization's current state, and decide on strategic direction. It all depends on the outcomes you are looking for. If transformation and innovation is your goal, the legacy annual review might not work for you. If, on the other hand, you have just implemented a process that delivers and you are seeing results, you might want to keep what's working — at least for now.

Accelerate the performance cycle. Even if you are keeping your current performance system, a once-per-year appraisal is simply too little too late. Quarterly reviews are becoming more and more common, and new, fast-moving organizations are making manager conversations even more frequent.

Simplify documentation. Requiring managers to do a lot of documenting and recording takes time away from them talking to their employees. Remember that timely feedback and on-the-job discussion is the most valuable part of any manager's time.

Focus on managers' conversations. Managers are the backbone of the new way of doing performance management. If there is one investment you need to commit to regardless of your overall transformation status, it is developing your managers' coaching skills.

Separate performance management and rewards. We've learned from behavioral economics that managing performance and assigning rewards is not a combination that leads to increased motivation of employees. At minimum, use performance review time to discuss performance only. Save the rewards conversation for later.

Invest in developing HR capability. Performance management transformation requires stewardship from HR, and many HR organizations are not prepared to lead such drastic changes. Make sure you're ready.

rating-less and no-documentation practice may have developed in defiance of the old tech infrastructure. Without “the platform,” companies took matters into their own hands and custom designed new performance management systems and processes. In the space of a couple of years, an ecosystem of startups has emerged, offering innovative and flexible solutions to enable fast-paced, simplified processes providing efficient, just-in-time connections between employees and their managers.

A new generation of cloud-based performance tools powered by big data algorithms and artificial intelligence is already flooding the market, and several talent management companies have unveiled innovative performance management apps. With this kind of technology, organizations are able to scale and adopt much more personalized, flexible solutions.

Practical Lessons for HR

For those of us working in higher education (which is not necessarily known for breakthrough management practices), seeing mainstream media reporting disruptions in the way human resources operates in the realm of performance management might be a little disorienting, as the rating-less environment for us represents a largely untested territory with land mines everywhere along the way and questions about differentiating talent, deciding on pay for performance and managing for risk and compliance.

But no matter where you stand on the performance management change readiness front, making a few decisive steps toward at least building the capability for change is a must. Here’s what you can do in the now:

Ask questions. Some questions we should be asking ourselves at our own organizations include “What would it take to make annual performance appraisals a reward?” “How could we take the fear out of the process and make it forward looking, energizing and motivating for our employees?” “Would anyone argue against having more mentoring and feedback in the workplace?” “What if we trained managers to coach, not judge, and rewarded them for coaching regularly and effectively?” “What if we created a culture where employees proactively ask for feedback

and expect to hear from their managers when they need it most?”

Empower managers and employees. Managers cannot do their jobs unassisted. The more organizations and managers know about employees’ needs and aspirations, the more targeted their messages can be. HR should place a focus on gathering that information and making it available


With all of the new technology at our fingertips, organizations are able to scale and adopt much more personalized, flexible solutions to performance management.

to managers. HR should also empower employees by giving them a voice. One way to do this is through people analytics and social technology tools.

Place a focus on collaboration. To achieve new performance levels in an organization, we must create teams and break out of silos, so make sure the performance system you currently have does not incentivize competition among team members. Review your reward systems, and validate collaboration as a special community asset.

Build HR capability. No change would be possible without purposeful, competent and empowered HR teams. Invest in building your HR organization’s innovative capability. Test out new client solutions on your HR team first, and make sure HR is fully on board.

Explore new technology. Switching to a new HRIS system is a major undertaking and might take longer than you think. Instead, try out new agile tools (think: apps) that do not require a big system overhaul.

In summary, there are many ways to join the performance management revolution. No organization can attract and retain high-potential, high-performing talent without moving along with the times. Just remember — getting there is a marathon, not a sprint, so be prepared to commit for the long haul. 

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With Gratitude

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the three individuals who completed their terms on CUPA-HR's national board of directors on June 30. These individuals gave freely of their time and talents, and each made tremendous contributions to the association over their past few years of service on the board. Thank you for your service and leadership!



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Associate Vice Chancellor
and Chief Human
Resources Officer
Vanderbilt University



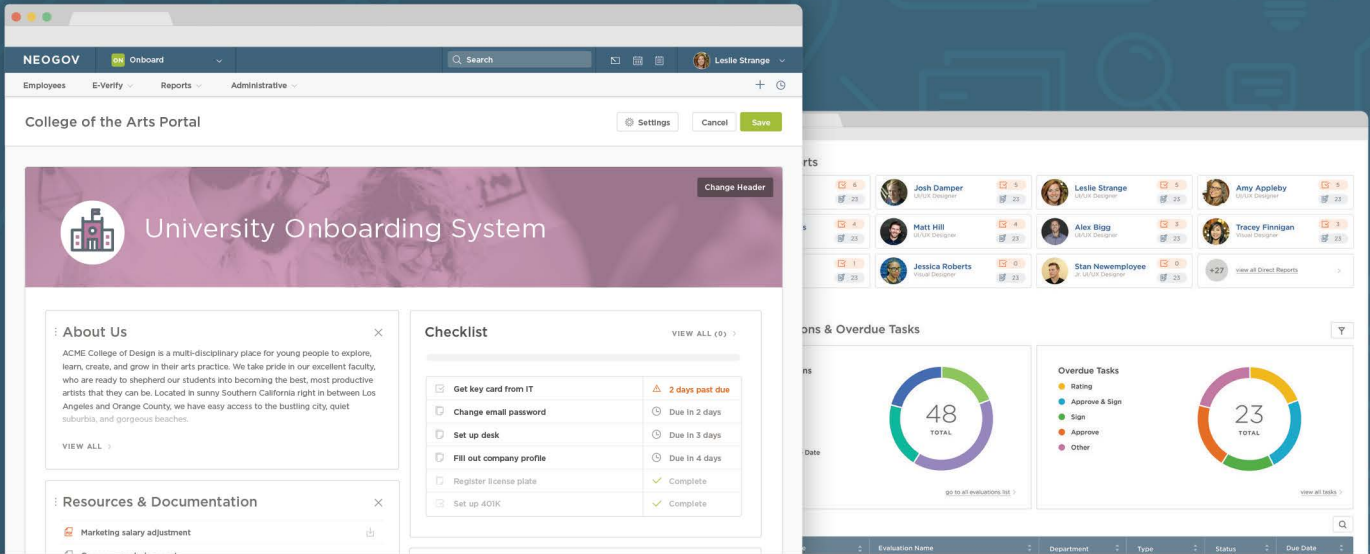
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