



June 16, 2011

## Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity in the workplace is an important issue in business. Mixing with people from different races, nationality and religious backgrounds is unavoidable. In fact, a diverse workforce actually offers a number of benefits to a company. Therefore, the issue of diversity in the workplace needs to be addressed.

This month, Dr. Jason F. Kirksey, Associate Vice President for Institutional Diversity, will address the issue of diversity in the workforce, including its benefits.

Dr. Kirksey holds the rank of Associate Professor in the OSU Department of Political Science and also serves as Director of the OSU Center for Africana Studies. He holds a BA in both Political Science and Economics from Oklahoma State University, and an MA in Political Science, also from OSU. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of New Orleans in 1997.

Dr. Kirksey's areas of specialization include minority politics (with an emphasis on African

Americans, Native Americans, and women in the American political system), race, politics, and sports, voting and elections, and public policy.

His research has been published in the *National Political Science Review*, *Women and Politics*, the *Voting Rights Review*, *Focus on Law Review*, and *Oklahoma Politics*. In addition to his published articles, Dr. Kirksey has written several book chapters that have primarily focused on the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He has also served as a federal court-certified expert witness on voting rights.

Plan to join us at Joseppi's Italian Kitchen, 223 E Hall of Fame in Stillwater from 11:30 - 1:00 pm on Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> for Dr. Kirksey's presentation on the Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace. The cost is \$12 for members and \$14 for non-members/guests. Please RSVP to Tonishia Van Pelt at [tonishia.van\\_pelt@okstate.edu](mailto:tonishia.van_pelt@okstate.edu) to ensure your seat at the table!

## Dates to Remember:

### Thursday, June 16, 2011

Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace \* Presented by Dr. Jason Kirksey of Institutional Diversity at OSU  
\* Joseppi's \* 11:30 am - 1:00 pm \*

### Sunday - Wednesday, June 26-29

SHRM 2011 Annual Conference & Exposition \* Las Vegas Convention Center \* Las Vegas, Nevada  
Guest Speakers include Sir Richard Branson & Michael J Fox. Entertainment includes Keith Urban \*

### Thursday, July 21, 2011

Pension Reform: 2011 & Beyond The Retirement Landscape \* Presented by Kaci Dinsomre, VP of Corporate Retirement Plans for Summit Financial

## Dates to Remember (Cont.):

Group \* Joseppi's \* 11:30 am – 1:00 pm \*

**Thursday, August 18, 2011**

TBD \* Presented by Travis Bradshaw, Senior Account Executive with Summit Financial Group \* Joseppi's \* 11:30 am – 1:00 pm \*

## Summer HR Checklist

Memorial Day weekend is the sign that summer is soon to come. After the holiday, however, a host of HR issues will make an annual reappearance...dress code, company picnics and outings, vacation scheduling, "Friday sick days," and so forth.

Following is a checklist of 8 policies or programs you may want to review and possibly add their revisions to your Summer HR 'to do' Checklist:

1. **Dress Code.** Business casual tends to be more open for interpretation in the summer. Be sure to clarify where your organization stands in regards to summer attire including capris, shorts, sleeveless tops, types of suits, overexposure, open-toes shoes, flip flops, etc. Whatever restrictions your organization sets, they should be equally applied to all employees (regardless of gender, race, and other demographic factors) and clearly communicated to all employees.
2. **Company-Sponsored Outings Behavior.** As with the office party around December holidays, many companies have corporate outings. Common company outings include golf tournaments, cookouts, and company baseball games. Food activities, raffles, prizes, and inclusion of employees' families are all staples of a great summer company outing. With the warm weather, some might even include swimming or decent amounts of alcohol. As previously mentioned, summer dress codes also tend

to allow for more revealing attire. Policies you may want to review for this area include harassment, discrimination, and professional behavior. Be sure your employees understand that even if a company-sponsored function does not take place on company property, they are still expected to adhere to company policies.

3. **Attendance.** There's nothing quite like a long, three-day weekend in the summer. That's why you need to watch out for "Friday Fever." The symptoms include an otherwise healthy employee calling in, consistently being late or leaving early on a beautiful, sunny Friday. Make sure that your organization has attendance and tardiness policies in place to deal with issues such as these. More importantly, however, attempt to solve the real issue of why employees are taking off work. Do they need more flexibility? More time off? Are they burnt out? Perhaps it may be a good idea to create a "summer flex-time" policy. At any rate, the increased need for time off in the summer leads to our next issue...
4. **Vacations/Paid Time Off (PTO).** Vacations are a common part of the summer season. Encourage staff to use their vacation time and implement a sound process for scheduling vacations. Schedule summer vacations in the fairest, most efficient way. For organizations experiencing difficulties scheduling vacations here are a few suggestions:
  - Use a vacation planner or vacation planning system
  - Remind employees that the business' needs need to come first
  - Require employees to schedule time off in advance
  - Have employees coordinate vacation time with their co-workers
  - Have a system for employees to request or "bid" on preferred dates
  - Develop policies that specify what

criteria will be used to approve vacations

Get a jump on the anticipated incoming flux of vacation/PTO policy questions by sending out a memo which outlines your company's basic guidelines and procedures.

5. **Holiday Observation.** Summer brings three major holidays: Memorial Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Labor Day. Although Memorial Day is already behind us, be sure to clarify the remaining days employees will have off – and you may want to use this opportunity to include the remaining holidays for the year.
6. **Cross-Training.** With all of the summer holidays and vacations, cross-training moves to the forefront. We've all experienced the issue of an employee that takes time off, something happens in their absence, and no one has been trained to handle the situation. Be sure your cross-training of crucial functions is up to date, and if not, rectify the issue before it brings your business to a standstill.
7. **Performance.** Speaking of results, it is mid-year and an ideal time for employees to meet with their supervisors and review their progress on key goals and objectives set at the beginning of the year. While on-going feedback is preferable, encourage supervisors to conduct a mid-year (at the very least) review or discussion with their employees so that employees are not surprised by the feedback they receive or the results of their performance review at the end of the year. If performance is substandard, take steps to coach, mentor, and improve it.
8. **Wellness Program.** Health care costs are a key issue for many employers, but wellness initiatives are often an effective solution for creating a healthier workforce and decreasing healthcare costs. Coordinate a few outdoor activities this summer such as outdoor fitness exercises, walking

programs, lunch-time pick-up sports, and other activities. Summer is also an ideal time to initiate education on nutrition topics, given the widespread availability of fresh ingredients.

While these suggested areas may not hit all of your company's hot-topic buttons, they are many of the most common. Additionally, for HR professionals with limited resources, they are a good place to start. Now, dust off that policy manual and start your review.

## SAHRA designated 2010 Chapter Champion

The Society of Human Resource Management Foundation's Champions Program recognizes exceptional chapters and state councils for their commitment, leadership and generous support to the annual fundraising campaign.

To achieve the Foundation's Champion designation, SAHRA had to meet specific fundraising and contribution requirements. It is through these contributions that the Foundation can continue their scholarship programs, academic research grants, and education products that advance the HR profession.



Special thanks goes to Kris Langston, 2010 President, and Jamie Payne, 2010 Foundation Chair.

## Find Us on Facebook

SAHRA is now on Facebook! "Like" us to connect with other HR professionals, share comments & articles, and information. You can also get an inside look at upcoming events and ideas by becoming a fan. Find us on Facebook today!

## Workers Compensation Reform Passed by Oklahoma Legislature

The Oklahoma Legislature passed SB 878 and has taken a positive step towards reforming the state's workers compensation system, protecting workers and improving the climate for job growth, according to the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America (PCI).

Workers compensation reform was a major priority this legislative session and SB 878 contained several important provisions that provide tools for improvements to the indemnity system, medical cost containment and improved return to work outcomes. The bill had bi-partisan support and was signed by Governor Mary Fallin.

"The passage of SB 878 is a major victory for Oklahoma's workers and business community," said Joe Woods, vice president for PCI. "The reforms effectively address medical cost containment, restructure medical fee schedules and adopt nationally recognized treatment guidelines for medical care. This legislation will ultimately improve benefits to workers by helping them get proper treatment and return to work and contain costs for employers.

Some of the major reforms include:

- ❖ Requiring the Administrator to develop a new Medical Fee Schedule by July 1, 2012 for the purpose of reducing overall medical cost by 5% but includes specific statutory

reimbursement requirements for MRI, radiology, Evaluation and Management, durable medical equipment, and physician provided DME and prescription drugs.

- ❖ Effective March 1, 2012 the scope and duration of medical treatment shall be in accordance with the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) and the Physician Advisory Committee may develop Oklahoma Treatment Guidelines for injuries to cervical,

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thoracic, and lumbar spine and also addressing pain management and continuing medical maintenance to supplement the ODG.

- ❖ Permanent Partial Impairment to parts of the body other than scheduled members must be based on AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment 5<sup>th</sup> Edition or a subsequent edition approved by the Administrator after public hearing; PAC may recommend the adoption of a method or system to evaluate permanent impairment that deviates or replaces the AMA Guides.
- ❖ Retains the Workers Compensation Court and Administrator and increases the number of judges to 10.

## Share It With Us

Got something to share or an announcement to make, such as an exciting professional achievement? Let SAHRA acknowledge and post it in the monthly newsletter. Please submit to Cheryl Garrett @ [c\\_garrett@oncueexpress.com](mailto:c_garrett@oncueexpress.com)

\*All submissions are subject to SAHRA Board approval and SHRM guidelines.

## HR Job Postings

Does your company have an opening in human resources? If so, take advantage of low advertising costs and place your ad in the Stillwater Area Human Resource Association newsletter and on the front page of the SAHRA website.

Consider the following:

1. \$75 per advertisement - one position
2. Position(s) must be related to human resource profession
3. Valid for 28 days from date of insertion
4. Advertisement may be renewed - \$40 renewal fee for 28 additional days
5. Must supply logo in .jpg or .gif format
6. Must supply advertisement as Word document, PDF format, or by e-mail
7. Do not need to be SAHRA/SHRM member

For more information, please contact Coral White, [coral.white@okstate.edu](mailto:coral.white@okstate.edu), (405) 744-5379.

### MISSION STATEMENT

#### Stillwater Area Human Resources Association

*To be recognized and respected as an organization, which promotes the development of Human Resource professionals into strategic business partners within their organizations by providing professional growth through development programs, networking opportunities, and community service projects.*