These are difficult times.

Every precaution must be taken to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities.

At the same time, the hiring of essential personnel – those who work in public safety and public works – has rarely been as critical as it is right now. So, how do we test job candidates safely?

IPMA-HR’s online testing and live remote proctoring services give you the tools you need to test candidates safely.

With these services, job candidates can take tests securely from any location – wherever they have a computer with a high-speed internet connection, keeping everyone safe while also extending your reach and expanding opportunity.

Learn more about online testing and live remote proctoring on our website, or call 1-800-381-TEST (8378).
Over the past decade, increasingly frequent federal government shutdowns, seemingly annual delays in passing state budgets, growing demands for local government services, and competition from the private sector made talent acquisition and management in the public sector more challenging than ever. Then the coronavirus pandemic hit.

Far beyond concerns over competitive salaries, attractive benefits and achievable career ladders, agencies and departments at all levels of government overnight found themselves answering existential questions about maintaining adequate staffing, deciding who truly held an essential job, protecting personnel who could not comply with stay-at-home orders and establishing workable work from home programs.

*HR News* has no definitive answers, but we were able to sift through reams of tips for managing remote teams and produce an annotated list of 12 consensus recommendations. The first step is to get the technology right. Setting and enforcing performance and communication expectations, focusing on product rather than process, and increasing employee recognition help.

Also timely, the [CompDoctor™](#) explains which questions public sector organizations must ask and answer before deciding whether to offer hazard pay to essential employees. The considerations go much farther than deciding who qualifies and calculating the rate.

The majority of this month’s article were drafted “B.C.”—before COVID-19. Still, each offers important information for when readers return to their more-typical struggles with recruiting and retaining dedicated, skilled public servants.

Applicant tracking system marketing manager Nina Cofer presents tips for fair hiring that boil down to ensuring older workers and individuals who have criminal records receive equal shots at qualifying for interviews and getting hired. She notes that employers help themselves when they “set a baseline of expectations for all candidates and give each job applicant and new hire fair opportunities to meet those expectations. You might be surprised at who outshines the rest.”

Michael Bungay Stanier, who has written two books on coaching, emphasizes that effective leadership requires guiding employees toward identifying and implementing their own solutions. The process he prescribes for doing that consists of being lazy, curious and often. Confused? Read the article.

Actually leading off the feature articles section, talent retention expert Troy Hall, Ph.D., traces the problem of valuable employees finding employment elsewhere to “the leader’s mindset, level of emotional intelligence and general concern for others’ best interests and well-being.” He does conclude on an encouraging note, however, writing, “It is easy to avoid becoming the number one cause of employees leaving. The trick involves giving employees reasons to belong. Good leaders pull the switch by showing employees that they have value and by committing to employee development.”

Between hiring and retention comes day-to-day management, which leadership coach Angela Civitella explains involves managing emotions. This definitely does not mean suppressing, ignoring or penalizing expressions of emotion. Rather, according to Civitella, “The secret to working successfully lies in learning how to acknowledge and deal with emotions. This is as true for entry-level employees as it is for chief executives.”

Last, this May marks a significant transition for IPMA-HR. Longtime Executive Director Neil Reichenberg retires at the end of the month. His successor will be introduced soon. Described by one former Association president as “a significant and influential presence,” Reichenberg led IPMA-HR’s evolution into a truly international voice for public sector human resources while also doing much to professionalize the HR function in government.

---

### Advertiser Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthur J. Gallagher &amp; Co.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPMA-HR Assessment Products</td>
<td>C2, 2, C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety Compass</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Institute at Kronos</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being a public safety telecommunicator is not a job just anyone can do. It takes a special kind of person to talk us through what are potentially the most frightening and stressful moments of our lives.

Ensure you have all the information you need to make strategic and successful hiring and promotional decisions with IPMA-HR’s Emergency Communications Center assessment products – entry-level tests, study guide, and first-line supervisor test.

Comprehensive, reliable and cost-effective, our tests provide you with the whole story about your candidates, allowing you to hire and promote with confidence every time.

Learn more! ipma-hr.org/ECC | 1-800-381-TEST (8378)
### FEATURES

1. **Avoid Talent Retention Mistake #192,653,478**

2. **3 Principles for Good Coaching as a Leader**

3. **True Leadership Demands Managing Emotions in the Workplace**

4. **3 Tips for Fair Hiring**

5. **A Dozen Consensus Best Practices for Managing Remote Employees**

### COLUMNS

16. **COMPDOKTOR™
Should Frontline Employees Receive Hazard Pay During a Public Health Crisis?**

### DEPARTMENTS

22. **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

23. **CALENDAR**

### FROM THE EDITOR

20. ‘A Significant and Influential Presence’: Neil Reichenberg to Retire as IPMA-HR Executive Director

### ADVERTISE IN HR NEWS

Visit [www.ipma-hr.org/media-kit](http://www.ipma-hr.org/media-kit) or email publications@ipma-hr.org to explore print and digital ad opportunities.
The 4th anthology from our global think tank examines an oft-forgotten group in the narrative around work/life balance, career growth, and the employee experience: the frontline workforce. Workforce Institute thought leaders recount how organizations can increase productivity via innovative programs and practices that support and engage the frontline workforce through prescriptive advice and real-world stories on how to win with your employees.
IN TOUCH WITH IPMA-HR

General Inquiries For basic information about Association programs and products, call (703) 549-7100 or email ipma@ipma-hr.org. Assessment Services Call (800) 381-TEST (8378) or email assessment@ipma-hr.org to ask about test products, test ordering and shipping, test development and test validation. Direct all other questions to (703) 549-7100.

Government Affairs For information on legislation and court decisions, email gov@ipma-hr.org.

Finance To ask about 1099s, taxes, accounts payable, credit card payments and insurance, email finance@ipma-hr.org.

Membership For membership questions, name and address changes, chapter information and dues or invoice inquiries, email membership@ipma-hr.org.

Meetings For conferences and seminar registration and information, email meetings@ipma-hr.org.

Publications To place orders, confirm prices, arrange shipping, obtain reprint permissions and submit to HR News, email publications@ipma-hr.org.

Research For sample policies, best practices, surveys and reports, call (703) 549-7100 or email research@ipma-hr.org.

Web For all questions relating to the website, email web@ipma-hr.org.

IPMA-HR Staff

Neil E. Reichenberg, Executive Director, ext. 251, nreichenberg@ipma-hr.org
Sima Hassassian, Deputy Executive Director, ext. 254, shassassian@ipma-hr.org
Ed Lamb, HR News Editor, elamb@ipma-hr.org
Lynette Martin, Administrative Assistant, ext. 200, lmartin@ipma-hr.org
Yari Randall, Test Development Manager, ext. 252, yrandall@ipma-hr.org
Markia Rauch, Mailroom Associate, ext. 240, mrauch@ipma-hr.org
Bob Sewell, Assessment Services Fulfillment Coordinator, ext. 249, bsewell@ipma-hr.org
Joanne Sisson, Accounting Manager, ext. 257, finance@ipma-hr.org
Jacqueline Snyder, Professional Development Manager, ext. 242, jsnyder@ipma-hr.org
Robert Svhila, Director of Association Services, ext. 256, rsvihla@ipma-hr.org
Debbie Tankersely-Snook, Special Assistant, ext. 250, dtankersely@ipma-hr.org
Maria Villarreal, Research Manager, ext. 244, mvillarreal@ipma-hr.org

External Staff

Alison Dixon, Graphic Designer, alison@ipma-hr.org
Kathy Dowdy, Director of Sales & Partnerships, ARP, kdowdy@associationrevenuepartners.com
Jenny Donovan, Social Media Manager & Marketing Consultant, jdonovan@ipma-hr.org
Daniel Gage, Database Administrator, dgage@ipma-hr.org
John Haas, Employment Testing Specialist, jhaas@ipma-hr.org
Julia Jaoude, HR Associate, jjaoude@ipma-hr.org
Shawn Kelly, Employment Testing Specialist, skelly@ipma-hr.org
Toni Kovalski, Test Development Consultant, tkovalski@ipma-hr.org
Jana Sobol, Senior Account Director, MGI, jsobol@marketinggeneral.com
Gabrielle Voorhees, Controller, finance@ipma-hr.org

Suggestions or comments? Please email us at customerservice@ipma-hr.org.

IPMA-HR Executive Director: Neil Reichenberg

HR News is published monthly by the International Public Management Association for Human Resources, 1617 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; (703) 549-7100. Copyright ©2020. The May issue is volume eighty-six, number five of the monthly magazine of IPMA-HR.

Article contributions of 500-2,000 words are welcome via email. HR News reserves the right to refuse and/or edit manuscripts submitted for publication. For further information, email publications@ipma-hr.org or phone (703) 549-7100, ext. 243

Send notices of changes in employment, special awards or honors, or other member news of interest to publications@ipma-hr.org, along with color photographs, if applicable.

Change of address notices should be sent to the IPMA-HR Membership Department at membership@ipma-hr.org.

IPMA-HR mailing labels are available at a base rate of $105 per 1,000 names, or at a fraction thereof for one-time rental (no retention or reproduction is allowed in any form). Key coding and selection sorts are available at additional cost. For further information, go to www.infocusmarketing.com, call (800) 708-5478 ext. 3266, fax (866) 708-5478 or mail requests to Infocus Marketing, Inc., 4245 Sigler Rd., Warrenton, VA 20187

IPMA-HR Membership Information

Join IPMA-HR today and receive HR News for free as part of your membership. Sign up online at www.ipma-hr.org or contact the Membership Department at membership@ipma-hr.org or (703) 549-7100.

Advertising Information

HR News accepts display advertising. For complete advertising information, please download our Media Kit at https://www.ipma-hr.org/media-kit or email publications@ipma-hr.org.

IPMA-HR is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to providing resources and advocacy for public human resource professionals at all levels. Comprised of four U.S. regions and more than 40 chapters, IPMA-HR represents individuals and agencies in local, state and federal government worldwide. IPMA-HR provides a focus and forum for the discussion and exchange of views and best practices among public sector human resource professionals throughout the United States and abroad.

Coming up in the June issue of HR News

Employee Engagement
Avoid Talent Retention Mistake #192,653,478

What Happens When Leaders Realize They’re the Problem

By Troy Hall, Ph.D.

I have led teams within organizations for nearly four decades. For the last 25 years, I’ve served as a senior executive. And, over the past decade, I have focused like a laser on speaking and consulting with leaders around the globe to help them transform their work environments into what I call “Cohesion Cultures.” A Cohesion Culture is one in which people feel a sense of belonging, have value and commit to both personal and organizational success.

Sessions with teams of executives permit discussions of strategies and practices for retaining talent, such as identifying the framework for creating a great work culture. The conversations reach their breakthrough point when participants take a deeper dive and start asking pointed questions about how to handle specific employee development and coaching situations.

The executives typically look for peer advice and best practices. Invariably, the dialogue gravitates toward exposing failures. In these ways, the sessions serve as great opportunities for learning how to set organizations on a path toward achievement and success.

Identifying the Problem

At the executive workshops, I have been asked, “What’s the number one mistake an organizational leader makes with talent retention?”

My response is simple, direct and concise: “You.”

And who am I to lay blame on the leader? How can I be so unapologetic about pointing out the leader’s failure? Quite simply, my decades of experience have shown me that more often than not, the leader is the prime culprit for causing the problem they are lamenting.

Furthermore, data make it clear that top executives deserve the blame. When Gallup asked employees why they quit, more than 75 percent named their supervisor as the number one reason.

No factor other than a major life event came close to poor management in driving an employee’s decision to leave. As cliché as it sounds, people do not quit jobs. They quit the boss.

Now, I am mindful to fully disclose that I, too, have been the leader causing problems. It would be a fiction to claim that I have performed perfectly in every leadership endeavor and situation. In fact, my imperfect past prompted me to change my behaviors for the better.

I will also sometimes share what my mother would say about growing as a person and rising to meet a challenge. “Your character,” she would say, “is a reflection of your choices, not your circumstances.” Mom, who was a great mentor to me, inspired me to build a reputation for solutions rather than excuses.

The devastation poor leadership visits upon individual employees and the work culture is always tough to see.
You Cannot Serve the Many Until You Serve the One

I have witnessed my fair share of good, bad, and ugly leadership. The devastation poor leadership visits upon individual employees and the work culture is always tough to see. Tracing the problem back to its origin inevitably leads me to the leader’s mindset, level of emotional intelligence and general concern for others’ best interests and well-being.

Once I realized that employees are an organization’s greatest asset, I became committed to creating a legacy that develops people for future succession opportunities. This commitment led me to create a roadmap for leaders who wish to avoid losing good employees. The mileposts are

1. Be the leader
2. Build the culture, and
3. Bring it to life.

Leaders must first take care of themselves. If a leader is not properly prepared, then how can they be expected to lead others?

Additionally, leaders need to be self-aware, and they must treat employees as agents of transformation rather than variables in a transaction. Leaders who adopt transformative principles espouse a vision and teach it as a daily habit. They are good social architects, and they create trusting environments.

Observe, Imitate, Model

Most learning happens in the form of social learning. Albert Bandura, the American psychologist, theorized that social learning occurs when people observe the actions, behaviors and characteristics of others, decide what to imitate and then model the actions, behaviors or characteristics they interpret to be valued and valuable. For this reason, leaders must be intentional in how they act, what they say and which behaviors they reward.

It is easy to avoid becoming the number one cause of employees leaving. The trick involves giving employees reasons to belong. Good leaders pull the switch by showing employees that they have value and by committing to employee development. Doing those things strongly positions a leader to align employees’ activities with desired organizational outcomes, And doing that results in greater achievement and accomplishment.

When it comes to talent retention, leaders who make the biggest impacts in the lives of others never want to be the number one cause for employees leaving. Instead, they strive to channel positivity and good into their relationships with their talent and take responsibility for being the number one reason employees stay.

Troy Hall, Ph.D., is an expert in talent retention who holds a doctorate in global leadership & entrepreneurship. Currently the chief strategy officer for South Carolina Federal Credit Union, he is also the author of Cohesion Culture: Proven Principles to Retain Top Talent and a trainer on how to build an organizational culture utilizing the Talent Retention Model™. To learn more, visit drtroyhall.com or connect with Hall on LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook. —N
The best leaders have mastered the behavior of coaching. The good news is that anyone can learn and practice that behavior and turn it into a habit.

First, you must understand what coaching is.

Coaching focuses on the process, not the outcomes. The outcomes can be great, of course, but a coach must focus on what they can control. One’s behavior is within one’s control; outcomes are not.

You also need to recognize that no definition of coaching says, “Never give advice” or “Only ask questions.” Either imperative would be deeply impractical. Coaching implies giving advice. The problem is that advice-giving is usually an overdeveloped muscle. What you should do to become a good coach is train the underdeveloped muscle of curiosity.

Three principles of leadership, which are foundational behaviors, follow from understanding that coaching is a curiosity-driven process. I frame those principles as

- Be lazy,
- Be curious, and
- Be often

Being lazy is, of course, the most provocative principle. I am pretty certain you are working hard, as are those around you. No one rises up the ranks by sitting around and twiddling their thumbs.

In truth, I am not encouraging anyone to actually be lazy. I offer that as a bit of classic misdirection. Being more coach-like actually involves putting in hard work. What a good coach and leader should be lazy about is jumping in and solving other people’s problems for them. Just stop that.

The second principle of being curious is the most essential. There is no getting around the fact you cannot be more coach-like if you are not being curious.

Staying curious and managing conversations is the hard work of coaching and leading. Being lazy enough to refuse to do someone else’s job tames what I have dubbed the Advice Monster.

Finally, being often is the most radical principle. It slyly blows up the idea that coaching is an occasional, hierarchical and formal event for leaders.

Every interaction can be a bit of a coaching session. All it takes to be more coach-like during routine interactions is staying curious a little bit longer. So, you can be more coach-like in meetings, on the phone, while exchanging texts, over Slack ... via pretty much any channel of communication.

Putting the Principles Into Practice

To deliver on the three principles, you need to ask seven types of questions. There are, of course, many great questions in the world.
A healthy subset of those are excellent for coaching. The following core questions can be used in most situations. Each works by itself, and they can be asked in any order.

- **The Kickstart Question**: Asking “What’s on your mind?” is a perfect way to start many conversations. The query is both open and focusing at the same time.

- **The AWE Question**: With AWE standing for “And what else?” This may be the best coaching question in the world because the first answer is never the only answer. And additional answers rarely show the very first answer to be the best one.

- **The Focus Question**: We all waste too much time and effort before simply asking “What’s the real challenge for you here?” and getting to the heart of the problem. By failing to ask a focusing question, we solve the wrong problems because we have been seduced into thinking the first challenge we identified is the real challenge.

- **The Foundation Question**: Asking “What do you want?” is the best way to spur motivated and informed action.

- **The Strategy Question**: Making courageous choices requires asking “If you’re saying yes to this, what must you say no to?” Determining opportunity costs and making commitments set a strategy.

- **The Lazy Question**: “What do you want from me?” is greatly preferable to “How can I help?” A coach and leader who offers to help is in the business of rescuing rather than teaching and motivating.

- **The Learning Question**: Learning does not happen when you tell someone something. Rather, it happens when a person figures the thing out for themselves. Consequently, the coaching question to ask is “What was most useful or valuable here for you?”

These questions are short, and they are simple. That is, they’re uncomplicated. Each one takes less than five seconds to ask. There is no set script. You can accomplish a lot with a little.

None of these characteristics make the questions simple to answer. On the contrary, you cannot know the answers before you ask any of them. While it is easy to end up asking questions that are designed to confirm a hypothesis or generate an answer you want or think to be the one that should be given, posing questions that knock at the door of the unknown produces greater results.

**Ask Coaching Questions in Combination**

The seven questions are all excellent on their own. But, as with other things in life, combining them sometimes makes them better. Think bread and butter or 1970s Hall and Oates. Or think bread and cheese, gin and tonic, or bread and butter and cheese. (OK, I like bread.)

Here are three great question combinations.

**The Focus Combo**
- What’s the real challenge for you here?
- And what else?
- And what else?
- So, what’s the real challenge for you here?

With four questions, you drill down deep to get closer to the real issue. I have found that slowing that last question down to make it sound particularly weighty is a great tactic.

**The Bookends Combo**
- What’s on your mind?
- [The rest of the conversation]
- What was most useful here for you?

Everyday leadership behavior is fast and effective. It amounts to starting strong and finishing strong. Getting things going by asking the Kickstart Question initiates a real conversation right away. Wrapping up with the Learning Question helps ensure you and the person you coached extract value and insights from the conversation that might otherwise have been missed.

**The AWE Combo**
- Ask any open-ended question such as “What do you want?”
- Add “And what else?”

Do not think that your work is done just because you received an answer to your initial question. Most likely, the first answer is nothing more than the froth on the cappuccino and the real stuff is yet to come. You can get more from anyone by immediately asking what else they have to say.

Asking the seven questions consistently and intentionally is the manifestation of the principles of being lazy, curious and often as a leader who coaches. It is not enough to hope they will come up naturally. Start by picking the one that you think will make the most difference for you and then actively incorporating it into your routine daily interactions with those you lead.

---

Michael Bungay Stanier is the founder of MBS.works and the author of the books The Coaching Habit and The Advice Trap. You can connect with him via LinkedIn. —MBS
Some people advocate creating an emotion-free work environment. Although those people have good intentions, what they seek is unrealistic. Too many unforeseen events make it impossible to work in an environment devoid of emotions, or even an environment in which emotions are completely controlled at all times.

Human beings are emotional creatures. At any given moment in our professional lives, we can experience joy, sadness, anger, stress, fulfillment and more. Especially in these crazy COVID-19 times, when many of us are working from home and others are wondering how secure their jobs are, our emotions can be all over the place. Leaders, managers and executives facing these uncertain times and trying to manage teams in ways they have never had to before are on a wild roller coaster of emotions.

The secret to working successfully lies in learning how to acknowledge and deal with emotions. This is as true for entry-level employees as it is for chief executives.

Here are some tips and tricks to navigate the sometimes messy world of alpha personalities, divas and leaders in your organization and come out victorious.

**Honesty Is the Best Policy**

Can you remember a time you worked for a boss who projected a perfect image? Maybe they were really smart, always had all the answers and were, indeed, a top industry expert.

Guess what? That boss still had struggles. Whether they show it or not, everyone does.

The truth is that leaders who are honest about their struggles typically see their team members kick in with extra degrees of loyalty and trust because they can relate. Coming clean about challenges may also make team members more mindful about creating chaos themselves.

Now, a leader does not have to divulge every little personal detail about their life. They just need to understand that the more they open up to people, the more genuine their relationships will be. This benefits the organization in two ways.

First, as bonds between team members strengthen, everyone will become more productive and the quality of what team members produce will increase. Additionally, when you have strong relationships within an organization, people look forward to coming to work instead of dreading it and seeing their jobs as nothing more than ways to earn paychecks.

**Address Emotions in the Workplace**

If you let tension build long enough without addressing it, it is going to boil over and create a much larger problem. Let’s say, for example, you have two coworkers who are constantly bickering. Or, two type-A personalities spend team meetings insisting their way is the only way. Pretending that chaos is not happening and everything is fine and dandy will cause more problems than the individual feuds themselves.

To be effective, a leader must commit to helping whomever is having a meltdown regain their sanity. A key to addressing emotions properly is doing so swiftly without making the other person feel attacked or threatened.

Reaching a resolution requires going deep and looking for what triggered the employee’s emotional behavior in the first place. This makes it possible to deal with root problems and gives insight into which danger zones to avoid entering. Identifying the boiling point puts a leader and other team members in good positions to prevent future outbursts.
Recognize That Men and Women Express Emotions Differently

“Biologically,” Loraine Collier explains in a February 2014 *Monitor on Psychology* article, “there may be a reason women cry more than men: Testosterone may inhibit crying, while the hormone prolactin (seen in higher levels in women) may promote it.”

In the very next sentence, though, Collier writes, “But a desire to cry is not all nature.”

Tears in the workplace should warn a leader that something needs to be addressed immediately. Is the crying employee feeling overworked? Is she sick? Is he stressed? Is there some event outside the workplace that the employee needs to address?

Effective leaders offer their shoulder to cry on and serve as a sounding board for complaints and potential solutions, True leaders also make sincere efforts to help team members through a crisis in any way they can. When the issue cannot be resolved or if the employee is in some kind of clear or perceived danger, suggesting an intervention by a mental health professional or referring the matter to law enforcement is appropriate.

Above all, a leader must remember that working through emotions is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength.

Sort Through Your Own Emotions

More than ever, with the COVID-19 crisis impacting all of us, we need to take time to focus on our own mental health and well-being. Taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do to ensure professional success.

If you are a leader and feeling overwhelmed, take a well-deserved breather. Tell your team, but keep it short. You have nothing to explain. Simply say, “You know what? I need a break. I’ll be back in 30 minutes.”

And then take your break.

A leader who tends to their own well-being also sets an important example for employees. Taking breaks, recharging and dealing with stress in healthy ways signals to everyone that it is OK to do those things.

On the other hand, a leader who neglects their emotions will not be able to perform at their best. The quality of their work will diminish, and the whole team may suffer.

The Takeaway

When it comes to managing emotions in the workplace, leaders encounter the complex challenge that any emotional situation can send deep and long-lasting ripples through the organization. This makes treating the expression of emotions as something healthy a way for great leaders to really set themselves apart.

The new, uncertain reality in which we are all living and learning to navigate is going to take an emotional toll and add a new dynamic to work relationships that few have ever seen. As your team moves forward, it is essential to step up as a leader who helps each employee deal with the ups and downs of trying to figure it all out while staying focused on the tasks before them.

*Angela Civitella is a business leadership coach and founder of the firm INTINDE.*
Tech-savvy younger employees have been in high demand. As much work has gone remote and looks to stay that way, all types of organizations are looking for qualified candidates who possess the ability to use advanced technological tools every day. But what about the large proportion of the workforce who cannot work from home?

It pays to be selective during the recruiting and hiring process, and especially when deciding who to hire. But being too critical regarding what disqualifies an otherwise promising candidate eliminates a large pool of talented individuals. Even for tech jobs, focusing on younger applicants leads to overlooking a large chunk of prospective employees.

In addition, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, some 70 million Americans have criminal records. Automatically excluding those individuals from consideration knocks out even more prospects who could have been valued and valuable employees.

The lesson is that human resources managers and hiring decision makers should not stress over a candidate’s age or background. It benefits everyone to instead focus on the contributions older or previously incarcerated workers could make to the organization and its culture.

To further that refocusing, here are three tips for making sure that unfair screening practices do not prevent successful hires.

**Eliminate Bias From the Start**

If you are wondering whether your organization treats every potential job applicant fairly, the answer is that your organization probably does not. Let that realization motivate you to eliminate biased screening and interviewing practices. Rewriting the standard job application itself is a good place to start.

Questions about age, race, credit history, criminal record and previous workers’ compensation claims should not be asked of applicants. Responses are more likely to steer hiring managers away from top candidates than they are to identify people worth bringing into the organization.

While it is important for employers to justify hiring decisions, it is also critical to give all qualified job seekers a fair chance. Too often, asking about anything other than education and work history early in the hiring process creates grey areas and leads to rejecting strong candidates without ever learning about their strengths. And when it comes to a criminal record, most readers will agree that everyone deserves a second chance.

When a person’s criminal convictions or age is an important consideration for holding and performing a job, such information can be gathered from speaking face to face or conducting a virtual interview. If such factors have little to no relevance to the job, serious consideration should be given to not asking about them at all.

**Stop Stereotyping**

Disregarding a top candidate’s skills and expertise due to ideas about their age or background is discriminatory and wrong. The excuse that a job candidate “won’t fit in” is just that: an excuse.

In fact, greater diversity equates to greater productivity and improved problem solving. As Boston Consulting Group noted in a 2017 report, “There is strong evidence that diversity can improve the performance of organizations, particularly those relying on creativity and innovation.” The BCG authors then went on to cite studies showing that diversity increases resilience, adaptability and organizational learning.

When hiring for diversity, do not overlook older workers. If nothing else, focusing on building a team from the bottom up with fresh-out-of-school workers denies an organization access to...
skills. The phrase “older and wiser” is in common use for a reason. Employees who arrive with real-world experience possess expertise and wisdom that younger workers simply have not cultivated. Plus, one never knows when an “obsolete” skill will suddenly become critical.

Ignoring stereotypes and investing in a blended workforce can serve as a WELCOME sign for a lot of great talent. The bigger that metaphorical sign is, the more vibrant your organizational culture will become.

Don’t Limit Expectations

Set a baseline of expectations for all candidates and give each job applicant and new hire fair opportunities to meet those expectations. You might be surprised at who outshines the rest.

Bearing this out, John Hopkins Health Systems & Hospital has since 2000 built a workforce in which 5 percent of employees have criminal records. An analysis of retention rates over a four-year period revealed that “fair chance employees had a 43 percent higher retention rate than employees without a criminal record.”

Such a finding points to the importance of taking loyalty and determination into account when deciding who to hire. To deploy a buzzword, focusing on a job candidate’s grit can help hiring managers pick out the best of the best among a sea of applicants.

The time to accept hard truths is always. Personal biases must be identified and challenged while reviewing resumes and talking to team members about the application, interviewing and hiring process. It is best to confront what keeps you stuck in the same rut. Evolving a fresh and dynamic process for recruiting and hiring will attract the best-quality talent and help you snatch them up before someone else does.

Nina Cofer is a product marketing manager at Breezy HR, an applicant tracking system based in Jacksonville, Fla. Connect with her on LinkedIn. —N

Gallagher

BUILDING BETTER

Trends in Talent, Compensation and Sustainability

Communication and strategy are key to holistically improving the wellbeing of any public sector organization. Whether a town, a metropolitan city or a K-12 school, each organization faces unique challenges.

Is there a secret to career and organizational wellbeing in the public sector? Our new Building Better video explores thought-provoking insights into the real-world challenges your organization faces every day.

The experts at Gallagher can help you attract, engage and retain top talent to meet your strategic goals and face the future with confidence.

Download our 30-minute video roundtable and written summary at GallagherHRCC.com/BuildingBetter/IPMA.
A small, quick survey of 365 U.S. companies showed that 66 percent of respondents had some portion of their workforce working remotely for some portion of each week. B2B rating service Clutch, which conducted the survey, also found that the proportion of employees who spent their entire workweeks outside the office rose from 19 percent before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to 44 percent in late March 2020.

IPMA-HR joined the stampede away from the office by temporarily shuttering its Alexandria, Va. headquarters on March 29, the day before Virginia’s stay-at-home order took effect. The fact that you received notice of this HR News issue appearing online and becoming available for download confirms that remote teams need not miss a step when it comes to serving customers and producing deliverables.

But how?

Inevitably, the sudden shift to working from home triggered an onrush of tips for managing remote employees. You have probably been too busy actually managing and working to review any of those how-tos. So I did that for you.

Poring through everything from CNBC’s “7 Things You Must Do to Effectively Manage Remote Workers” to WeWork’s “16 Tips for Managing Remote Teams” and going back a couple of years revealed a significant overlap of advice. I took this to mean most everyone agrees that the following 12 practices consistently work for organizations whose workers work from home. For simplicity’s sake, I generally quote just one source for each consensus best practice.

**Get the Technology Right**

Remote team managers and members will surely agree with the insight from an April 11, 2020, *Government Executive* article that working from home and staying productive “takes more than a laptop, an internet connection, and apps like Slack or Zoom.” At the same time, no job gets done well without the necessary tools.

**Set Clear Expectations**

Ilean Harris, a member of the Forbes Coaches Council observed, “Everyone has a different idea of what doing something ‘quickly’ or ‘well’ means.” In her contribution to a list published on Forbes.com on May 30, 2018, she recommended “showing examples of what you expect to be done, calendar sharing, etc., [to] make sure you have clear expectations from those you work with online.”

Writing for Gallup on Aug. 14, 2019, Adam Hickman, Ph.D., and Ilana Ron Levey offered a little more specificity on setting expectations. “Managers need to be explicit about what the remote worker must produce,” they stated. “The parameters, deadlines and metrics of tasks must be crystal clear, but so should the manager’s personal feelings. If a manager needs weekly progress reports, for instance, or prompt replies to emails, the manager must say so and hold the employee accountable.”

**For Those Who Cannot Work From Home**

A great deal of public sector work cannot be performed remotely. First responders, law enforcement personnel, health care providers, IT staff, road crews, water and power professionals, building maintenance workers and many others must all report for duty regardless of risks. IPMA-HR thanks these brave and selfless individuals. Essential information on protecting essential employees appears on our *Coronavirus Resources for Public Sector Organizations* webpage.
Create Clear Communications Guidelines

Videoconference solutions provider Highfive explains that remote team members communicate best when they know and respect
- Other members’ preferred communication method (email vs. text message vs. chat vs. phone vs. video conferencing),
- How often communications should occur,
- When communications should occur if members live in different time zones,
- Expected turnaround times for replies, and
- When team members will not be available.

Trust Team Members

Nearly every tip-giver offered some version of this key to successfully managing remote workers. Organizations are best served by avoiding the temptation to monitor electronic messages and force employees to use tracking software.

Set Aside Time for Regular One-on-One Conversations

Jobs site Indeed recommends scheduling weekly or biweekly chats with each team member. If nothing else, calls or videoconferences conducted with no other distractions allow a manager to put everyone on the same page “because remote employees often miss the small updates and ad hoc meetings that happen throughout the day.”

An individual conversation is also a good time to solicit feedback directly from an employee who would not normally speak up in a group meeting. During a public health crisis or other period of forced remote work, the manager should ask about the employee’s physical health and mental well-being.

Establish a Single Source of Truth

Public sector organizations should have this locked down. First, remote employees need one or more sets of standard operating procedures. The guides can be actual operations manuals, FAQs or handbooks. What matters is that authoritative guides exist and workers follow them consistently when completing assignments and responding to customer queries.

Second, employees must know the organization’s mission and how what they do contributes to accomplishing the mission. Government agencies are mission-driven and drowning in SOPs. The job of the remote public sector manager is to ensure that team members remain committed and stick to the script.

Find Ways to Collaborate

WeWork, which specializes in providing office space to people who do not go into the offices of their employers, knows better than any other organization that “it’s easy to give your remote workers tasks that can be done in a silo.” Organizations see better results when workers overcome their reluctance to share and comment on drafts and brainstorm solutions.

Set Goals

WeWork also acknowledges that “it is easy for any employee, remote or otherwise, to lose steam and do the bare minimum if they don’t have long-term goals that they are working toward.” Setting goals helps employees “know what success looks like for their role and … understand how their goals make an impact on the team’s goals.”

Stay Focused on Goals, Not Activity

Forbes Coaching Council member Donald Hatter counsels strongly against micromanaging. “Don’t worry as much about what is being done,” he writes. “Instead, concentrate on what is being accomplished. If we are meeting our goals, then great. If not, we need to look into the situation further.”

Be Flexible

To expand on what it means to focus on product rather than process, Jason Aten wrote in Inc. that a manager must operate under the assumption that remote team members do not clock in for a solid eight hours. As a result, it is essential to “trust your team and give them the freedom and flexibility to get work done on the schedule that helps them be the most productive. That’s good for your team in the long run anyway.”

Create a Virtual Watercooler

Highfive observes that even remote employees “need to interact with each other spontaneously and independently, and to get to know each other as people, not just co-workers.” Building personal relationships enables and improves work-related communication and collaboration.

Increase Recognition

Mary Baker, writing for Gartner on April 2, 2020, has many good things to say on this subject. As someone who has worked offsite for every one of my clients since 2006, I can confirm that it can be tough for someone outside the office to even know whether they are meeting minimum performance standards. This is why, as Baker notes, “Effective recognition not only motivates the recipient, but serves as a strong signal to other employees of behaviors they should emulate.” The recognition could be as simple as a texted “Thanks.” —N
Should Frontline Employees Receive Hazard Pay During a Public Health Crisis?

Question: My colleagues and I, like the leaders of most municipal and state governments, are hit hard from the impact of COVID-19—working from home situations, working out of class, OT, and pay continuation. These measures may become long-term, and they have shaken standard compensation policies. Do you have any advice on both short- and long-term impacts and what we should do to protect system integrity?

CompDoctor™: Work from home. Social distancing. At-risk populations. Wash your hands. Disinfect everything. COVID-19 changed our world, seemingly overnight. Let us address the issues that compensation professionals need to know to support career and organizational well-being.

Many government employees serve as frontline workers. In other words, they interact with the public as part of their jobs. They cannot work from home, nor can they always practice CDC-recommended social distancing. EMTs, firefighters, police officers, nurses, home health aides, social workers, bus drivers, license clerks and others fall into this group.

Can Hazard Pay Help?

Frontline workers are exposed to all the situations that we are told to try to avoid during the pandemic. They simply cannot self-isolate. Nobody is saying they should stay at home, and most of them would not do so even if they could. Plus, we need frontline government employees now more than ever.

At the same time, some agencies and departments are experiencing sickouts and recording high numbers of no-shows because employees are concerned about their own safety and health. This potentially puts members of the public at even greater risk.

At Gallagher, our clients have asked if providing additional compensation to frontline workers can help. The best answer we can give is possibly.

WorldatWork, the professional compensation and benefits association, on March 27, 2020, published survey findings showing that among 267 organizations, 65 percent were not then planning on offering “hazard pay (incentives and spot bonuses) for employees who are required to work on-site during the pandemic.” Perks such as free meals and day care were generally seen as sufficient to keep workers on the job.

The survey also revealed that 26 percent of surveyed employers said they are planning to provide hazard pay. Of those, 9 percent will offer a cash incentive that is a flat dollar amount, 8 percent will give cash incentives tied to hours and shifts worked, and 9 percent will give cash incentives that are based on a different formula, such as a percentage of salary.

To the degree that paying people more to assume additional job-related health risks can keep them on the job, how does an employer structure compensation so it is fair and effective? And can hazard pay be instituted in a way that ensures employees will continue coming into work?

Examples of Incentives for Grocery Store Employees

The Wall Street Journal reported on March 28, 2020, that Walmart, one of the world’s largest employers, planned to pay bonuses to its roughly 1.5 million employees in the United States. The retailer announced bonuses of $300 to full-time, hourly workers and $150 to part-timers. Kroger put forward the same plan as Walmart.

Earlier, as summarized in the March 20, 2020, Sacramento Bee, Target, Whole Foods and Texas-based chain H-E-B boosted store employees’ pay by $2 per hour. Save-Mart said it would pay its unionized workers $2.50 more per hour and bump overtime pay. In addition, the California- and Nevada-based chain planned to provide hourly employees one-time rewards averaging $200 per employee.

Please call on us at Gallagher if we can help to answer any questions to help you face the future with confidence. Visit GallagherHRCC.com or call (800) 822-8481.

Thank you for all you do. We know your team is on the front lines, and we are very grateful.

Be safe!
$500 to ensure they continued stocking shelves and providing the services the public needed.

**How the Federal Government Handles Hazard Pay**

Under long-standing policy, the federal government awards hazard pay to members of the military who deploy in conflict zones or take on dangerous assignments. As explained by *Federal Week*, “The amount of hazardous duty pay is determined by multiplying the percentage rate authorized for the exposure by the employee’s hourly rate of pay. That amount is then multiplied by the number of hazardous duty hours to be paid. Hazardous duty pay may not be more than 25 percent of the employee’s rate of basic pay.”

Usually, law enforcement personnel and firefighters do not receive hazard pay because the assumption of risk has already been factored into their base pay rates.

**Deciding Whether to Provide Hazard Pay**

So, should state and local governments start providing hazard pay to frontline workers? Our answer is a qualified yes.

Before deciding if your agency or department should make hazard pay available, ask the following questions.

- Does any state or local law prohibit extra pay? Historically, payments of incentives or bonuses by public agencies are not prohibited. However, to avoid issues or challenges related to “gifts of public funds,” public agencies that intend to offer bonuses or other forms of incentive compensation are generally advised to make certain that the terms and conditions for earning and disbursing the extra pay are spelled out in advance of when employees receive the money.

- What jobs are directly affected? That is, can you define or identify which jobs will be covered by any incentive you want to provide? You will want to ensure that you are not excluding groups that may be similarly affected simply because they may not be as visible to the public as other groups.

- Will employees in other jobs have to pick up work not being done by those who are on the front lines because their frontline responsibilities leave them unable to complete all their usual tasks? If so, should those who step in to backfill for frontline workers receive some form of additional pay for working out of class?

- Can you afford it? This may not seem like the right question to ask while the pandemic is still peaking, but it needs to be asked.

- How long will the extra pay be available?

- Do you think the additional pay will overcome employees’ fear of the virus (or other risks)?

We cannot answer these questions for you.

**Deciding How Much Hazard Pay to Provide**

If you decide to pay extra, you must determine how to calculate that pay. Here are the options we suggest for setting the hazard pay rate:

- Pay the bonus as an hourly rate enhancement. The average appears to be about $2.00 per hour, but there are no standard rules. We do know from our own experience that bonus pay is impactful if it is paid at a rate of at least 7 percent over base.

- Pay it out as a monthly bonus based on the above calculations.

Regardless of which option you choose, do not pay the bonus as part of an employee’s normal paycheck. Making hazard pay look like a component of regular pay will make ending the award of hazard pay after the pandemic subsides more difficult.

**Formulating a Hazard Pay Policy**

The Fair Labor Standards Act does not address hazard pay except to require that it be included as part of an employee’s regular rate of pay when computing overtime pay. So, each agency and department must create its own hazard pay policy. Here is that we advise.

- Develop an objective test or measure for when the extra pay will be eliminated. Base this on state infection rates, decreased infection rates or some other verifiable measure.

- Clearly communicate the terms for earning hazard pay. In messages to employees, include the intent, expected behaviors and how the extra money will be paid and for what duration. Communicate these details before the plan goes into effect.

- Encourage employees to participate but avoid punishing employees for not taking assignments that will earn them extra pay.

In all events, provide frontline employees with all the personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, shields, nitrile gloves, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and disinfecting opportunities) you can to mitigate the hazard of coronavirus infection.

We do not have all the answers. No one does. With proper discussion and safety precautions, however, you can help to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus and lessen the impact of COVID-19 in your community while continuing to provide the services that public servants are called to deliver.

---

The Comp Doctor™ is written by Ronnie Charles, the managing director for public & higher education sectors at Gallagher. For more public sector content like this, visit www.GallagherHRCC.com. If you have a question you would like to see answered by the CompDoctor™, please email ronnie_charles@ajg.com or call (651) 234-0848. — Ron
Demoted Black Correctional Captain Can Proceed on Claim He Felt Forced to Retire

A corrections employee is being allowed to pursue race discrimination claims brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. In its March 10, 2020, ruling in Biggs v. North Carolina Department of Public Safety (No. 18-2437), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit found that evidence could show that the plaintiff received harsher punishment for a rules violation than did similarly situated white corrections employees.

Ray C. Biggs began working as a correctional officer at the Bertie Correctional Institution in 1991. He received very good performance reviews throughout his career and earned several promotions before becoming a correctional captain in 2012. As a captain, he was the officer-in-charge during his shifts. Until the incident that gave rise to this lawsuit, Biggs had never been disciplined.

In its summary of the facts, the appeals court wrote, “On August 19, 2012, while Biggs was on duty, several inmates attacked three correctional officers. Biggs followed Department procedure by ordering a lockdown (requiring all inmates to return to their cells) and sending the injured officers to receive medical treatment.”

Shortly after that, another correctional officer identified two inmates who had been involved in the fight and escorted them, unrestrained, to speak with Biggs. As the inmates told Biggs that staff had assaulted them, “several prison guards approached …, yelling and gesturing hostilely toward them.” This prompted Biggs to suspect two separate assaults had occurred.

In compliance with a department policy requiring prompt investigation of inmates’ claims of excessive force, Biggs ordered that the two inmates be taken to an office where they could write statements. Again quoting the appeals court:

Department policy also mandates that inmates must be handcuffed behind their back before being removed from a cell and while being escorted through the facility. The inmates refused … to be handcuffed, stating that they feared staff would attack them and wanted to be able to defend themselves. Biggs agreed to cuff them in the front and then walked them across a five-foot-wide hallway into an office, where they wrote statements. Later, one of those inmates was found to have a homemade razor blade in his pocket after going through a metal detector.

An investigation was conducted, and the department concluded that Biggs’s decision to handcuff the inmates in the front violated department policy and put others in danger. In the investigator’s view, “Biggs should have either refused to talk to the inmates until they consented to being handcuffed in the back or used force (like mace) to restrain and escort them.”

In February 2013, the department demoted Biggs six pay grades back to correctional officer and selected a white employee to fill the role of captain. Later, Biggs learned that white staffers had received lesser punishments for violating the handcuffing policy.

Biggs subsequently filed a lawsuit, asking only for reinstatement to his prior position with accompanying benefits, the removal of negative material from his personnel file and reimbursement of legal expenses. The trial court issued summary judgment for the Department of Public Safety, and Biggs appealed.

Biggs retired before the appellate hearing, prompting the department to move for dismissal on the grounds that Biggs’s retirement mooted his request for reinstatement. The department also argued that, as a government agency, it was immune from Biggs’s lawsuit.

The appeals court held that the lawsuit was not moot because Biggs submitted a signed statement that he only retired because he no longer wished to serve as a correctional officer. He wrote that the job of correctional officer was too dangerous given his age, and he pledged that he would return to work if he could resume his duties as a captain.

That statement convinced the appeals court to treat Biggs’s retirement as involuntarily. The court also held that sovereign immunity does not apply to Biggs’s claims.

Former Employees Forced to Participate in Religious Practices Awarded Damages

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on March 6, 2020, affirmed a jury’s earlier damages award to 10 former employees of a discount medical plan provider. EEOC v. United Health Programs of America, Inc. (No. 14-CV-3673) was first decided in 2018. The case involved claims that the employees were forced to participate in religious practices at work and had to endure a hostile work environment. One of the employees was also found to have suffered a wrongful termination.

In 2007, United Health Programs of America hired Denali Jordan, who is the aunt of the then-CEO Robert Hodes. Jordan joined the company as a consultant and quickly began pushing her own “Onionhead” religious and spiritual practices and teachings in the workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission went to court on behalf of employees who alleged that their supervisors and company officers fully supported Jordan in imposing Onionhead practices and beliefs on them.

According to testimony, the employees were compelled to complete an Onionhead workshop on emotions and family that was led by the company’s COO and had nothing to do with the employees’ jobs. The employees also said they were forced to pray, hold
hands and tell their coworkers “I love you.”

Hodes and Jordan allegedly told the employees that they were “chosen,” prayed in the workplace and sent emails referencing God, divine power, spirits, spirituality and demons. In addition, the office utility closet was turned into a mosque. Candles were burned daily after Jordan arrived, and she instructed employees not to use overhead lighting because “demons come through the overhead lights.”

The employees were also subjected to talk of angels, displays of Buddha statues, burning incense and the reading of religious texts every day. An Onionhead logo was placed on the building that housed company offices.

Eventually, the Onionhead religion became intertwined with the company and was inescapable in the work environment. Employees were instructed to use Onionhead cards, posters, banners, flags and pictures, including portraits of an Onionhead character with angel wings. There were also Onionhead pins that were in a glass bowl in the reception area that employees were encouraged or forced to wear. One employee who opposed such practices was fired.

Claims brought to court under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 included religious discrimination, reverse religious discrimination, retaliation and hostile work environment. A three-week jury trial resulted in a unanimous verdict for the employees and total cash awards of $5.1 million in compensatory and punitive damages.

The district court agreed with the jury that there was an abundance of evidence that the employees were subjected to a hostile or abusive work environment based on religion, which is a violation of federal law.

### Woman Who Resigned From Town Job May Proceed on Constructive Discharge Claim

A woman in her sixties who resigned from her job with the East Haven, Conn., Police Department after being accused of stealing a roll of Pillsbury biscuit dough and a wire basket from the office kitchen is being allowed to proceed with constructive discharge and age discrimination claims. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit on March 10, 2020, overturned the district court’s summary judgment for the defendant in Green v. Town of East Haven (No. 18-0143).

Dyanna Green was hired by the East Haven Police Department in 2001, when she was 47. Her duties in the records division included processing arrest and accident reports, typing up search warrants and typing out misdemeanor and infraction tickets.

In 2012, Lt. David Emerman became Green’s supervisor. Also in 2012, when Green was 58, the department hired 30-year-old Jennifer Ward to work in the records division because Green’s previous coworker had retired.

According to Green’s testimony, Emerman and Chief Brent Larrabee then began subjecting her to treatment that she “believed … was intended to create a hostile work environment and [cause] her to retire.” Green also alleges that she was singled out because of her age in ways intended to make her employment intolerable and force her to resign. Incidents she described included Emerman publicly criticizing her, micromanaging her, minutely scrutinizing her work, giving her less-desirable work assignments and denying her training opportunities.

In December 2014, Green borrowed a basket from the office kitchen and also took a roll of biscuit dough that had been “in the communal kitchen since at least Thanksgiving.” An email then went out asking who took the biscuits. Green initially denied that she did it, but she later admitted to doing so while explaining her intention of taking the dough home, cooking it and bringing biscuits back to the office in the basket for a holiday party.

She was placed on administrative leave without pay while an investigation was conducted. The investigation report issued after two weeks discussed whether Green violated the department’s Code of Conduct by impeding the operation or efficiency of the department by engaging in premeditated theft and purposefully concealing the biscuit dough and basket.

The investigator never interviewed the officer who owned the roll of biscuit dough or other individuals who Green alleged to have borrowed baskets without asking permission. Green, who was 61 at the time, retired while a ruling on the investigation was pending.

She then sued the department for age discrimination and constructive discharge under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. She alleged that if she had not resigned voluntarily, the department would have either forced her to do so or fired her. At the district court level, the department prevailed by arguing that Green could not proceed on her claims because she had resigned instead of being fired.

Green appealed, and the appeals court held that sufficient evidence existed to show that she resigned due to the fact that she reasonably anticipated being fired. The appeals court reasoned that it was rational for an employee in Green’s circumstances of having taken kitchen items without permission, initially lying about their actions, and having been found to have stolen the items in a premeditated manner would feel compelled to submit their resignation rather than face a nearly certain termination. In light of this, the appeals court reinstated Green’s claims and allowed her to proceed with
Ask Neil Reichenberg what he will miss most when he retires from his post as IPMA-HR executive director in June, and he immediately responds, “the people.”

This comes as no surprise from someone who devoted 39 years of his career to a people business, including 24 as the Association’s chief executive. Under his leadership, IPMA-HR became the world leader and advocate for not just public sector human resources, but also public servants everywhere.

Neil came to what was then known as IPMA in late 1980 after earning a law degree from the New York School of Law and working as an attorney in the private sector. He started with the Association as director of government affairs and gradually took on additional roles before becoming executive director when his predecessor, Don Tichenor, retired.

An eventful quarter century followed. As Neil reflected on his IPMA-HR tenure, he said, “I can’t think of a better way to spend my career.”

One of his many takeaways is that our members “have really tough jobs” that their colleagues and the public don’t fully understand and appreciate. He is proud of the many ways the Association has provided public sector HR professionals with the tools and support they need to succeed in their tough jobs.

Evolving IPMA-HR Into the World Leader in Public Sector HR

Neil is especially proud that the Association is now the preeminent global organization for public sector HR professionals. Before he became executive director, the “International” in IPMA only really meant Canada. Neil worked hard to forge partnerships in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America, as well as with the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others.

To create and sustain those partnerships, Neil has circled the globe, logging more than two million hard-earned miles on just one of the many airlines he frequently used.

Building Our Association and Its Influence

During Neil’s tenure, IPMA-HR led the way in professionalizing public sector HR. It expanded training and development activities (especially online), created HR competencies and established the certification program. The Association has now certified 23,000 HR leaders and professionals in 18 countries.

Other accomplishments on Neil’s watch include

- Leading the development of the first-ever IPMA-HR strategic plan, which enabled the Association to expand its services and influence.
- Putting IPMA-HR on firm financial footing, thereby allowing the Association to thrive despite fluctuations in the U.S. economy and government budgets.
- Spearheading a stream of research that has created important knowledge about government HR. Neil did this, in part, by building research alliances with organizations such as the Center for State and Local Government Excellence and the National Association of State Personnel Executives.
- Maintaining IPMA-HR as the voice of public sector HR in the United States by advocating for our profession and members before Congress, federal agencies and the U.S. Supreme Court.
Providing clear guidance and interpretations to Association members on complex federal, state and local legislation and rules that affect HR.

Building Strong Relationships Among Association Members

While Neil said he will miss the people in IPMA-HR, they will most certainly miss him, too. Because of Neil’s welcoming and approachable personality, the Association’s members feel a special kinship with him that might not ordinarily develop in an organization of our size.

We heard this uniformly from past presidents. As one of the authors, Jackie Wehmeyer, recalled, a long-ago email to IPMA-HR about certification received a direct response from Neil.

She also always appreciated how the congratulation email for earning her senior certified professional certification also came from Neil with a personal message and was not just a cookie-cutter form letter. Such personal interactions and knowing that a professional association’s executive director took the time to do such things made her feel very welcomed.

Mary Rowe, who preceded Wehmeyer as Association president in 2017, said, “What I have always been amazed at is how he manages to keep up with all of the emails he must receive from members and is able to track so many people’s interests and make personal connections. He knows people’s favorite sports teams, sports their children play, who has grandchildren and even fits in rounds of the game Words with Friends.”

Working with a volunteer board and leadership isn’t always easy, but Neil continuously made those relationships a top priority, nurturing them and instilling trust through his easygoing—but-effective manner. Fred Weiner, who served as president in 2006, in particular remembers Neil’s “energy, enthusiasm, vision and flexibility” as being key to his relationship with the Executive Council.

According to 2007 IPMA-HR president Oscar Jackson, Neil “has always been a significant and influential presence. I suspect that every one of our presidents has similar thoughts about the critical support Neil provided during their tenures.”

Mila Cosgrove, president in 2013, confirmed this, noting that “it has been evident to the membership that Neil consistently puts the organization first.”

The Next Phase

Neil hopes to stay active in public sector HR. Given his expertise, experience and wisdom, his continued involvement will be a win-win for government and himself.

And, of course, he will continue to follow his beloved University of Maryland Terrapins basketball team. Fear the Turtle!

Neil’s parting advice to IPMA-HR members is to keep focused on attracting, developing and retaining the talented people who deliver government services. If HR adds value in a visible and measurable way, we won’t have to worry about finding a seat at the table. We will be invited and welcomed.

Jackie Wehmeyer, IPMA-SCP, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, is the director of human resources and library for the City of Parkland, Fla. Bob Lavigna, IPMA-SCP, is director of the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement with CPS HR Consulting. Both are former IPMA-HR presidents. —

HR News Anywhere

Members can access the full text of every issue of the magazine back to 2005 at on.ipma-hr.org/hrnew3e91e.
IPMA-HR Welcomes Its New Members

The Association looks forward to serving and connecting these organizations and individuals who joined during March 2020.

New Agency Members

City of Lincoln City
Lincoln City, Ore.

Jurupa Community Services District
Jurupa Valley, Calif.

Lane County
Eugene, Ore.

Pike Township Fire Department
Indianapolis, Ind.

New Individual Members

Robert Dumouchel
Eureka, Calif.

Sheena Gossett
Dewey Beach, Del.

Jennifer Hart
Louisville, Ky.

Greer A. Hill
Washington, D.C.

Molly Johnson
Dodge City, Kans.

MaryLou Kadlik
Kennebunk, Maine

Mariam Khan
Washington, D.C.

Kasey Dawn Lane
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Kimberly Lighty
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Joel Nichols
New Carrollton, Md.

Jacqueline Palmer
Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Richard G. Pfaff
West Allis, Wisc.

Kimberly Reese
Peru, Ill.

Tiny Rose
Covington, Tenn.

Michelle Ross
Bradenton, Fla.

Catherine Varian
Atlantic Beach, Fla.

Darlene Winfield
Baton Rouge, La.

Missed a Webinar? Need to Recertify?

The coronavirus crisis changed everything, including IPMA-HR’s webinar offerings. Expect to see several new sessions at learning.ipma-hr.org/webinars by the time you read this, but don’t miss opportunities to catch up on:

- April 16, 2020 IPMA-HR Virtual Roundtable: Handling Coronavirus in the Workplace
- The Brain Science of Shared Adversity and Resilience: Exploring the New Opportunity for Connection and Leadership
- How to Thrive and Flourish When Working in Isolation (From Home)
- April 2, 2020 IPMA-HR Virtual Roundtable: Handling Coronavirus in the Workplace
- In Harm’s Way: Suicide Prevention in Law Enforcement
- March 25, 2020: Coronavirus in the Workplace
- Walk a Mile in Your Candidate’s Shoes: 6 Tips for Improving the Candidate Experience (Sponsored by NEOGOV)
- HR20/20 Report: The IPMA-HR Guide to Transformative HR

Remember that your Association membership earns you free, unlimited access to each archived webinar and that completing webinars earns you points toward recertifying as an IPMA-CP or IPMA-SCP.

Bookmark the Learning Portal website page to revisit topics and stream sessions you could not join live. —X
Certification Corner

Congratulations to these newly certified individuals!

Bridget Anderson, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Analyst
Vallecitos Water District
San Marcos, Calif.

Malaika Billups, IPMA-SCP
Deputy City Attorney
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

Grace Boda, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Analyst
City of Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Timothy Bunch, IPMA-CP
Director, Human Resources
White Pine County
Ely, Nev.

Pascal Challita, IPMA-SCP
Deputy Superintendent of Building I
Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety
Los Angeles, Calif.

Brittany Cullen, IPMA-CP
HR Director
City of Mandan
Mandan, N. Dak.

Angela Farha, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Generalist 2
West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
Charleston, W. Va.

Stephanie Fuller, IPMA-CP
Albany, N.Y.

Jim Harner, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Director
City of Roswell
Kennesaw, Ga.

Christine Hoffmann, IPMA-SCP
HR Manager
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District
Beaverton, Ore.

Janell Ishii Hata, IPMA-SCP
Sr. Personnel Analyst 2
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

JoVonne Lavender, IPMA-SCP
Chief Management Analyst
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

Joseph Miele, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Specialist
SunLine Transit Agency
Palm Desert, Calif.

Crystal Moreno, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Specialist
Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
Indio, Calif.

LaWanda Neely, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Consultant II
Fulton County
Atlanta, Ga.

Kori Parraga, IPMA-SCP
Management Analyst
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

Alexandria Polk, IPMA-CP
Senior HR Analyst
City of Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jasvir Sidhu, IPMA-SCP
Risk Management Analyst
City of Livermore
Livermore, Calif.

Paing Soe, IPMA-SCP
Managing Director/Owner
PSM International College
Yangon, Myanmar

Jessica Taylor, IPMA-SCP
Sr. Personnel Analyst I
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

Antonio Zepeda, IPMA-SCP
Sr. Personnel Analyst
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

May 4-29
Developing an Ethical Culture in an Organization – Session 1
Online Course
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/pd6

May 6
WEBINAR: Building World-Class Employee Engagement
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/8j8

May 20
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/27d

June 9-Aug. 25
HR Foundations: A Roadmap for Non-HR Managers
Online Course
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/5op

June 16
WEBINAR: 7 Ways to Maximize Employee Potential Through Coaching and Feedback
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/2o4

July 20-Nov. 30
Public Sector HR Essentials – Session 3
Online Course
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/cur

August 4-Oct. 11
Developing Competencies for HR Success – Session 3
Online Course
To register, on.ipma-hr.org/04o

Sept. 13-16, 2020
IPMA-HR Annual Conference
Baltimore, Md.
For more information, on.ipma-hr.org/2020i59edb

Sept. 18-22, 2021
IPMA-HR Annual Conference
Indianapolis, Ind.
For more information, on.ipma-hr.org/b7s

Check www.ipma-hr.org/events for updates on conferences and meetings. Online courses will commence as scheduled.
her constructive discharge and age discrimination lawsuit.

 Delay in Accommodating Disability Enables Postal Service Employee to Proceed on Discrimination Claims

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois on March 9, 2020, denied summary judgment to the defendant in Johnson v. Brennan (No. 17 C 8878). The disability discrimination case names the postmaster general of the United States Postal Service (USPS) as the respondent.

Sharon Johnson was hired by the USPS as a mail-processing clerk in 1994. She became a sales service and distribution clerk in 2006, and she remains employed in that role.

In March 2011, Johnson was diagnosed with anxiety and depressive disorder. Between September 2012 and March 2013, three of Johnson’s doctors wrote letters to the USPS indicating that certain of her work absences were health-related.

Johnson suffered an anxiety attack while at work in May 2013 and went to the emergency room before taking medical leave and entering an intensive outpatient program. She claimed that mental stress and fear for her safety triggered her anxiety attack.

Earlier in 2013, Johnson had asked to be transferred away from that supervisor, alleging unfair treatment and a hostile work environment. She made those requests verbally and received a doctor’s note supporting the transfer. Johnson followed up on her request several times while she was on medical leave.

The transfer remained unapproved when Johnson returned to work in September 2013, and she heard several supervisors make comments about her being in the “crazy house.” She was also asked if she was taking her medication, and she had sharp tools removed from her workstation despite needing the items to perform her job duties.

On Sept. 9, 2013, Johnson informed one supervisor that she could no longer work under the man who she blamed for triggering her anxiety attack. Thirty minutes later, the postal police arrived. While Johnson alleged that was unnecessary, the USPS countered that Johnson threatened that there was going to be a fatality in the building and told her supervisor that she carried mace and a knife.

When the police arrived, they asked Johnson to empty her pockets and found mace. They also found a knife in her purse.

Johnson was put on emergency outplacement until Sept. 27, 2013. On that date, she was transferred to a different office before later being transferred another three times.

In her lawsuit, Johnson alleges that she experienced discrimination because of her anxiety and depressive disorder and that the USPS ignored and denied her an accommodation by refusing to transfer her before the police incident in September 2013. Asked for summary judgment on the grounds that Johnson made such threats, In addition, the court noted that even if the threat had been made, it happened only after Johnson’s request for an accommodation had been ignored for five months.

The court also held that Johnson provided enough evidence of disability discrimination, including her supervisors’ mocking of her disability and taking away sharp tools. As a result, Johnson can proceed on her disability discrimination and failure to accommodate claims.

Contact David B. Ritter at david.ritter@btlaw.com or (312) 214-4862. Contact Kelsey Schmidt at kelsey.schmidt@btlaw.com or (312) 214-4589. You can learn more about labor law cases by visiting www.btlaw.com and following our blogs at www.btcurrentsemployment.com and www.btlaborrelations.com.
Is your community's drinking water safe and clean?

Make sure it stays that way.

IPMA-HR’s Wastewater Treatment Test series for operators and supervisors helps ensure your candidates have what it takes to be successful stewards of your community's water supply.
Extend Your Reach

Expand Opportunity

IPMA-HR's Public Safety Compass Career Center extends the reach of your job ad, expanding opportunity far beyond other job boards.

Enjoy a response rate up to four times better than the leading national job board. You can reach millions of active and passive job seekers monthly across the Internet on local, niche, and vertical job sites, as well as on leading aggregator sites and social networks from one place.

Plus, jobs posted on Public Safety Compass are automatically optimized, distributed and monitored as part of targeted ad campaigns, which produces higher rankings in search results on search engines and paid job sites resulting in an increase in qualified response of 200% on average.

The largest recruitment ad network of job sites in North America is just a click away.

publicsafetycompass.com