



# Monthly Strategies

HR Strategies, LLC

Volume 17, Issue 12

December 1, 2020

## ***Find Ways to Celebrate***

Due to the pandemic, having a workplace holiday party isn't safe or practical, and we need to think of other ways to help employees celebrate this year. It's more important than ever before to celebrate their contributions and accomplishments, after what we have all endured this year. In years past there have been in-person celebrations which gave your employees the chance to bond and have a little fun while thanking them for a job well done. How do we do this without risking the safety of our employees and their families?

Keep in mind that in the past when you provided a holiday party and gave gifts to your employees it would have a significant price tag on it due to the cost of food, beverages, venue, etc. and the cost of the gift. Below are some high end ideas for your consideration that your employees may use often and prefer over the party they usually have.

### **Holiday Gift Ideas**

The following ideas are not endorsed or recommended by HR Strategies and are merely suggestions of high end employee gifts. Fitbit, Air Pods, Echo or Google Nest, Cordless vacuum, Single serve brewing machine, Bose Audio, Sunglasses, Nintendo Switch Light, Sonos Speaker, Fire HD 10" Tablet, Beats Wireless Headphones, Digital Picture Frame, Mini Projector, Portable Photo Printer, or a Roomba to name a few.

Other possibilities include virtual happy hours; dinner parties complete with all the ingredients to make a meal or having an entire meal or pizza party delivered to each employee simultaneously. Another idea is home entertainment packages that include games, movies and cookie-decorating kits. There are organizations that provide platforms for virtual social gatherings and even entertainers can be hired to facilitate the virtual party and entertain your guests.

Perhaps one of the most appreciated holiday gifts during the pandemic is the gift of time. Whether it's

time with friends and family or time alone, there is nothing more precious than time. We need to recognize that Zoom or Teams or whatever platform you use can cause fatigue and the solitude of working remotely is an ongoing challenge. We must encourage employees to step back from the computer and spend time doing activities that re-energize and recharge them.

It's important to acknowledge how much your employees have contributed to the success of the organization and helped your organization with sustainability and in some cases growth. Many employees have had to learn new skills, technology and modify processes to be able to do their jobs. They are doing things differently and have had to learn as they go. Some of these changes have resulted in process enhancements and others have made things a little more cumbersome than before. Many of these employees have stepped up to the challenges while simultaneously managing childcare and home schooling issues. Take the time to celebrate them and all that you have accomplished, together.

## ***Delaware Anti-Sexual Harassment Law Training Requirements***

The Delaware law that specifically addresses prohibition against sexual harassment under the Delaware Discrimination in Employment Act (DDEA), requires anti-sexual harassment training requirements for employers, with 50 or more employees in the state, every two years. The law went into effect on January 1, 2019 and in January 2021 it will be time to conduct the mandatory interactive training again.

### **Mandatory Sexual Harassment Training**

**Required:** The training for staff must include all of the following elements:

1. The illegality of sexual harassment;
2. The definition of sexual harassment using examples;

3. The legal remedies and complaint process available to the employee;
4. Directions on how to contact the Department of Labor; and
5. The legal prohibition against retaliation.

In addition, the interactive training for the supervisors must further include all of the following:

1. The specific responsibilities of a supervisor regarding the prevention and correction of sexual harassment; and
2. The legal prohibition against retaliation.

HR Strategies, LLC is available to present interactive training programs consistent with Delaware's training requirements. We can provide the training in-person or virtually. Contact HR Strategies to schedule your organization's required training or schedule individual employees for a live upcoming online interactive class.

## **Review Year-end Time Off Policy**

As 2020 comes to an end, many employers have another pandemic-related issue to resolve: how to handle employees' unused vacation or PTO balances or competing requests to take time off before December 31, 2020.

Employees who typically take time off to travel and visit relatives during the holidays may be opting to stay home as the pandemic continues. Other employees who skipped their summer vacations may be scrambling to use their time off before they lose the time at the end of the year or reach their accrual cap.

Employers concerned about a potential rush of employee requests to schedule paid time off before the end of the year can take steps now to make sure staffing and productivity needs are met. Those steps should include communicating with employees to remind them of existing policies requiring advance notice of paid-time-off requests and carefully assessing the company's business needs when deciding which requests to approve or deny. Employers may also want to consider allowing employees to carry more time over than under current policies and require employees to use it within a certain time-frame in 2021.

## **Update Your Job Descriptions**

Job descriptions when thoughtfully crafted, can be used as building blocks for conducting successful workforce planning, setting salary and grade levels, and meeting compliance requirements. They also play an important role in performance reviews, employee career development and recruitment.

Often, job descriptions are updated in conjunction with annual performance reviews or as part of the recruiting process to refill a position. Because many employers these days are asking their employees to take on greater responsibilities as a result of cost constraints brought on by the pandemic, now might be an opportune time to review these documents.

It's more important than ever to capture all the essential functions you're asking employees to do so your employees can be very clear on what's expected of them. Clearly outlining what someone needs to do in a role and setting expectations gives them a tangible measure of success.

Because the pandemic has forced many companies to alter the way they operate for the foreseeable future, any changes to processes and approaches need to be addressed in job descriptions. It's also a great time to reassess the skills needed to perform the actual job. There might be some skills that you realize you need more of based on changing business needs, or some that are no longer necessary for the same reason.

## **Time to Update Your AAP's**

Many Affirmative Action Plans (AAPs) expire on December 31, 2020. Under federal law, government contractors and subcontractors with 50 or more employees who have entered into at least one contract of \$50,000 or more with the federal government must prepare and maintain a written affirmative action program, which must be developed within 120 days from the commencement of the contract and **must be updated annually**. AAP's should be submitted to DOL during the first quarter of 2021.

*Contact HR Strategies staff at 302.376.8595 or [info@hrstrategies.org](mailto:info@hrstrategies.org) if you would like support or would like to learn more about the items in this newsletter. Please contact us if you would like to be removed from our Monthly Strategies mailing list or if you would like for us to add someone to our mailing list.*