



HRATT

Human Resources Association of the Twin Tiers

June 2018
Twin Tiers
HR Times

2018 HRATT Current members:	104
SHRM members:	49 (47%)
Certified members:	21 (20%)

SHRM
EXCEL
2017

President's Report

Welcome to Summer! I hope everyone is having a great start to the summer and has enjoyed many of the great lunch event's we have had this year with HRATT.

We had great attendance at the May 2018 event, thank you to all those who attended and thank you to the great presentation. In July 2018, we will be celebrating the 35th anniversary of the HRATT chapter, with a legal update from Conrad Wolan, HRATT Legislative Chair.

Continue to watch for upcoming changes related to the New York State Sexual Harassment legislation, as this will impact employers throughout the state.

I want to congratulate Sharon Swartz and the 2017 HRATT Board for receiving the 2017 Excel Platinum Chapter recognition from SHRM. Sharon did a tremendous job leading the board in her two-year role as HRATT President and guided us to platinum status. Well done and congratulations to all who served in 2017! The SHRM Excel Award recognizes accomplishments and strategic activities that enhance the human resources profession.

"SHRM exists because of our great chapters and state councils like HRATT which work tirelessly to help advance the important mission of the HR profession through initiatives that support our future, build inclusive organizations and focus on workplace readiness. Recognizing you as a recipient of this prestigious award is just one way to show that SHRM supports you and that we are by your side step by step as we move Together Forward."

- Johnny C. Taylor, SHRM-SCP, President and CEO of SHRM

SHRM Certification Exam Preparation Advice and SHRM Certification Exam Prep & Testing Advice:

As we approach the ending of the school year and a new exam window, for the SHRM-CP and the SHRM-SCP, I want to share exam prep advice that worked for me and the Spring 2016, 2017 & 2018 exam prep class at Elmira College. The recommendations below work if you plan to self-study or take the prep class.

- Schedule time to study, get into a routine and remain disciplined throughout the process. If you need to go to a library, the local college or coffee shop, find an area that is quiet and focus on the material. These questions can be tricky.
- Check your progress. Take a full test prior to beginning the material, halfway through and after you complete the readings and practice questions. Progress checks will help reinforce area's that you need to focus on.

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- What is your learning style? Some people obtain information from reading, watching/listening or doing. Know your kinesthetic learning style and focus on that throughout the prep process.
- Practice makes improved, not perfect. The more time you focus on reading the material and practicing questions the more improvements you will make as you progress through the material. Do not get discouraged by a low-test score, find the area you struggled and focus on reviewing the material and questions for that area.
- Network with others. If other HR professionals in the area are taking the exam, ask them what their study schedule is and how they are progressing.
- Test day. Know if you are a morning or afternoon person, I work better in the morning, therefore I registered for an early morning exam. Know your personal schedule. Understand the rules of the testing center and arrive early on the day of the exam.

Be prepared to spend many hours studying for this exam for at least two months. Proactively setting a study schedule (practice questions during a lunch break), getting into a routine and remaining disciplined throughout the process will help to ensure your success on the exam. I have no doubt that all of you will be successful during the upcoming SHRM exam window. Good luck to all preparing for and taking the upcoming SHRM certification exams. Remember one thing, practice makes improved on this test!

I look forward to seeing all of you at the remaining HRATT events we have scheduled in 2018. We are currently planning a sip and paint fundraiser for the SHRM Foundation in late 2018, November or December. More to come on this.

Matthew W. Burr

HRATT President

Thank you to all of the volunteers and businesses who donated their time and shared their expertise to support students throughout our region in numerous Career Development Council programs and events this 2017-2018 school year. Your time provided valuable career awareness and career exploration to our future workforce.

We look forward to collaborating with you in the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. Let us know that you'd like to volunteer and we'll contact you with opportunities starting in September. Please contact us at Career Development Council, (607)795-5320, through our website, www.cdc.gstboces.org or email cdc@gstboces.org. We appreciate your support by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



Employment Law Briefs

Conrad R. Wolan, Esq.

Why Your Lawyer Frequently Says “It Depends”

Imagine that you have an employee working under a series of one-year contracts. And imagine that, upon being presented with a renewal, the employee said that she would sign the contract as long as the employer would release her if she received a better offer during the year. Finally, imagine (with little difficulty) that you say, “I’m not going to renew your contract. I’m going to give you the gift of freedom to pursue another opportunity.” This situation seems like the proverbial no-brainer. An employee wants more money and the employer wishes that employee good luck in her future endeavors.

Of course, context is everything. The exchange imagined above seems like a straightforward, and perfectly legal, conversation between an employee and an employer. However, this is an excellent example of how otherwise legal behaviors can become illegal retaliation. The distinction in the real-life case, Wheeler v. Saga Communication (United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee) (June 7, 2018), was that this dispute over pay involved a long-tenured radio personality who had recently learned that she was making decidedly less than her male counterparts. The entire discussion about pay was not merely a contract negotiation; rather, it was part of a larger complaint about pay disparity at this particular employer.

The defendant employer attempted to get rid of the case on summary judgment. The court found, however, that “a reasonable jury could find that [the employee’s] statement that she would consider other offers was part of her protected activity demanding equal pay for equal work – that is, she only stated she would consider other offers because she was being paid less than men and felt discriminated against. In other words, [her] protected activity consisted of demanding equal pay for equal work, and that she threatened to leave if [the employer] did not stop discriminating against her is part of [her] protected activity.”

In employment discrimination cases, what the employer knew and when the employer knew it are very relevant inquiries. It is, under ordinary circumstances, patently legal in an at-will state to part ways with employees with whom you do not see eye-to-eye, who violate express work rules, or who are simply disagreeable. But, if the less-than-endearing behavior is an assertion of a protected activity, the decision to part ways is no longer an easy one.

It remains to be seen whether the plaintiff in the Wheeler case will ultimately win. However, this employer will have to continue fighting, perhaps all the way to trial, because of what seemed perfectly normal behavior at the time.



Foundation

CHAPTER  CHAMPION

Creating Connections: **The HRATT Pack**

Are you seeking an opportunity to have a more meaningful HRATT experience? We are looking for current HRATT members to volunteer to be a part of our new **buddy program: The HRATT Pack**. The **HRATT Pack program** is designed to offer a welcoming, individualized experience for new members, guests or students.

Our HRATT chapter is a large group, which is great for networking resources... if you are able to meet and connect with others! The whole purpose of the **HRATT Pack** is to offer an olive branch to those individuals new to our chapter, to help those feel welcome and connected during their first meeting. **HRATT Pack members** assist new individuals integrate to the HRATT culture.

Any HRATT member can be in the **HRATT Pack**, as long as they have a desire to meet new people! **HRATT Pack members** will be matched to new members, guests or students that come to meetings. Hopefully we have notice of new individuals at meetings and can match **HRATT Pack members** prior to the meeting but, since we all know the world is not perfect, **HRATT Pack members** may be assigned right at the meetings.

Role of **HRATT Pack Members**:

- Be present and available during most HRATT meetings.

- Introduce yourself and be welcoming to the new member, guest or student.

- Show the new individual the basics to our meeting setup, review the agenda.

- Introduce the new individual to a few other members.

- Offer the new individual to sit with you for their first meeting.

- Follow up with a final welcome email and an invitation to the next meeting.

If you have an interest in being part of the **HRATT Pack program**, please reach out to Megan Cole at mcole@chemungcanal.com. There will be a quick questionnaire so that HRATT can get to know you to better match new members, guests or students.



Identifying the D&I opportunity and potential obstacles to implementation

Last month we started to discuss how “we” the business, HR professionals, etc. look at Diversity & Inclusion. The aim here was to look beyond the traditional “compliance” definitions (ie: race, gender) and view D&I from the perspective of diversity of thought. One of the nice things about diversity is there are no wrong answers. We all come from different backgrounds, experiences, and values which help frame the lens in which we view the world. By embracing diversity by this definition, we not only ensure a more engaged and innovative workforce, but also empower our leadership to assume accountability for D&I efforts as an organizational imperative aimed at impacting the bottom line.



So, now that we have established the foundational business case for D&I within your organization, how do we now transition to implementing D&I initiatives and identify the landmines? How do you put your efforts in the right context within your organization so that it complements the existing culture? Or are you trying to create a new culture? Is your organization unhappy with the way it is branded with its employees? Unfortunately there is no one “perfect” roadmap. What follows is designed as a starting point for each of you to make your own assessment of the unique factors, opportunities and challenges for bringing diversity of thought to your organization.

Examine your organization’s mission/values: For some organizations, there is a natural tie-in the core mission/values. Is D&I, innovation, collaboration and/or synergy called out? If so, this certainly makes it easier to tell the “story.”

Build your business case: Where the mission/values do not naturally lend themselves to a D&I tie-in, you may need to create the business case from scratch. In this case, can you link D&I efforts into your short/mid/long-range business goals? Are we appropriately representing the diversity of our core customers? The key here is to leverage that knowledge in order to introduce the logical case for D&I efforts.

Identify, anticipate and have a plan for the obstacles: How do we introduce D&I to our organization and gain the buy-in of our leaders? How do you get your peers to buy in? For successful organizations, we often face resistance in the form of a “if it isn’t broke, why fix it?” mentality. One way of marshalling your forces would be to identify and reward early adapters. Are there formal and informal influence leaders that you can influence to take the lead? Who are those naturally enthusiastic change agents who can be D&I ambassadors? Perhaps your organization is a market leader and is resistant to change. In that case, can you sell D&I as a way to stay that way or to differentiate yourselves from your competition?

Last but not least... how to we justify the success or failure of a new idea? Show me the data! This can be somewhat overwhelming to begin. Below are just a few ideas to get you thinking of what might work best for your organization once you have established a baseline to measure from.

Measuring success: Beyond a strategic competitive advantage, what is the impact that you are looking for in the short term? Can you establish metrics that could help sell your initiative? Is there an expectation that D&I will improve retention? Did you already conduct studies to set your baseline? Can you market D&I as a differentiator in your recruiting efforts? Alternatively, is there a way to tie D&I to innovation and reward creative ideas that drive business goal achievement? If you still encounter resistance, do you start small and sell the initiative as a “proof of concept?” If so, what is the timeline? How will you set appropriate expectations? Lastly, will you measure success differently if your program is mandated vs. simply encouraged?

I hope you find these ideas useful to your organizations as you navigate through your D&I journey.

Looking ahead, our next article will focus on: “How to introduce Diversity & Inclusion efforts to our employees.”

- Do we speak a common language?
- What’s the ask?
- Is it customer facing?
How do we address potential negativity?
- Is it engagement focused?

Remember to email any topic ideas and feedback you have to HRATTdiversity@gmail.com

See sponsorship opportunities outlined below-

Level	Description	Sponsorship
Platinum	<p>Exclusive sponsorship of our most popular event – the membership recognition luncheon held in December. This sponsorship level entitles you to:</p> <p>Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting by HRATT Board Member.</p> <p>Five (5) minute engagement of membership audience.</p> <p>Distribution of materials to attendees (must be provided and approved in advance by HRATT)</p> <p>Logo recognition in email blasts to membership.</p> <p>A display table available to attendees.</p> <p>A half-page of space in our bi-monthly newsletter for three (3) consecutive publications.</p> <p>One free annual membership to HRATT.</p>	\$500
Gold	<p>A featured sponsor for a monthly meeting will receive:</p> <p>Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting by HRATT Board Member.</p> <p>Five (5) minute engagement of membership audience.</p> <p>Logo recognition in email blasts to membership.</p> <p>A display table available to attendees.</p> <p>50% off of one annual membership to HRATT.</p>	\$300
Silver	<p>Reach more members through newsletter and website sponsorship. This sponsorship level entitles you to:</p> <p>A half page of space in our bi-monthly newsletter for three (3) consecutive publications.</p> <p>Recognition of sponsorship (logo display) with link to sponsor's chosen web portal association website for six (6) months.</p> <p>25% off of one annual membership to HRATT.</p>	\$250
Bronze	<p>Sponsor a monthly meeting to increase exposure of your product or service to our membership. This sponsorship level will entitle you to:</p> <p>Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting by HRATT Board Member.</p>	\$200

**The Human Resource
Association of the Twin Tiers**

**P.O. Box 904
Elmira, New York 14902**



**VISIT US ON THE WEB:
WWW.HRATT.ORG**

Annual Dues:

Membership Plus - \$215 -
Pay one price, attend meetings
all year.

Regular Membership - \$55

Retired Life Membership - \$50

**Full Time Student Member -
ship \$25**

Monthly Meeting Fees:

Members - \$25

Non-Members - \$30

Students - \$15

RSVP to:

Megan.Fewkes@adeconna.com

*****No shows (without cancelling)
will be charged the monthly meet-
ing fee.**



Foundation
2016 CHAPTER CHAMPION

2018 HRATT Officers

President	Matthew Burr	matthew@burrconsultingllc.com
President-Elect	Megan Cole	mcole@chemungcanal.com
Past President	Sharon Swartz	sswartz@ah.arnohealth.org
Membership Director	Sarah Hammer	shammer@elmira.edu
Treasurer	Pamela Burns	pburns@chemungcanal.com
Secretary/Newsletter	Sue Ann Kirkum	skirkum@lawny.org
Webmaster	Julie Fielding	jfielding@elmira.edu
Government Affairs Chair	Conrad Wolan	cwolan@saylesevans.com
Certification Chair	Catherine Murray	catherine.murray@macom.com
Marketing Director	Sean Lukasik	sean@laborlove.com
Diversity Director	Meredith Dessoie	mdessoie@travelers.com
WF Readiness Advocate	Susan Pawlak	supawlak@gstbores.org
Registration Chair	Megan Fewkes	megan.fewkes@adeconna.com
SHRM Foundation Director	Rick Shay	rshay@stny.rr.com
College Relations	Laurel Eschbach	leschbach@marketstreettrust.com

The Association

The Human Resources Association of the Twin Tiers (HRATT) is an organization for human resource professionals from the private and public sectors who daily deal with personnel matters, wage and salary administration, labor relations and other aspects of human resource management.

HRATT serves the Twin Tiers including the counties of Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler in New York, and Bradford and Tioga counties in Pennsylvania.

HRATT meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Elmira-Corning area. Meetings usually alternate between breakfast and lunch unless otherwise indicated, except July and August. On the months where a holiday is involved in the week, we move the meeting to the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Goals

1. Provide the members a means for exchange of information on area HR practices & challenges.
2. Further members' professional development and education.
3. Develop & publish a survey of wage/salary & HR practices in the area.
4. Enhance the area's labor relations image.

Benefits of HRATT Membership

- Monthly meetings dealing with local and national HR issues.
- Professional speakers covering current HR topics.
- HRATT Membership Directory.
- Networking with local HR professionals.
- Opportunities for professional and personal growth.