



December
2014
Twin Tiers
HR Times

HRATT Current members:	99
SHRM members:	55 (55%)
Certified members:	18 (18%)

The President's Corner

Hi Everyone,

At this time last year, I embarked on a journey as the new president of HRATT. I have had the opportunity to work with a tremendous, hard-working, and dedicated board and it has been my pleasure to serve you this past year. I look forward to 2015 and a new set of exciting challenges to work through and build upon. In our last newsletter I spoke about the many thought provoking decisions the board was undertaking as we prepare for the new year. One decision we have made is to increase the price of our monthly meetings to \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members beginning in January. This decision is based on several factors including the increased cost of food and the other expenses that go into coordinating a program including speaker fees, speaker gifts, and our monthly raffle prize of an annual SHRM membership.

Another decision is to offer a pay one price option for membership this year. This membership fee will allow you to attend all monthly meetings without paying for each meal separately. We realize this may not be a feasible option for some members so we continue to offer a \$50 annual membership fee as a valuable alternative.

We are putting together a terrific program calendar for the new year and plan to incorporate some additional opportunities to network, socialize, and learn in different ways. Stay-tuned for more information as we finalize our calendar. Thank you for allowing us to serve you. We wish each of you and your families a safe and peaceful holiday season and a happy and healthy new year.

Sincerely,

Jenine J. Cleary, SPHR

HRATT President



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EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATES

by

Conrad R. Wolan, Esq.

Emily M. Rockett, Esq.

OSHA Cautions Retailers in Anticipation of Black Friday

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a letter to CEOs of major retail employers, encouraging those employers to implement safety measures to prevent workplace injuries during major sales events, including Black Friday. Failure to implement safety measures around this time of year can have dire consequences. In 2008, a worker at a Wal-Mart in Valley Stream, NY was trampled to death by shoppers who charged the entrance before the store opened on Black Friday.

To ensure the safety of their employees, retailers are encouraged to use the safety guidelines found in OSHA's "Crowd Management Safety Guidelines for Retailers." According to OSHA, crowd management plans should include, at minimum:

- On-site trained security personnel or police officers;
- Barricades or rope lines for pedestrians that do not start right in front of the store's entrance;
- The implementation of crowd control measures well in advance of customers arriving at the store;
- Emergency procedures in place to address potential dangers;
- Methods for explaining approach and entrance procedures to the arriving public;
- Not allowing additional customers to enter the store when it reaches its maximum occupancy level; and
- Not blocking or locking exit doors.

The full text of OSHA's Crowd Management Safety Fact Sheet can be found on the OSHA website: https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/Crowd_Control.html

Condé Nast Settlement Highlights Continued Problems with Unpaid Internships

On November 13, Condé Nast agreed to pay \$5.8 million to settle a class action law suit brought by thousands of former interns who claimed that the low compensation they received during their internships at the publisher's high end magazines violated the Fair Labor Standards Act and New York State Labor Law. The case is one in a wave of recent suits brought against media and entertainment companies, which have a longstanding practice of paying little or nothing for internships. Two such cases have been appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit: Glatt v. Fox Searchlight Pictures (interns who performed work in connection with the production of the film *Black Swan*) and Xuedan Wang v. Hearst Corp (interns who worked at various Hearst publications for little to no pay).

Under both the FLSA and New York State law, for an unpaid internship to avoid running afoul of wage and hour provisions, an unpaid intern and the intern's employer must agree that the person performing the work is not entitled to wages for the work performed. In addition, an internship must provide experience for the benefit of the intern, the intern must not displace regular employees, and the work must be performed under the close supervision of existing staff. New York has the additional requirement that the employer not be committed to hire the intern at the conclusion of the training period.

Conducting Interviews

By Dan Mori

There are various schools of thought on conducting interviews. We've seen different companies pursue different strategies, and we've seen the results.

One of the big questions is what to ask during the interview.

While some companies rigidly stick to boilerplate questions they've read in generic staffing solutions books, we would recommend going a step beyond, and adopting some more interesting and unanticipated interview questions that will let you know more about the people who are applying for jobs.

Why Use Curveball Questions?

Unique or less anticipated interview questions play a good role in an interview. They help to switch things up, and allow job applicants to demonstrate more of their skills and abilities.

In a sense, a lot of people at a job interview are looking for challenges, because they give them opportunities to stand out from the pack and make themselves look like the best option for an employer.

At the same time, curveball questions can tell interviewers more about the job applicant. You can go through a whole boilerplate interview without really understanding how one applicant is different from another, but by putting a little pressure on and adding spice to an interview, you can often see who shines and who folds under pressure. It's all part of making an interview more "three-dimensional" and valuable – and after all, that's why companies are moving to multi-stage interviews, which take longer and tie up more HR hours: so that they know more about applicants at the end of the process.

Examples of Curveball Interview Questions

Let's start with some common examples of curveball questions that, actually, a lot of companies do ask. Examples include questions like 'what are your strengths and weaknesses?' and 'how have you dealt with a challenge at work?' These questions are meant to encourage the applicants to be more introspective, and tell more about themselves.

Going beyond this, you could ask some even more interesting interview questions like the following:

Who do you look up to and why?

Who would be your three ideal companions at a business dinner?

What do you hate about your field?

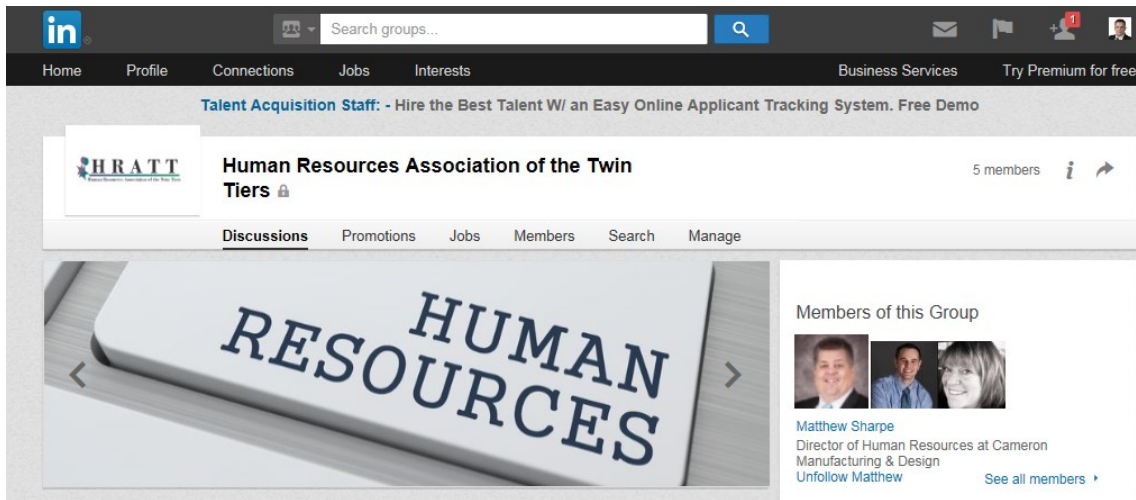
What do you see emerging in your industry in the next 10 years?

It's interesting to note that some of these questions have to do with insight or philosophy in a particular field. Interviewers perform these kinds of challenges partly to get the applicant talking about the industry. That way, they can see how much he or she really knows. And that's going to be very valuable when it's time to sift through applications post-interview and find the right person to assume a given job role.

HRATT Marketing & Public Relations

HRATT will be introducing a new LinkedIn Group webpage to all members over the next few weeks. The goal of the new webpage is to share ideas, discuss topics that are important to the membership and update everyone on HRATT events. Look for an invite to the new group over the coming weeks. If you have any suggestions for improving the group page, let the board know.

Matthew Burr



College Connection:

HRATT is continually looking at opportunities to engage with local human resource students in an effort to build relationships and enable learning. In coordination with the student SHRM chapter at Mansfield University, we recently held a panel discussion on November 18th at the Mansfield campus. The event turned out to be a huge success! HRATT members, Pam Burns, Matthew Burr, Jenine Cleary, Sharon Schwartz, and Conrad Wolan all eagerly shared their insights regarding human resources and employment law. The session was very well attended by over 25 students from various backgrounds including HR, Business Administration, Psychology, and even Nursing. The students submitted questions prior to the panel, as well as asked many off the cuff. Topic areas included tough employee relations issues, liability mitigation, and general career path guidance. Following the formal panel discussion, there was a short networking session where the students had the opportunity to talk one on one. The event has sparked great deal of further interest from the students, and we are looking forward to more joint programs and events. One opportunity we are investigating is a "reverse" mentoring program. Students would be paired with interested local professionals in an effort to help the professionals better understand and engage with the Millennial generation. New technology and the ever evolving social media landscape would be top priorities!

Josh Hogue

College Relations Chair

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The Human Resource
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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

