



The 4 Trends Impacting Your HR in 2018

Are You Ready for the New Year?

It's that time of year: the store shelves are lined with holiday décor, parties are being planned and organizations are huddling in conference rooms hashing over what worked, what didn't and what's to come in the New Year.

As a leading professional employer organization (PEO) in Texas, every day we work with organizations facing the same tough decisions as they look to streamline their human resources management and predict cost expenditures for the coming year.

From our perspective, there are several key factors organizations should keep in mind as they look to 2018. No doubt, HR is an important and essential function of any successful business. If you can be prepared for and begin implementing some of these ideas into your 2018 human resource management, your employees will be more productive and engaged.

1. Rethink Performance Reviews

We all know how time-consuming and ineffective the annual review process can be, but it's been ingrained into our organizational DNA that reviews are required. That's not necessarily true. While employee reviews and feedback remain extremely important, the process has changed considerably.

Today's employees need ongoing, regular feedback. As stated in *The Performance Management Revolution* from Harvard Business Review in October of 2016, there are three primary reasons to drop the annual appraisal process:

- a) The return of people development
- b) The need for agility
- c) The centrality of teamwork

These three reasons point to the need for a system that more closely follows the natural cycle of work.

As Michael Heller of iRevu explains, "Reviews aren't dying, but they're certainly changing. 43% of highly engaged employees receive feedback at least twice a week, but here's the sticky twist; many employees report being uninterested in performance reviews. Ongoing corrective feedback is far more desirable and constructive than any form of feedback."



So all that to say: infrequent reviews are no longer adequate. Organizations must provide regular feedback to employees so they will know where they need to improve.

2. Work-Life Balance = Being Less Connected

The importance of work-life balance is far from a new idea or trend. However, more and more studies we see suggest that the need for this balance is increasing greatly.

There are different views how work-life balance is defined, but the trend for 2018 is around encouraging employees to disconnect from the workplace and their electronic devices while out of the office. Clearly, this isn't possible for all professions, but we should all be working toward the goal of less screen time.

According to a 2016 survey from Deloitte, Americans collectively check their phones 8 billion times per day. The average for individual Americans was 46 checks per day, including during their leisure time (watching TV, eating dinner, spending time with friends).

According to Brandon Carter of Access Perks, "HR departments are recognizing the value of work-life balance. Specifically, many companies are putting policies in place that limit checking email while out of the office and working while on PTO. They're trying to be proactive about encouraging people to use more PTO and to actually stay offline during that PTO."

If employees feel less tethered to their phones for work reasons, they can sleep and eat better and experience better overall health. This is good for our employees' productivity short-term and health costs long-term.



3. Artificial Intelligence Works For HR, Too

Artificial Intelligence is finding its way into the workplace through customer service departments as well as sales and marketing groups of businesses around the world. So, why can't it work for human resources?

Well, it can, and we are starting to see more proof each day. According to Jeanne Meister, who published *The Future Of Work: The Intersection Of*

Artificial Intelligence And Human Resources in Forbes earlier this year, “Artificial intelligence is not the future of the workplace, it is the present and happening today.”

Meister further explains that IBM and many others are using chatbots, or computer algorithms designed to simulate a human conversation, to recruit employees, answer HR questions and personalize learning experiences.

Employees value that these chatbots can provide real-time answers to HR questions. For HR leaders, chatbots can improve talent acquisition and new employee onboarding.

Brandon Carter from Access Perks claims, “Talent acquisition is a prime candidate for the use of robotic process automation. A big company might have tens of thousands of resumes and other paperwork from past applicants, and managing all of that is incredibly time-consuming.”

In the digital age we are living in, the immediacy that chatbots can provide will soon become the norm.

4. Continuous Learning Benefits Us All

Simply put, organizations that help their employees grow will see value in their bottom line. Providing valuable training opportunities sends the message to employees that the organization cares about their future.

Lauren Stafford of HRMS World agrees, “Continuous learning will be a hot trend this year. HR leaders are recognizing the need to overhaul learning and development opportunities for their employees, considering that careers are now likely to span 60 years. Digital training through learning management software (LMS) is an increasingly attractive option because it gives HR teams the ability to measure employee productivity through data. It also makes for a more collaborative experience since various departments across the organization supply learning content.”

Skilled jobs are becoming more specialized. With rapid advancements in technology, among other things, the need for employees and businesses to stay ahead of the game is now more crucial than ever.

