



West Sound Human Resource Management Association

# West Sound Happenings

July 2006

*Save The Date*

## Monthly Luncheons

There will be no August luncheon meeting.

Next luncheon will be September 13, 2006.



Please continue to check our website at [www.wshrma.org](http://www.wshrma.org) for updated information on the above events.



## WSHRMA MONTHLY LUNCHEON

### *“PANDEMICS: WHAT’S SHOULD YOU DO”*

**PRESENTED BY:** Betty Dunaway, Kitsap County Health District

**SILVERDALE BEACH HOTEL**

**JULY 12, 2006**

**SPONSORED BY:**



Public health experts believe that it is only a matter of time before we will experience an influence "pandemic" - a global outbreak of disease from a new influenza virus - the "avian" or "bird" flu. Because people will not have been infected with a similar virus in the past, it is likely that few people will have any natural immunity to the new virus. Because of this, the new flu could be far more deadly than the seasonal flu viruses. Vaccine for a new virus might not be available for six to 8 months after a pandemic starts.

A pandemic could last for several weeks or months, could recur in waves and could interrupt vital governmental and other services. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts that, if a pandemic influenza virus develops, it will spread rapidly and infect as much as 25-30% of the U.S. population.

For employers, this means widespread absences from work caused by employee absences, lack of supplies and inability of vendors to perform, employers should consider a number of human resources issues before a pandemic occurs. Come to our July presentation to hear what those are.

**RSVP by July 7, 2006**

Date: July 12, 2006  
Time: 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Price: \$20.00 Member\*  
\$30.00 Non-Member\*  
RSVP: [wshrma@artanderson.com](mailto:wshrma@artanderson.com)  
360-479-5600 x2265

**SILVERDALE BEACH HOTEL**

3073 NW Bucklin Hill Road

Silverdale, WA 98383

360-337-8800

\*Add \$10 with no reservation. Cancellations must be received at least 2 days prior to receive refund.



LEADING PEOPLE  
LEADING ORGANIZATIONS

## IN THE NEWS - SHRM.ORG



### More employers pre-screen, use background checks in hiring

By Kathy Gurchiek

## Become A Member

Are you interested in a SHRM Membership or transferring your membership to our chapter? Please give Linda Corpe, VP of Membership a call with any questions: 360-373-2686 or e-mail to [lcorpe@amiinter.com](mailto:lcorpe@amiinter.com)

More employers are turning to pre-screening tools to help them streamline their hiring process, according to a [national workforce study](#) that recruiting and staffing firm Spherion Corp. released in June.

Finding qualified, skilled workers and keeping employment costs under control will be small companies' top two HR concerns over the next few years, according to the study, which found that more big and small employers are turning to tools to help them screen potential job candidates more efficiently.

In fact, 51 percent have increased their use of pre-screening programs in the past five years, and 60 percent have upped their use of assessment programs. The findings are based on phone and online interviews conducted between March 21 and April 27, 2005, with senior human resource executives at U.S. companies. "Changing demographics, shrinking supplies of qualified workers and the growing importance of retaining top talent are just some of the reasons employers are re-evaluating their approach to the screening, interviewing and hiring process," Spherion President and CEO Roy Krause said in a press release.

A survey from Challenger, Gray & Christmas this year found that 66 percent of HR executives said it is becoming more difficult to find qualified candidates and/or retain them because of the tightening job market. "More and more human resource executives are coming to the realization that they can no longer drag their heels on hiring decisions," Challenger CEO John A. Challenger said in a press release. "If they do, it is increasingly likely that the candidate will be off the market before the offer is made."

Employers cannot afford to spend time and money interviewing unqualified candidates, and hiring managers risk losing talented workers who won't be available in the market for long, Spherion's Krause noted.

The typical hiring manager interviews an average of eight people for a position, and 42 percent of employers think that their hiring managers interview too many people to find qualified candidates, according to Spherion.

Companies with \$1 billion or more in annual revenue, though, are less inclined than smaller organizations to think that they interview too many people. The most innovative organizations, Krause said, use pre-screening and assessment tools to find good job candidates quickly. Overall, 93 percent of employers surveyed for the Spherion study use some type of screening tool, a big increase from 48 percent five years ago. Background checks appear to be the screening tool of choice for some or all of the jobs at 79 percent of organizations. That's up from 51 percent in 2005.

Other tools they use include:

- Non-specified pre-screening programs, 57 percent; up from 51 percent in 2001.
- Skills testing, 56 percent; up from 48 percent.
- Behavioral interviewing; 54 percent, a slight dip from 56 percent.
- Drug tests, 50 percent; down from 54 percent.
- Behavioral assessments, 34 percent; down from 60 percent.
- Credit checks, 33 percent; down from 55 percent.

## AFFILIATE OF



## Job Bank

Please check out our website at [www.wshrma.org](http://www.wshrma.org) for current job openings. If you would like to advertise an open HR position in the WSHRMA job bank, please contact Debbie Laudenslager at 360-415-6533 or e-mail to [dlaudenslager@kpshealthplan.com](mailto:dlaudenslager@kpshealthplan.com)

**Prescreen—Cont. from page 2**

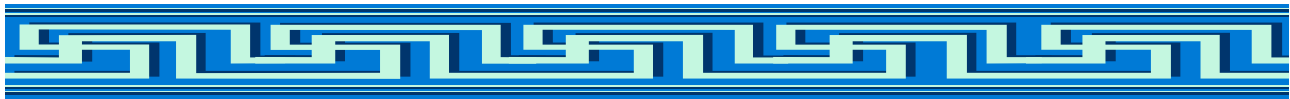
Employers that are more successful financially and have stronger employee growth because they use HR best practices—dubbed “emergent” employers—are more inclined to use pre-screening and assessment tools in their hiring process, Spherion said.

For example, 69 percent of emergent employers vs. 51 percent of traditional employers use skills testing; 78 percent vs. 40 percent use behavioral interviewing; 65 percent vs. 46 percent use pre-screening programs; and 55 percent vs. 24 percent use behavioral assessments.

Some employers even are looking at profiles on social networking sites to research and screen job candidates, the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) found.

Among employers participating in Purdue (Indiana) University job fairs and on-campus recruiting, 50 percent of 114 employers surveyed in the past academic year use some sort of online technology to screen candidates who had already applied for a job. Those employers were going online to look at social networking sites such as Facebook, Friendster, MySpace and LiveJournal; personal websites, blogs and search engines. Another 7 percent said they do not use online screening methods but plan to start.

*Kathy Gurchiek is associate editor for HR News. She can be reached at [kgurchiek@shrm.org](mailto:kgurchiek@shrm.org).*



## **\$50,000 in Regional Scholarships Available**

One tangible benefit of the SHRM Foundation is its support of scholarships for SHRM members. All chapter leaders are encouraged to help us spread the word about the 2006 Regional Scholarship Program. 60 scholarships totaling \$50,000 will be awarded in 2006. The awards program is designed to assist working SHRM members in meeting their professional development goals. SHRM members pursuing a college degree or professional certification are eligible to apply for either a \$1300 education scholarship or a \$600 certification scholarship. Twelve scholarships will be awarded in each of the five domestic regions, so applicants compete only with members in their own area. (Members outside the U.S. are also eligible to apply.) **The application deadline is July 15, 2006.** Note: student members and local-only members are not eligible for these awards. Contact Sandi Peyton ([speyton@shrm.org](mailto:speyton@shrm.org)) or your regional coordinator to request a free supply of scholarship brochures for your chapter. The scholarships are made possible by your generous support of the SHRM Foundation. Award applications and information are available online at: <http://www.shrm.org/foundation/EducationGrants.asp>.

## **New Barbara Sanchez Scholarships**

An additional scholarship program is now available for HR professionals in the media industry. Five \$1500 scholarships, one in each SHRM domestic region, will be awarded annually to SHRM members pursuing a college degree. Applicants must be SHRM members working full-time in human resources in the media field (includes print, publishing, cable & satellite, broadcasting, motion picture, internet and communications.) In 2000, a scholarship fund was created to honor the late Barbara Sanchez, an HR director at Newsday and a dedicated member of the Media Human Resources Association (MHRA) board of directors. MHRA was disbanded in 2003, and it was agreed that the remaining scholarship funds would be awarded through the SHRM Foundation. Funding is available for this scholarship program through 2009.

**The application deadline is July 15, 2006.** Award applications and information are available online at: <http://www.shrm.org/foundation/EducationGrants.asp>. If you have additional question about either scholarship please contact Terry Finch ([tfinch@shrm.org](mailto:tfinch@shrm.org)) or your regional coordinator.



## HR BITS AND PIECES JULY 2006

### **Workers would like to change mix of pay and benefits**

A survey shows that most U.S. employees are relatively satisfied with their pay but that, given the chance, they would like to restructure their rewards packages.

Three out of four workers responding to a Hudson Highland Group survey said they were satisfied with their compensation. Forty-four percent of respondents said that they would change their mix of cash and benefits if given the chance.

When given their choice of unconventional benefits, employees said a more flexible work schedule would be their top choice; it was cited by one-third of survey respondents. Twenty-two percent said they would opt for additional family benefits, including parental leave and personal days. Supplemental insurance was identified by 16 percent. Job training was cited by 13 percent.

Only one in five workers said that better benefits would make them happier with their compensation package.

### **Chamber: Benefits consume 40.2 percent of payroll costs**

The cost of employee benefits reached 40.2 percent of payroll expenses in 2004, the most recent year for which statistics are available, according to a new study released by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

According to the 2005 Employee Benefits Study, retirement and savings plan costs experienced the sharpest increase, rising from 6.7 percent to 8.0 percent of payroll expenses from 2003 to 2004. The study included 720 U.S. businesses.

Medically related expenses remained the greatest share of employee benefit costs, at 11.9 percent, according to the Chamber. Payments employers made for time not worked, such as holidays and other paid time off, represented an additional 10.5 percent of payroll expenditures.

The average dollar amount in benefits received by employees from the participating companies increased from \$18,358 in 2004 to \$20,158 in 2005. Benefit costs, as a percentage of payroll costs, have increased on average close to 1 percent each year since 2000.

“These results indicate that employers continue to strive to offer good benefits packages to workers, even in the face of increasing costs,” said Randel Johnson, a Chamber vice president, in a Chamber publication.



### **West Sound Human Resources Management Association Awarded the 2005 Superior Merit Award**

CONGRATULATIONS!! Our organization has once again been awarded the Superior Merit Award! In order to be awarded this honor we must meet minimum

“By achieving Superior Merit designation, your chapter has distinguished itself as an outstanding organization dedicated to serving the networking and professional development needs of your members and to the advancement of the human resources profession” noted Keith J. Greene, SPHR, Vice President for Member Relations for SHRM.



## HR NEWS - COURT REPORT

### 10th Circuit: Rubber-stamping of recommendation to fire did not shield bottler from bias claim

By Maria Greco Danaher

Termination based solely on a biased supervisor's recommendation could lead to liability under Title VII, even when an HR person unfamiliar with the employee's race discharges the worker, the [10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals](#) ruled.

Stephen Peters worked as a merchandiser for BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Albuquerque, N.M., and was one of the fewer than 2 percent of black employees at that location. Most BCI merchandisers worked staggered shifts to effectively perform their duties of arranging, cleaning and rotating product displays in various retail outlets. Because Peters was the most senior merchandiser in the district, he had the most desirable schedule, with weekends off. Peters was regarded as a good employee and team player.

He reported directly to Cesar Grado, a Hispanic district manager, but Jeff Katt, a white account manager, supervised Peters on a day-to-day basis. Grado was responsible for supervising and evaluating the district's account managers, but he did not have authority to discipline or terminate employees. Instead, he was to bring such issues to the attention of the HR department, which then would take any necessary action. BCI received no complaints about Grado from Peters, but a number of Grado's other subordinates felt that Grado treated black employees less respectfully than Hispanic employees, and subjected black employees to greater scrutiny and more serious discipline than others.

On Sept. 28, 2001, Grado learned that a "floater" merchandiser, upon whom Grado relied to cover extra shifts, had been injured and was unable to work the following weekend. Because Coca-Cola was running a promotion at that time, BCI needed additional personnel to cover the work. Grado asked Katt to have Peters work that Sunday, but Peters refused. Grado's recollection was that Peters had responded that he would "call in sick" for that day, but Katt denied that Peters said that. Instead, Katt recalled that Peters said that he had plans for the weekend. Grado decided to follow up with HR.

The HR manager for Grado's district was Sherry Pederson, and her supervisor was Pat Edgar. Neither had ever met or heard of Peters until the incident in September 2001. Grado called Edgar and told her that Peters planned to call in sick rather than come to work on Sunday. Based on a BCI policy that prohibited calling in sick in advance, Edgar told Grado to direct Peters to come to work and to inform Peters that his failure to do so would be viewed as insubordination, which constituted grounds for discharge.

Grado then met with Peters, who informed Grado that he had plans for the weekend. When Grado asked about the plans, Peters reacted angrily and told Grado that the plans were "none of his business." Grado then directed Peters to work on Sunday, and told him that failure to do so would be viewed as insubordination.

Peters did not work on Sunday, and he was terminated. He filed a charge of discrimination with the EEOC, which ultimately filed a federal court action against BCI on his behalf. Although the district court dismissed the case, the 10th Circuit reinstated the action, based on the fact that the decision to terminate Peters was based solely on information obtained from Grado, an individual with an alleged racial bias.

[\*EEOC v. BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co., 10th Cir., No 04-2220 \(June 7, 2006\).\*](#)

**Professional Pointer:** Various federal courts have used the "cat's paw" or "rubber stamp" theory to characterize a situation in which an employment decision is made by one manager but is heavily influenced by a biased supervisor. Courts have held that an employer cannot escape liability simply by insulating the decision-maker from the affected employee. The important element in this decision is a statement by the court that "an employer can escape liability entirely by performing an independent investigation." The fact that information from a biased supervisor forms part of an adverse decision can be mitigated by a fair, full and unbiased investigation into the circumstances that lead to the ultimate employment action. Employers should ensure objective and complete documentation of such an investigation as a defense to a claim of discrimination.

*Maria Greco Danaher is an attorney with the firm of [Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote](#) in Pittsburgh.*

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