



West Sound Human Resource Management Association

# West Sound Happenings

March 2008



**Save The  
Date**

**Mark this date on  
your Calendar!**

**April 9th—Luncheon**  
**“What’s new in the  
Employment Law  
Zoo”,**  
**By Susan Stahlfeld,  
Miller Nash.**

**May 14th—Full Day**  
**Spring Conference**  
**Project Leadership**  
**Mark Christenson**

**June 11th—Luncheon**  
**Compensation Trends**  
**By Catherine Dovey,  
CCP**

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

**The Rules of Engagement and The War for Talent**  
**Understanding, Measuring, and Improving Engagement in Your  
Organization**

The race for talent is no longer just about attracting talent. With the labor shortage in full swing, employers will have to focus more on their existing employee population. With the U.S. employment rates hovering below 5% according to the Department of Labor, the cost of acquiring talent will grow more expensive and you will be fighting harder than ever to keep the people you have. One way organizations have been dealing with these problems is by focusing on “employee engagement.”

This course focuses on increasing your awareness and understanding of employee engagement, the drivers of engagement and some of the levers Human Resources professionals can pull to enhance engagement in your organization.

**What You Will Learn:**

- Learn the definition of employee engagement
- Understand the key drivers of employee engagement
- Look at some of the latest statistics on the workforce, labor-shortage and employee engagement in the United States
- Use a High-Performance model to quickly assess & pin-point strong & weak areas in your “system” of high performance
- Learn the common themes for measuring employee engagement
- Consider an analysis tool for measuring employee engagement in your organization  
Take key strategies and action steps back to your workplace for implementation

Lynda Silsbee is a consultant, speaker and author on creating high-performance organizations and workplace effectiveness. She is Founder and President of Performance Dimensions Group, a consulting firm specializing in business and human performance.

**Date: March 12, 2008**

**Time: 11:45 a.m.—1:30 p.m.**

**RSVP by  
March 10, 2008**

**Place: Silverdale Beach Hotel**  
**3073 NW Bucklin Hill Road**  
**Silverdale, WA 98383**

**Price: \$20.00 for Members**  
**\$30.00 Non-Members**

**RSVP: [wshrma@artanderson.com](mailto:wshrma@artanderson.com)**  
**360-479-5600 x2265**



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## Become A Member

Are you interested in a SHRM Membership or transferring your membership to our chapter? Please contact Rachael Taylor, VP of Membership with any questions: 360-792-3336 or [rtaylor@kitsapsun.com](mailto:rtaylor@kitsapsun.com)

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## 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@kpshealthplans.com](mailto:dlaudenslager@kpshealthplans.com).



**"Need HR Help NOW??  
Get it with LIVE HELP from SHRM"**

[Click Here For  
LIVE HELP](#)

### What is Live Help?

Live Help is an interactive, one-to-one chat feature that connects you directly to an SHRM staff member for quick real-time assistance. It is provided for both customer service inquiries and quick answers to HR questions and is accessible during regular SHRM business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 5 pm ET). The link for instructions to use this service can be found at <http://www.shrm.org/help/whatis.asp>.

### How does it work?

Click the live help button and answer a few quick questions so SHRM can direct you to the appropriate department. You will then be greeted by a staff person and can submit your question. You will receive a response within seconds and may be able to get an immediate answer during your brief chat. If no one is available at that moment to respond, you will be given the option of sending an email instead.

### Who are the "live persons" on the other end of Live Help?

Live Help is brought to you by the Information Center and the Customer Service Departments -- the same SHRM Staff who answer your questions via the SHRM phone and email services. Many staff take turns on Live Help, so different people may be "on" at different times of the day. The staff of the SHRM Information Center provides the "Answers to HR questions" section of Live Help. The Customer Service Representatives, experts on SHRM membership benefits, conferences and seminars, provide Live Help for many non-HR questions.

### Can I get a record of the discussion I have?

Yes. At the conclusion of your chat you may choose to provide an email address where a transcript of your session will be sent within seconds.

### What if I have a follow-up question?

If it is necessary for you to be in touch with the same staff member you chatted with previously, and that individual is no longer available on chat, your request will be directed to them via email for a separate response. Complex issues are best addressed by phone or email in most cases. If your question takes more than a few lines to type, or you have several questions about an issue, it is probably best to ask it through email or the telephone. Live Help is best suited to one quick question.

### Why does it sometimes take several seconds for a response?

There may be a brief delay before you see a response for many reasons, one of which is that they may be chatting with up to three visitors at one time. In addition staff may be pulling up a link to provide you or another member with a response to a question. They respond as quickly as possible, but complicated HR-related questions or those requiring system research may result in delays of a few seconds. Live Help is busiest late in the day when more individuals tend to be on the SHRM website conducting Internet research. You might want to try it again at a less busy time of day.

## Diversity Corner

### National Recognition Available for Inclusive Employers

By Rebecca R. Hastings, SPHR, February 2008

In 2002, U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao established the New Freedom Initiative Award to recognize efforts to improve employment and career advancement of individuals with disabilities. Employers interested in vying for one of the 2008 awards should begin the nomination process now.

The annual award recognizes public-private partnerships and programs that impact employment of people with disabilities positively through access to assistive technologies, use of innovative training, and hiring and retention techniques. It recognizes organizations, businesses and individuals that develop comprehensive strategies to enhance the ability of Americans with disabilities to enter and advance within the workforce of the 21st century.

“The New Freedom Initiative Award celebrates innovative efforts to advance accessibility to the workplace for Americans with disabilities,” said Chao in a press release. “The New Freedom Initiative Awards ceremony is an opportunity to showcase worthy organizations that are welcoming Americans with disabilities into the workplace.”

IBM and Microsoft are among the 20 businesses honored by DOL over the NFI Award’s six-year history. But large companies are not the only ones who can benefit from workers with disabilities. Case in point: A & F Wood Products in Howell, Mich., and TecAccess in Rockville, Va., were winners of the award in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

Winning an award is not the primary outcome sought by these employers when employing people with disabilities, however. Like any business, each is looking for hard-working employees who can get the job done.

In a 2006 interview with *SHRM Online*, Steven J. Korte, co-owner of A & F, said that investments in equipment for employees with disabilities resulted in increased productivity from all of the company’s employees.

Debra Ruh, president and founder of TecAccess, told *SHRM Online* that employees with disabilities are often more loyal than other employees, in part because disability-friendly employers can be hard to find.

Individuals and non-profit organizations are also eligible for the award, but federal, state and local government organizations are not.

Among the requirements needed to apply for the award are:

- An executive summary.
- A full description of the specific activities, program(s) or establishment for which the nomination is being submitted.
- Specific data on training, placements, resources expended and other relevant information.
- A description of how the program(s) and/or activities have had a positive and measurable impact on the employment of people with disabilities.
- A report detailing any unresolved violations of state or federal law, as determined by compliance evaluations, complaint investigations, or other federal inspections and investigations.

Additional information on the award and specific nomination criteria are available in the [Jan. 29, 2008, edition](#) of the *Federal Register* and at [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep).

The deadline for receipt of nominations is May 30, 2008.

Rebecca R. Hastings, SPHR, is manager of *SHRM Online*’s Diversity Focus Area.

### 2008 Upcoming Events:

April 9: Susan Stahlfeld, What’s new in the Employment Law Zoo

May 14: Spring Conference—Project Leadership

June 11— Catherine Dovey, CCP, SPHR, Compensation Trends

August 13: Breakfast meeting—Kellis Borek, FMLA and WA FMLA Update



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**WSHRMA Full Day Spring Conference**  
**Project Leadership**  
**Wednesday, May 14th**

### **Workshop Overview**

Learning Point is excited to offer *Project Leadership Training at WSHRMA's 2008 Spring Conference*.

A project leader, by definition, is responsible for ensuring project success. However, when people are involved, project success can become complex and unpredictable. The ability to sustain focus and commitment toward clear project outcomes is a critical leadership skill.

### **Objectives:**

This workshop will help you:

- ⇒ Define the critical role of project leadership in the project management process.
- ⇒ Effectively develop and use a project charter to ensure focus and commitment.
- ⇒ Identify project stakeholders and manage stakeholder expectations.
- ⇒ Apply tools and techniques for developing and leading a project team.
- ⇒ Handle difficult situations that could throw your project off track.

Project leaders are often expected to achieve results while balancing limited dollars, time, and resources. People are a project's most valuable resource, but they can also pose the biggest challenges.

This workshop will provide tools and techniques for defining project goals, ensuring project commitment, and maintaining project focus.

**More Details Coming Soon!!!**

### **Legislative Update—Cont from page 5**

expended in the event of prevailing on appeal. Presently, self-insured employers prevail in about 60% of their appeals. Amendments that would have improved the bill's appeals process or expanded the authority of self-insured employers over claims administration unfortunately did not pass. A floor amendment did pass in the House that provided some additional recoupment tools for self-insured employers and provided for a L&I study of appeals and the impact of this act on employers and the state fund. AWB, along with the WSIA, continues to oppose the measure. SB 6750 did not pass the Senate by cutoff, but HB 3139 passed late last night.

### **Unemployment Insurance Bills**

**Benefits for Apprentices.** **HB 2967**, sponsored by Rep. Steve Conway, D-Tacoma and **SB 6751** sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Seattle, allow individuals to leave active employment, enter a union sponsored apprenticeship program and earn UI benefits while enrolled in the program. Both bills were amended in committee to clarify that the individual would be entering an apprenticeship approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council. AWB testified in opposition to these bills and is asking for clarifying amendments to ensure that if an individual leaves the program without completing it, that the departure is considered a voluntary quit and the individual will no longer be eligible for UI benefits. The House version did not survive today's cut-off, but the Senate version passed off the floor without AWB's clarifying amendment. We will continue to advocate for that change in the House of Representatives.

## Legislative Update — March 2008

### Labor & Employment Law Bills

#### ***Paid Family Leave Funding and Implementation.***

Following the work last summer, fall, and winter of the Joint Legislative Task Force on Family Leave Insurance, and its ensuing report, minority report, and business community report, this session promised to be the time in which last year's 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-the-nation paid leave program would be funded and implemented. Not long into the session, it became apparent that the question of funding the benefits and ongoing administration of this program would not be settled in the 2008 legislative session. Similarly, it now appears the two implementation bills, **HB 3305**, sponsored by Rep. Marylou Dickerson, D-Seattle, and **SB 6280**, sponsored by Senator Keiser, D-Des Moines, will not be passed out of their house of origin by today's cut-off. Although both bills will likely be exempted from this cut-off as deemed "necessary to implement the budget," nevertheless the questions of funding and implementation remain significantly unanswered. The most likely scenario at this point involves a push by proponents to maintain some degree of funding in the year's supplemental budget for the Employment Security Department to look at initial administration of the program while the employer community and others look for a more viable policy proposal including, potentially, economic incentives for employers to provide paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child.

#### ***Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence.***

On Monday of last week, a bill introduced last year, **SB 5900**, sponsored by Senator Debbie Regala, D-Tacoma, passed off the Senate floor 48-0 without a public hearing this year. Last night, a companion bill from this year, **HB 2602**, sponsored by Rep. Lynn Kessler, D-Hoquiam, passed off the House floor 82-14 after a failed attempt at amendment. Both bills provide for a "reasonable" period of job-protected leave for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, to seek various forms of legal, medical, or social assistance. The bill contains leave, notification, and verification provisions roughly analogous to provisions of the state and federal Family Medical Leave Acts, but creates a new category of leave over and above those laws. In addition, the leave provisions apply to employees of all employers in the state, and unlike the family leave laws does not exempt small employers. The bills also provide for a new, potentially concurrent administrative remedy and civil cause of action for employees who feel aggrieved or discriminated against with respect to their leave. The House Amendment on HB 2602, offered by Rep. Cary Condotta, R-Wenatchee, would have tightened the definitions sections of the bill, and aligned the policy and enforcement provisions of the leave with those of the state's Family Leave Act. AWB supported the Condotta amendment and will continue to work with legislators on these bills.

#### ***Fixing the Brink's Uncertainty.***

Employers whose employees have commuted to and from the employer's premises or job-sites in company-provided vehicles know all too well the uncertainty and jeopardy that followed the Washington Supreme Court's decision in *Stevens v. Brink's Home Security* last October, holding that under certain circumstances, such commuting time can be counted as hours worked and require compensation. AWB and other employers and organizations proposed two companion bills to address the compensability of commute time in company provided vehicles, **HB 3294**, sponsored by Rep. Bruce Chandler, R-Granger, and **SB 6867**, sponsored by Janea Holmquist, R-Moses Lake. These bills would have specified that commute time and activities incidental to commuting within an employer's normal commuting area are not compensable. Unfortunately, the labor community, joined by the plaintiff's attorney who litigated *Brink's* and has filed five subsequent class action lawsuits, presented staunch opposition to the proposals and the House bill did not receive a hearing. The Senate version was heard in a contentious hearing, but did not move out of committee and is effectively dead. The Department of Labor & Industries has indicated it intends to address the issue in an interim policy and through later rulemaking. It is unclear whether the policy or rulemaking will address employers' key concerns.

### Workers' Compensation Bills

**Pay During Appeal.** **HB 3139**, sponsored by Rep. Steve Conway, D-Tacoma, and **SB 6750**, sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Tacoma, provide that the Department of Labor & Industries and employers in the case of self-insured employers shall pay workers' comp benefits ordered by the Department when the employer appeals that Department order. AWB has joined the Washington Self-Insurers Association in expressing serious concerns about these proposals insofar as they change current workers' compensation law and practice and create a huge cost problem especially where employers will continue to pay benefits, including medical benefits, with very little hope of recovering the amounts

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