Organizational and Team Leadership

Let Go of 20th-Century Management Models

Build Support for Civil Service Reform

Recognize and Overcome Bias in the C-Suite

Lesson Learned on Building Employee Engagement
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This month’s feature articles and columns fall into three broad categories—models of 21st-century organizational leadership, leadership philosophies and creating and maintaining high-performing teams.

Jesse Newton opens the issue by declaring that “It’s Time to Let Go of 20th-Century Management Models.” He details why clinging to traditional personnel management practices renders organizations incapable of innovating to meet existing challenges and unable to grow as needed to adapt to an uncertain future.

Longtime public HR consultant and HR News contributor Howard Risher, Ph.D., illustrates how the State of Tennessee did shed outdated management structures in his newest Managing People in Tough Times column. He emphasizes that approaching civil service reform as a government performance imperative enabled managers and elected officials to improve all aspects of state government operations.

According to Risher, a business mindset drove Tennessee’s civil service reform, which highlights how philosophy guides practice. Andrew Rahaman, Ed.D., illuminates many aspects of this relationship in a Leadership Roadmap column titled “Understand Why and How to Formulate Your Leadership Philosophy.” He also offers readers guidance on how to articulate, write out and share their own philosophy of leadership while including a long list of the leadership philosophies developed by his graduate students. The students’ statements prove that there is no one sure and preordained way to lead.

As former IPMA-HR president and current Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement Director Robert Lavigna, IPMA-SCP, notes, however, the most effective organizational leaders lead employees where those workers wish to go. Learning that destination by conducting regular engagement surveys and acting on the findings to ensure management practices align with employees’ needs will yield improved performance.

Of course, no leader can build engagement from scratch. Putting together and reinforcing strong work teams establishes a framework on which engagement can grow. Maintaining staffing levels and bolstering skillsets helps with this, as does ensuring that employees know they can advance in their careers by remaining with the organization.

Stephan Schiffman and Gary M. Krebs offer five tips for doing just that by making your organization more appealing to millennials. Last, Michael D. Brainard, Ph.D., shares advice for recruiting, hiring and promoting the best people by recognizing and overcoming personal biases.

Do not put down this February HR News before reviewing the employment law cases summarized in the Labor Relations column and scheduling professional development and learning opportunities with the help of the Calendar on page 28.

If you want to contribute your own article, we are currently lining up content for the second half of 2019. Topics of particular interest include civility in the workplace, public safety administration and diversity & inclusion. Send your ideas to elamb@ipma-hr.org. —N

Ed Lamb
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It’s Time to Let Go of 20th-Century Management Models

By Jesse Newton

We are in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, but we have yet to achieve the productivity gains delivered by the three preceding revolutions in how work gets done. This is due, in part, to many organizations hanging onto 20th century ways of managing.

Almost two decades into the 21st century, significant performance potential remains untapped because obsolete management practices and structures are no longer suited to getting the best from human beings, leveraging the latest technology and reimagining organizations. A traditional 20th-century organization has the following, probably recognizable, characteristics:

- Decisions are made at the top of the organization, meaning leaders constantly require status reports and data.
- Leaders control performance by establishing strict processes, policies, role definitions and performance expectations.
- Middle managers are installed with budgets to manage the execution of front line employees.
- Front-line employees follow instructions, adhering to established processes and rules.
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Engagement with other groups needs to funnel through management.

This highly analytical approach to managing work is illustrated in Figure 1. The hierarchical model depicts an organization as a machine in which human beings are cogs that turn to produce a predictable outcome.

**Figure 1. 20th-Century Vertical Hierarchy**

- C-Suite
  - Sets strategy
  - Sets strategic goals
  - Makes strategic decisions

- Business Unit / Functional Leadership
  - Converts strategy into BU / Function strategy
  - Sets BU / Function goals and budgets
  - Makes strategic decisions

- Middle Management
  - Manages execution of strategic goals
  - Manages budgets
  - Makes decisions
  - Allocates work
  - Controls interaction with other departments

- Front Line
  - Executes against instructions
  - Escalates decisions
  - Seeks approval and feedback: incorporates ongoing input
Traditional best management practices reinforced the need for dense bureaucratic structures and strict, formal process with more and more rules so that employees could be controlled, mistakes limited and productivity baselined. The way to improve performance was to have executives at the top of the organization dictate redesigned processes.

The assumption has been that employees cannot be trusted, that they should simply execute their instructions and not allow themselves to become distracted by thinking about better ways of doing things. Creating and maintaining organizational structures based on this philosophy ensured that managers’ power over employees increased as they ascended the vertical hierarchy, which, inevitably, gave rise to intense political struggles among management and executive candidates.

Adhering to the 20th-century approach to organization design led to a number of other harmful implications, including the following:

- It breeds a reactionary, instruction-following workforce in which everyone vies for more power.
- Many managers occupy roles that add little value.
- Thinking outside the box has been discouraged, as the focus is on meeting expectations while following predetermined processes and rules.
- Decisions get made slowly due to multiple approval processes.
- Innovation is low, as multiple rejections crush potential innovators’ willingness to even try.
- Anxiety runs high among employees whose “success” is measured by the performance reviews prepared by their manager.
- Employees focus on getting through the day and week while delivering prescribed outputs instead of focusing on the broader strategy and mission.
- Great distance separates leadership from front-line workers. Coupled with high-level reporting, this results in suboptimal decision-making and missed opportunities to better serve customers or clients.

Why the Hierarchical Organization No Longer Makes Sense

A vertical hierarchy made sense when requirements were simpler and before automation and artificial intelligence took over many routine tasks. When all an organization had to do was produce a product or deliver a service at a fixed cost or degree of quality, human capital could be managed, measured and organized as leaders saw fit. All was well as long as employees came to work on time and did the same things in the same ways.

Today, accelerating technology developments are forcing organizations to adapt quickly and well lest they fail to meet expectations. Employers can no longer afford to have managers simply tell employees what to do, especially if authorizations require approvals from more than one manager. Nor can employees blindly follow predefined processes or wait for new guidelines developed by at least four groups of which affected employees are not members. Rather, organizations must trust their people and free them to innovate, execute, make mistakes, learn and thrive.

The Emergence of Agile Organizations

Organizations are starting to explore new ways of operating. Instead of assuming that people cannot be trusted and, therefore, need to be controlled, managers are acknowledging employees’ intelligence and empowering and liberating them to make decisions and perform tasks as they deem best. Progressive organizations have also stripped out bureaucracy and connected leaders with front-line workers while pushing decision-making authority down to where the information is.

The move from top-down micromanagement to autonomous teams, which is sometimes referred to as creating an agile organization or operating as a holacracy, is gaining momentum. Increasing numbers of large and small organizations are taking steps to make the switch to this progressive method of managing work.

Major aspects of an agile organization, and what makes it different from a traditional hierarchical organization, include

- **Clarity from the top.** The vision, mission and strategy are set and clearly articulated by leadership. Key opportunities are distilled and translated into a prioritized set of initiatives that are allocated to the appropriate team(s) to pursue.
- **Removal of layers of management.** Vertical reporting lines are removed and replaced with lines of communication across pods of small teams. Layers of management are stripped out, which better connects leadership with the front line and generally improves the flow of information.
- **Category pods.** Pods are established for each particular product, service or market. Within each pod are a number of small teams that work on particular opportunities.
- **Small autonomous teams are focused on particular opportunities.** Each team determines how to solve problems and make decisions, when to execute and how to incorporate lessons learned.
- **Coordinating nodes.** Teams closely coordinate activities by
Show me a good leader, and I will show you someone who is self-aware.

Poor leaders, on the other hand, are not.

Few like to admit this, but each of us harbors personal biases. Especially when those biases remain unacknowledged, they can cause us to make really foolish decisions in the workplace.

Thanks to the very impulsive and politically incorrect amygdala—the section of the human brain that triggers emotional responses—we are often primarily, yet subconsciously, drawn to and pushed away from certain employees, colleagues and concepts. People and ideas we find familiar make us comfortable. As a result of this unintentional myopia, we often miss out on hiring the best candidates or pursuing the most-promising opportunities. In order to lead effectively, modern executives need to both recognize the existence of destructive cognitive biases and to engage in ongoing exercises that help them embrace the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Managing With Minimal Bias

At a recent business conference, Craig Boundy, CEO of Experian North America, spoke about how leaders can build winning teams in empowered organizations by utilizing simple techniques to decrease the negative impact of cognitive biases. Boundy’s five effective leadership practices are

1. Assure accountability.
2. Don’t set targets, receive commitments.
3. Turn the organizational chart upside down to ensure a servant-leadership culture.
4. Celebrate good judgement.
5. Build an organization where people are encouraged to bring their whole, diverse self to work.

Committing to each of these practices helps decrease the negative impact of cognitive biases because carrying them out requires
engaging employees in decision-making. Doing the first four things makes good business sense and represents good leadership. It also helps build an empowered organization.

Then, working within the context of an empowered organization makes it possible to pursue the fifth practice. Think of encouraging employees to bring their whole, diverse selves to work as the secret sauce for great organizations—as what really leads to increased innovation, engagement and productivity.

**Understanding the Bias Trifecta**

As you well know, an engaged employee is a better employee. By understanding your biases, you can mitigate the negative impact of those biases on employee engagement. The first step is understanding the different components of the Bias Trifecta and recognizing that these three types of cognitive biases reside in all humans outside of our own awareness.

**Unconscious Bias**

Billions of stimuli bombard your senses and trigger emotions at every moment. Since your brain is an efficiency-seeking speed demon, you often respond in the first manner that looks or feels most comfortable, whether the response involves choosing an ice cream flavor, making a new hire or deciding on a campaign tagline. You must know, however, that being comfortable with your decisions does not equate to arriving at the best decisions—especially on the job. This is why developing a solid awareness of your unconscious biases is vital.

**Retroactive Inference**

Confronted with a choice, your brain takes you back to similar past experiences without you realizing it. This unintentional reflection guides current decision-making.

As the psychologists of the world know all too well, however, your memory only offers you your interpretation of the past and not an objective point of view. Further, every experience is different even though some share similarities. The only way to move forward is to let go of preconceived notions and learn to envision better future outcomes.

**Confirmation Bias**

Did that candidate on TV just say what you have been thinking for years? Well, then you must have been right all along, right? Wrong.

Most of us are constantly looking for evidence that “proves” we are right or that what we believe in is real. As humans with supersized egos, we like to be correct—which is not a trait that dissipates as you climb the corporate ladder. And as an adult in a position of power, an organizational leader will be so steeped in confirmation bias that constant mitigation is usually the only option for avoiding rushing into dumb decisions such as hiring on impulse or not hiring a candidate based on a superficial characteristic like the person’s name or gender.

While we all have personal biases, it is the implicit ones we do not recognize or talk about that lead us down the wrong paths. Addressing and mitigating all components of the Bias Trifecta at work requires engaging in constant conversation. Once leaders uncover and communicate their biases in a judgment-free atmosphere, they can better make changes on an individual level and for the greater good.

When hiring employees or honing performance management skills, it is often helpful to open up the process by asking for alternate points of view from colleagues. Having holes poked in your policies and practices will not feel great, but receiving critiques will point out ways to minimize the influence of destructive biases. An organization in which implicit biases hold little sway is an organization with a well-rounded, inclusive atmosphere where creativity flows.

As a bottom-line issue, biases are innovation killers. Leaders who constantly settle on solutions and seek out situations that feel comfortable will never see their organization produce anything new. This is why today’s most successful organizations are those whose leaders work consciously to mitigate biases and boost collaboration on imaginative concepts.

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**HR News Anywhere**

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If you are having difficulty filling positions and retaining talent, that may be because your organization has not made adjustments to appeal to millennials. People born between the years 1982 and 2000 became the largest age cohort in the U.S. workforce during 2015, succeeding members of Generation X. Early in the next decade, millennials will constitute 50 percent of the working population. This means that if you manage people, you better figure out how to lead and motivate millennials—fast.

Job-hoppers With Their Own Expectations

As a group, millennials pose an entirely new set of challenges for managers accustomed to directing baby boomers and Gen Xers. First, younger workers tend not to have the same long-term commitment to staying with a company as older employees. They are impatient about achieving career goals and are cavalier about job-hopping. According to Gallup survey data reported in 2016, one fifth of employees born between 1980 and 1996 had changed jobs in the previous year, which was three times greater than the percentages in other age groups. Further, 60 percent of millennials indicated that they were actively looking to change jobs.

Holy Moses! That is a lot of onboarding, training, coaching and mentoring hours wasted. In fact, Gallup estimated the annual cost of all that turnover to be in the neighborhood of $30.5 billion.

Second, twenty- and thirty-somethings approach work with unique belief systems and have even developed their own generational vocabulary that baby boomers and Gen Xers may find baffling. As a result, avoidable mistakes in recruiting, training and rewarding younger employees abound.

The worst thing to do is write all millennials off as lazy, spoiled and spoon-fed. But is this perception myth or fact? The answer is somewhere in the middle. Supervisors and managers who feel frustrated because they do not understand how millennials view the world—and, especially, work—must, nevertheless, adapt their old-school approaches in order to create a millennial-friendly environment.

What to Do Differently

Collaborate

Wherever possible, managers should assign millennials to work in teams and on projects that require brainstorming and which involve other departments. One word of caution: Do not let younger employees go overboard in trying to get involved in activities outside their job descriptions. Setting stretch goals and communicating across departments should be encouraged, but employees will get distracted and not achieve their own annual goals if they try do too much.

Five Ways to Make Your Organization More Appealing to Millennials

By Stephan Schiffman and Gary M. Krebs
Offer Frequent, Detailed Feedback

Millennials crave feedback. Saying, “Great job!” will not cut it even if it is true that the employee did a great job. Millennials who go without specific guidance each week on every project can start to think their manager does not care or may lose confidence in their ability to do their job correctly.

Provide More Training

Millennials thrive on training sessions. If money exists in the budget and employees have time in their schedules, try to accommodate this. Do make sure, however, that all training helps participants grow, develop and contribute to the bottom line.

Respect Work-Life Balance

Millennials desire flex-time. Demanding this may make them seem lazy, but that is not the case. Young professionals often find it difficult to separate work and play. Although they may want to start the workday later, they also feel that checking work texts and emails at 3:00 am is perfectly appropriate.

Create Meaning

Millennials want to work for an organization that is doing something important for the people it serves and for the community as a whole. Simply getting the job done and earning a paycheck will not suffice. Therefore, managers must clearly state and regularly reinforce the value and benefits the products or services deliver. Further, managers must ensure that millennial employees recognize where their contributions fit into the equation that yields valued and beneficial products or services.

There is no way to avoid employing millennials. They are here to stay and, as mentioned, they are on their way to outnumbering the rest of us in the workplace. Do your best as a manager to lead, inspire and earn their trust. If you do, you will reap the rewards of all the great things they have to offer. Even better, they will stand by your side for years to come.

Stephan Schiffman co-wrote Creating Sales Stars with Gary M. Krebs and has trained more than half a million salespeople at a range of international corporations, including IBM, AT&T, Motorola, Sprint and Cigna. His other books include Cold Calling Techniques (That Really Work!) and The 25 Sales Habits of Highly Successful Salespeople. You can contact Schiffman through his website at www.steveschiffman.com.
Building Support for Civil Service Reform

By Howard Risher, Ph.D.

The 2018 elections changed the political landscape in a number of states and local jurisdictions. As an eternal optimist, I see this as an opportunity to move away from the constraints of the outdated civil service laws and mindsets that have dominated HR in government for decades.

Twenty new state governors and one new territory governor were elected last year. At a guess, most will take office with goals that include reforming some element of government operations. One of the most prominent recent success stories comes out of Tennessee, where Bill Haslam launched a major public management reform when he took office in 2011. As the story has been reported, the state was then seen as a “laggard” in this area; today, it is a leader. Every new governor should take the time to understand what Tennessee accomplished.

Civil Service Reform for the State of Tennessee

Tennessee’s still-serving HR commissioner, Rebecca Hunter, was involved in the reform effort from the beginning. In Haslam’s first year, Hunter and the deputy governor went on a statewide listening tour to understand the state’s employment problems. Hunter opened her meetings by stating, “I’m new. You won’t hurt my feelings.” Managers and employees in many jurisdictions had a lot to say.

The feedback was the basis for 2012 for the Tennessee Excellence in Accountability and Management (TEAM) Act. By 2018, in Hunter’s words, state government service has become “attractive, full of accomplishment and achievement, and ... a place where people are proud to work.”

Civil service reform followed from Haslam’s goal of improving government performance. The key to gaining support for reform and for redefining HR’s role is the evidence highlighting the practices associated with raising performance levels. In Tennessee, the HR office had a long-standing reputation as the agency of “no,” which made it like many of its counterparts in the public and private sectors. Also making it similar to other HR offices, the one for Tennessee followed antiquated HR practices that gave it a negative image among employees.

HR offices have no direct responsibility for workforce management, but research has confirmed that HR’s leadership is central to making an organization a great place to work. Further, HR needs solid, public support from elected leaders.

The Case for HR Involvement

Several trends are unfolding that could facilitate and support the redefinition of HR’s traditional role. First, as I argued in my December 2018 Managing People in Tough Times column, emerging skills shortages highlight the importance of creating and communicating career paths, a positive work experience and a more-attractive brand as an employer. I further noted that elected officials should logically rely on HR to play a lead role in developing the answers for how to attract needed talent. One reader disagreed, telling me HR cannot be expected to solve staffing problems. She is correct, of course. HR cannot solve the problem, but addressing the skills shortage is an opportunity to serve as a change agent and compete more effectively for talent. No other function can do that.

Second, it would be impossible for elected officials not to see headlines touting the best places to work. Such articles appear in newspapers in addition to business and industry periodicals. Too much attention has been given to the belief that making it onto one of those lists reflects the benefits of creating a positive work experience. Again, the focus needs to be on practices logically within HR’s domain or which involve people management issues.

Third, employee benefits are a big-ticket cost that limits funds needed for other public purposes. At the federal level, it is likely that the benefits package will be changed to reduce costs in the next year or two. My argument is that government has to be competitive with other employers when it comes to recruiting qualified talent. It is misleading to compare government benefits with those offered by the millions of small and mid-sized businesses that can only afford to provide legally required benefits. If a compromise is needed, any changes should be limited to new hires or to those under a specific age (e.g., 40). HR should play a prominent role in those discussions.

Fourth, employers in every economic sector have begun to realize that it is shortsighted to manage employees and payroll as costs to be minimized. Progressive employers recognize the value of talent and adopt strategies to tap the full use of employees’ capabilities. Doing that triggers a rethinking of how work is organized and managed to empower employees. Newly elected leaders may need to be educated on this, and HR should be their guide toward understanding the potential payoff.

The fifth, and possibly most important, argument for HR’s involvement in civil service reform follows from Gallup research showing that raising engagement levels can generate savings from increased productivity. That does not include added savings from reduced errors, accidents and waste. In dollars the savings will be far greater than those from efforts to increase efficiency or reduce costs.

Hurdles to HR Involvement

A thread common to the workforce trends that I just described is the link to government performance. But changing an organization is never easy. One hurdle for governments is the failure of the public administration...
academic community to recognize the importance of HR management and the potential payoff of investing in enhanced workforce management. Teaching faculty and researchers typically focus on public policy issues, and studies on workforce management are rare. Indeed, only two of the 25 highest-rated public admin programs offer graduate degrees in human resources management. This contrasts with business schools that, with few exceptions, offer graduate degrees with an HR (or related) major. Several business schools also support centers for HR research and host regular conferences on HR issues.

Another hurdle is the political climate. Incoming elected officials often feel compelled to change policies regardless of their effectiveness, but changing government personnel management practices should benefit everyone. Anachronistic civil service practices have few supporters, so introducing successful changes that contribute to improved performance and create a great place to work should win broad support.

There are, to be sure, other hurdles. A few that come to mind include

- A common entrenched “culture of compliance” (to use a key phrase from part 2 of the National Academy of Public Administration’s 2017 report titled No Time to Wait) that suppresses employee innovation and initiative,
- Unions that resist change,
- Leadership’s silence on workforce issues,
- The aging workforce,
- Inadequate investment in employee skill development, and
- Human nature and our usual discomfort with change.

The Reason for Reform: Better Government

The role of HR is experiencing an ongoing revolution in other economic sectors. More than two decades ago, thought leaders started producing works like Dave Ulrich’s 1998 Harvard Business Review article, “A New Mandate for Human Resources.” Subsequent research has produced a body of knowledge that outlines steps to improve organizational performance with HR playing a lead role. Those changes today contrast sharply with the cost-cutting practices companies adopted for much of the past century. Moreover, the information on what innovation in private sector HR can achieve is readily available to build the case for transforming public sector HR.

When seeking the governorship, Tennessee’s Bill Haslam campaigned on his executive experience as both the mayor of Knoxville mayor and the president of a large company. Coming from the business world differentiated him from many elected officials who focus primarily on public policy issues and have never been responsible for managing large groups of employees. Early in his tenure as governor, Haslam appointed an IBM executive as the state’s first chief operating officer, or COO. Doing this was significant because it accentuated the importance of management and facilitated collaboration across the usual silos, which are key to improving organizational performance.

The COO began convening monthly meetings with department heads to discuss operations and pursue opportunities for collaboration. Subcabinet working groups now meet regularly to address current problems. Also in Haslam’s first year in the state house, he asked his cabinet members to perform top-to-bottom reviews of their departments and learned that a common concern was the state’s antiquated employment practices. When the finance commissioner surveyed state agencies asking for ideas to improve performance, roughly half mentioned this issue.

In combination, Haslam’s management initiatives made it clear that civil service reform had solid support at the highest level. It also made it clear that the goal of reform would be improving state government.

In addition to addressing workforce issues, Haslam takes credit for creating an almost $2 billion 2018-19
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

state budget surplus, championing “sweeping education reform,” providing two years of free community or technical college to state residents, and funding a $10 billion backlog in road projects. Returning to the employment reform, Haslam lists accomplishments that include reducing total state government employment by 10 percent and increasing the pay of the average state employee by $10,000.

A theme for the state’s reform could be transitioning from focusing on seniority to rewarding performance. Hiring practices are now based on the knowledge, skills and competencies each position requires, and the employee performance management system is based on defining S.M.A.R.T. goals. All learning and development is under the HR office and the first state chief learning officer, and the pay program is based on pay for performance. The overarching goal of civil service reform has been to foster “a culture that promotes engagement, encourages retention, and provides continuous learning and leadership development for all employees.”

Steps to Build Support for Reform

The type of reform undertaken by the State of Tennessee is heavy lifting, and carrying it out should be expected to require a minimum of two years. Fully embracing and reflecting the new management philosophy in day-to-day agency operations will take even longer. Anyone working to build support for civil service reform should focus on how reform can be expected to contribute to improved performance. For this reason, Rebecca Hunter was the right person to support Haslam’s goals. She spent the first 25 years of her career working in accounting and describes herself as a “recovering accountant.” That mindset combines with her experience as a county HR director to give her a different perspective on government personal management and a broader understanding of government performance.

Documenting the need for reform would highlight the most important problems and provide a preliminary understanding of what managers and employees can expect. This makes Hunter’s listening a step worth considering for all government organization. So are the agency reviews and survey that were performed in Tennessee. Each would generate an understanding of how all operations, but particularly workforce management, could be improved. Conducting engagement surveys would similarly focus leaders on addressing problems that adversely affect the work experience.

Haslam had the goal of creating a customer-focused government. The same goal could be adopted by HR offices. Instead of concentrating on enforcing rules and administration, HR offices could ask those using HR websites or having reasons to interact with HR staff if they found their experience satisfactory. This, of course, is common today on many business websites.

Another step to highlight near-term problems would be doing a workforce analysis to document anticipated retirements. If essential skills and competencies have been documented, that should be central to the analysis. A similar but more-statistical analysis could be done to understand and forecast turnover by age, occupation, job level and other employee characteristics.

It would also be useful to assemble information on the successes and failures of other reform initiatives, the goals of those initiatives, the initial plans, problems encountered and what was accomplished. It would be very valuable to talk to the HR managers responsible for those initiatives, especially the ones that were not fully successful.

Reform is likely to need broad support. That means leaders and employees will need to know what to expect by being presented with a solid project plan that includes goals, anticipated timelines, cost estimates and expected outcomes. The goal should be improving the work experience and enhancing career opportunities, and elected leaders and employees should see the benefits of planned changes.

Are Civil Service Laws Really Necessary?

State and local civil service reform have been under way for at least the last three decades. For instance, I first met and worked with the HR director for Charlotte, N.C., in the 1990s when it was a model for city government. Likewise, several states preceded Tennessee. Unfortunately, a record of what has worked and what has not does not appear to exist.

Labor markets, career expectations, work management practices and employment laws are far different today than when older civil service laws were enacted. One of the most important developments has been the litany of federal and state employment laws that now protect workers in all sectors from discriminatory, abusive or dangerous employment practices. The protections provided by those laws could obviate the need for separate civil service laws. In any event, I recommend that, when possible, lawmakers not stipulate employment policies in statutes to give future leaders more flexibility to adopt new practices.

Government is, of course, not the same as the private sector. Possibly the most important difference is that many elected officials have little or no management experience. That means few have an appreciation for HR and its potential value. Undertaking civil service reform should be an opportunity to redefine and expand HR’s role.

Civil service systems need to support government operations going into the future. Existing laws in too many states are a barrier to creating a “good government” environment.

Howard Risher, Ph.D., is a private consultant and frequent author on pay and performance issues. He has experience in every sector, including federal, state and local governments. He can be reached by email at h.risher@verizon.net. —N.
Employee engagement continues to be a hot topic. Increasing numbers of organizations, including many in government, realize that measuring and building engagement can improve performance and service delivery.

In the private sector, companies understand the bottom-line value of employee engagement. For example, the Wall Street Journal reported in an August 2018 article titled “A Company’s Performance Depends First of All on Its People” that for 693 large, publicly traded companies, employee engagement and development are the biggest drivers of financial performance.

Similar findings have emerged from research on the power of an engaged workforce in the public sector. As I highlight in my book, Engaging Government Employees, and during my speaking engagements, high-engagement government organizations do better at

- Achieving strategic goals,
- Delivering responsive customer service,
- Recruiting and retaining top talent,
- Devising innovative solutions,
- Improving attendance, and
- Keeping workplaces safe.

Such truths are why we established the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement and made it our mission to

- Help public sector organizations measure and improve employee engagement, and
- Conduct research that advances knowledge about engagement, particularly in government.

In the two years since we opened our doors, we have surveyed tens of thousands of employees in dozens of public-sector organizations across the nation and worked with many of those organizations to help them act on their survey results. We are also proud that IPMA-HR has designated the Institute as its official provider of engagement surveys and services for Association members.

Most importantly, to steal a line from that insurance company ad I see pretty much every time I turn on the TV, we have learned a thing or two. In truth, we have learned much more than two things. Below is a baker’s dozen of lessons on how to measure and improve employee engagement.

Lesson #1. Make Improving Employee Engagement a Strategic Priority

With due respect to my HR colleagues and the profession I have worked in for more than 30 years, improving employee engagement cannot be perceived as just another program. Fortunately, many municipalities and agencies have incorporated engagement into their strategic priorities and plans.

For example, the 2016-19 strategic plan for the City of Columbia, Mo., includes this strategic priority: “Operational Excellence—High-Level Service From Engaged Employees.”

To support this priority, Columbia’s plan includes the following objectives:

- Create an employee engagement strategy.
- Analyze and act on an employee engagement survey.
- Increase employee engagement.

Note that these are not HR-specific priorities and goals. Instead, improving engagement in Columbia is a citywide strategic priority that is supported by clearly stated citywide objectives and actions that explicitly—and publicly—focus on employee engagement.

Lesson #2. Emphasize the Business Case for Improving Engagement

Everyone in the entire organization—senior leaders, managers, supervisors and front-line employees—must understand why engagement is important. This is not just another touchy-feely fad. Nor is it about trying to make employees happy all the time. This is why one of my favorite expressions is, “Free pizza and drinks on a Friday afternoon is not an employee engagement strategy.” Not even if “drinks” means “beer and wine.”

Instead, improving engagement is about delivering superior performance and services. When performance improves because engagement has improved, so too does citizens’ satisfaction and confidence in government. We call this the engagement value chain, as depicted in the accompanying figure on page 16.

Too often, HR leaders say that they cannot convince leaders to invest in measuring and improving engagement. The solution is to help leaders understand the value chain.

Lesson #3. Measure Engagement

As the saying goes, you cannot manage what you do not measure. Organizational leaders cannot guess about how engaged the workforce is. Prescribing solutions is impossible without identifying the problems.

This is all to say that an organization must know the current level of engagement—the baseline—and what drives its employees to feel engaged and disengaged if it wishes to raise the level.

The best way to measure engagement is to survey employees. Ask them directly how they feel about the organization, their work, their supervisors, senior leaders, resources and the culture. Also ask employees what they believe is working and what they think should change. The organization can then use the survey responses to take action.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16
Lesson #4. Commit From the Top
Leaders must commit to both surveying employees and taking action on the results of the survey. Equally important, leaders must clearly articulate their commitments. Doing that involves explaining why the organization is conducting the survey, how the survey will be administered and how results will be used. Some directors even record videos about the upcoming survey and make the message available to all employees. Short of that, managers and supervisors should repeat the leaders’ messages across the organization.

Lesson #5. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
Closely related to the fourth lesson, communicating openly, honestly and often with employees is key to achieving a high survey response rate, taking meaningful action on the survey results and sustaining engagement.

Start early and follow up often. Take to heart the adage that you can’t overcommunicate. Research has shown that most people need to hear a message multiple times before they internalize the meaning.

It should go without saying that the entire HR staff has important roles to play in ensuring that the survey’s purpose, process and outcomes are clearly communicated. Commit to communicating before, during and after administering the survey to ensure that all employees know why the organization is focusing on engagement, understand how essential their participation is and know how the results will be acted on.

Lesson #6. Keep It Confidential
Employees will not complete surveys unless they can be sure that no one else in the organization will see individuals’ responses. For this reason, many organizations contract with third parties to prepare, administer and process surveys.

When the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement does a survey, we guarantee that no one in the surveying organization will have access to the responses. We only report summary data, and even then only if we receive a minimum number of usable responses.

Lesson #7. Survey All Employees
“Every voice counts” is an important message to convey to employees. Make that clear by inviting each person on staff to complete the engagement survey and by doing as much as possible to lower barriers to participation. Invite employees via email and put the survey online so employees can respond using smartphones or tablets. Then make extra efforts to connect with employees who do not have ready access to work emails and computers.

Lesson #8. Push for a High Response Rate
Collecting a greater number of responses provides more valid, useful and actionable data. Achieving response rates of 90 percent or higher, but considerations must be taken for several factors, including the size, composition and dispersion of the workforce.

In some organizations, most employees are in the same building and sit in front of their computers all day. In these situations, we have seen response rates close to 100 percent. Law enforcement, firefighting, public works, human services, public transit and parks and recreation departments, however, have employees everywhere out in the community serving the public.

Sending paper survey forms to these employees is one option, but doing that can be costly and logistically difficult. Another approach is to hand-deliver hard-copy survey invitations that ask employees to log on to a survey website. Setting up dedicated computers in easily accessed locations or calling a group meeting and handing out tablets may also make sense.

Lesson #9. Share Survey Results
Share survey findings with all employees within 30 days of when the information becomes available to organization leaders. Not only do workers expect to hear the results, radio silence will spark resistance to actions taken in response to survey findings. Additionally, being kept in the dark will make employees less likely to respond to future surveys.

Lesson #10. Drill Down
We recommend reporting survey results at the lowest organizational level (e.g., department, division, bureau, location) from which at least 10 usable responses are received. Depending on this degree of detail makes the results more actionable and promotes specific accountability for the actions that are taken.
Lesson #11. Involve Labor
Partner with unions and employee associations to measure and build engagement. Ideally, labor leaders should be advocates, encouraging their members to complete surveys and helping the organization take action.

When we host a survey kickoff meeting, we ask labor representatives to attend so they can learn why the organization is doing the survey and hear the organizational leaders state their commitments to act on the results. We hope the labor reps leave the meeting ready to urge their members to participate.

Lesson #12. Take Action
Acting on the results of the engagement survey is probably the most important thing an organization can do. Unfortunately, some organizations survey their employees, achieve a high response rate and then declare victory. This can be a fatal mistake when, over time, engagement declines rather than improves.

I was invited to facilitate an action-planning workshop for a municipality that had developed and conducted an employee engagement survey internally. Before agreeing to do the workshop, I asked when the survey was fielded. “About a year ago” was not a good answer because too much had changed to make the year-old responses fully reflective of employees’ current situation.

An organization should begin thinking about taking action before the survey is even administered. Waiting until the results come in and then saying, “OK, now what?” creates delays that may render the eventual actions ineffective or counterproductive.

Some organizations create employee committees or task forces to review the survey data and help develop action plans. It is also important to set priorities. Since addressing every issue revealed by a survey will be impossible, we analyze results to identify the key drivers of engagement. This helps the organization understand, and then take action on, the issues that are the most important for influencing the level of employee engagement.

Lesson #13. Resurvey
A one-off employee engagement initiative will not succeed in sustained improvement. Conducting periodic surveys as part of a long-term strategy enables an organization to track progress and adjust approaches as drivers of engagement shift over time.

We encourage the organizations we work with to tell employees how often they will be surveyed right at the start. Doing this creates accountability and sends the message that leaders have made long-term commitments to improving engagement.

Most organizations, including the federal government, conduct annual surveys. Surveying every two years is also common, but some organizations supplement their full-scale assessments with shorter pulse surveys.

In summary, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to attracting, developing and retaining talent. What each organization needs is an integrated and comprehensive strategy that specifically addresses the realities of its employees. As we have learned, measuring and improving employee engagement should be a key part of any such strategy.

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In the movie Invictus, Morgan Freeman, playing South African President Nelson Mandela, asks the captain of the national rugby team played by Matt Damon, “What is your philosophy on leadership? How do you inspire your team to do their best?” That line stopped me cold and compelled me to ask myself, “As a leader in my organization, who would want to be led by me?” Of course, answering that question required first figuring out what I stand for as a leader. This sent me on a lengthy reflection on my behaviors, values, what I am known for and what I want to be known for.

How a Philosophy Transforms Into Leadership

Leadership and philosophy go hand in hand. Articulating a leadership philosophy facilitates self-awareness. It also amounts to embracing an internal operating system, adopting a mindset and committing to values that guide one’s actions as a leader. Stating a personal leadership philosophy affirms who you are and informs what you do. It also enables you to correct harmful or self-defeating practices. In short, answering the question, “What do I stand for?” makes it possible to move beyond one’s current situation and toward the person one wants to be.

To understand how that transformation happens, it is necessary to recognize that as a practice, philosophy involves asking questions, engaging in critical reflection, stating and testing principles and beliefs, and explaining relationships of one concept or behavior to another. Or, to cite three dictionary definitions, philosophy is

- The investigation of the nature, causes or principles of reality, knowledge or values based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods (American Heritage Dictionary)
- The study of the ultimate nature of existence, reality, knowledge and goodness, as discoverable by human reasoning (Penguin English Dictionary); and
- The rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics (WordNet).

“Doing” philosophy allows people to understand relationships between, among other things, the intent of our actions and the impact of those actions. Philosophical reflection similarly illuminates the disconnects between our beliefs and attitudes and they ways in which things actually work.

Why Every Leader Must Have a Leadership Philosophy

People study leaders’ words and actions for instructions and, equally important, suggestions on what to do and how to do it. This is why having a leadership philosophy is important.

First, a philosophy determines how leaders convey to others what they believe their core purpose to be. How leaders see themselves, their role and their reason for being gives fuel to projects and programs while also establishing criteria for determining what are the best and most complete accomplishments.

Second, a leadership philosophy identifies values and guides behaviors. For instance, a leader who values inclusiveness will issue and enforce policies that foster inclusion.

Of course, merely expressing a value will not suffice. Putting values into practice demonstrates a leader’s character. Actions really do speak louder than words.

Third, adhering to a leadership philosophy helps others anticipate how decisions will be made, what actions should be taken and which expectations must be met. Leaders who are mindful of the impacts their statements and behaviors have on others can achieve a lot just by being consistent
I recently challenged my graduate students to write down their own personal leadership philosophies. I am honored to share a sample of their verbatim responses.

My leadership philosophy is to be a Team Leader. This class opened up my perspective of leadership through understanding the reciprocal relationship of followership and managing yourself. — DJ

I believe that the positive conflict (from their job) is an opportunity for team players to perform better. — JZ

Building your leadership brand is a long-term effort. — WS

First, I would like to set an example by doing the tasks. — TA

I will value helping people, especially those from disadvantaged communities. It drives me and is central to who I am. Now and in the future, I want this value to be evident to people on my teams and in my organization. — KK

My aim as a leader is to influence not direct, as a result, my leadership style centers around developing and maintaining trust. — JK

My conceptualization of Leadership Philosophy is to “lead by example.” It is less about implementing my personal vision but more about having a reciprocal relationship. Further, the issue of paramountcy would be to commit to a “shared vision.” — HC

I have therefore adopted a leadership philosophy that sees me “setting the right examples by aligning my values with my words and my actions” and doing this on a foundation built on mutual trust, respect and integrity. — OCR

My leadership philosophy is based on my passion for creating and maintaining legal and policy objectives that focus on social justice issues within our society. As a leader, I value integrity, hard work, empathy, responsibility, competence, and passion towards the overarching mission—social justice. — EG

As I grow and learn as a leader, one thing that I will strive to hold true about my leadership is that when colleagues, team members, and others think of SK, they say “SK is a values-based leader who leads her organization with authenticity, compassion, and collaboration.” — SK

I will say I want to lead people who inspire me as a person and a leader because this is the ideal condition for me as a leader. I need people to know my personality, my warmth, people who know that I will treat them as a human, not only as a tool of my organization. — YH

The promise I make to myself is to Stay True to Who I Am. Never try to become someone I am not to impress others or get a promotion. — TWS

My direct supports must be proud to say they are part of my team, and I work hard to maintain their trust by aligning my behaviors with the values I say I have. — FD’A

As a leader, I pride myself as being a leader with emotional intelligence who cares about the success, autonomy, connection to, and satisfaction of my followers. — SP

I am a servant leader, who wants to also help people believe in the very best of themselves. I never want anyone in my presence to feel undervalued or unappreciated. I would like to constantly challenge myself and my team to show up as the best version of ourselves each day. — KP

My leadership philosophy states that I am a leader who is committed to making the mission, vision, and goals of my organization to be connected to everyone I lead. This happens through empowerment, where I as the leader, can help every one of my followers understand their individual role in helping the organization reach success. — JH

I will rely on the opportunity to use disagreements as a coaching opportunity because I am aware that collaboration and conflict go hand in hand. — SC

My leadership philosophy is that people are one of the key tools to success, and that to lead those people you need to create shared connections. — HM

I am committed to creating a culture of respect, trust, and input. I am employee driven, focused on providing an environment that nurtures individual talents and diverse contributions. I balance rigor and compassion to foster a dynamic environment that is lead with my values first. — RL

To build trust, I will continue to follow my model of creating a personal relationship with others and being open about my experiences and myself. — SH

I will build trust by allowing collaboration from my reports. I will be open to their ideas and concerns and believe that meaningful discussion of options and opinions is crucial to creating an inclusive environment. — DM

in what they say and do. Consistency also builds trust.

Steps to Developing Your Leadership Philosophy

Bill George and Peter Sims titled their guide to discovering one’s authentic leadership style True North in order to invoke the metaphor that each person has an internal compass that points to “who you are as a human being at your deepest level.” Describing their core identity as a philosophy of leadership allows people to orient on the things they consider important in terms of what they do, what motivates them and what kinds of people and leaders they aspire to be.

In a similar vein, Warren Bennis and Robert Thomas wrote in their September 2002 Harvard Business Review article “Crucibles of Leadership” that one way to formulate a personal leadership philosophy is to reflect on times of challenge—so-called “crucible moments.” Doing this will

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reveal how a person sees and responds to personality defining events. Revisiting crucible moments can clarify how behaviors convey values to others. Doing this can also reveal how one’s values are often not aligned with the person one really wants to be. Even reflecting on failures are instructive in this way because this uncovers beliefs and habits that hold one back.

Whatever you do to begin formulating your own leadership philosophy, you can carry out the process by following these four steps:

- Select a current or past leader you admire and identify the traits, behaviors or characteristics that make that person stand out. Consider how this individual became the person you admire and want to emulate.
- Define your own beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. It can help to complete this sentence: “I believe ________.” Fill in the blank with respect to you, other people, your team and your organization. Once you have stated your beliefs, move on to thinking about how you speak about yourself and others in positive, critical or judgmental ways. Complete this sentence: “My words ________ others.”
- Determine how you will act as a leader by writing out your nonnegotiables. For instance, “I will lead by engaging a learner’s mindset” or “I will lead by listening to others before speaking and making a decision.”
- Share your leadership philosophy with others and ask for feedback. When fully formed and written out, your leadership philosophy will be

A reflection of personal beliefs
A statement of personal intent
A commitment to those being led
A guideline for behavioral expectations

Some of the best people I have worked for have handed out their leadership philosophy to staff members. I encourage you to do the same.

Andrew Rahaman, Ed.D. has worked nationally and internationally with leaders and organizations of all sizes in the public and private sectors, including 26 years in federal government. He is an executive in residence at American University, where he teaches graduate courses on organizational learning, leadership, change and teams for the university’s Key Executive Education Programs. Rahaman is also on the staff of the Center for Creative Leadership and past-chair of the U.S. affiliate of the World Institute for Action Learning. He currently runs his own consulting firm, specializing in executive coaching, onboarding, organizational culture assessment and delivering leadership development programs. He can be reached at andrew@organizationalstrategiesgroup.com or rahaman@american.edu. Follow him on Twitter @ProfA_Rahaman — XV

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Employee Alleges ADA Associational Discrimination Based on Colleague’s Supposed ‘Obnoxious’ Body Odor

On Dec. 21, 2017, Amber Bridges filed a complaint against the City of Indianapolis in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, claiming associational discrimination and wrongful termination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Bridges v. City of Indianapolis, No. 1:17-cv-04706).

Associational discrimination is discrimination based on an employee’s relationship with someone who is disabled or perceived to be disabled. Many associational discrimination claims arise from family relationships, but the ADA does not require this. The key factor is whether the employer is motivated by the employee’s relationship, or association, with a person who has a disability. For instance, it can be discriminatory to refuse to accommodate a parent who may need some schedule flexibility to care for a child who has a disability.

In her complaint, Bridges, who had worked for the county court in Indianapolis, alleged that the city terminated her due to her association with another employee named Mia McRoy. Bridges claimed the city regarded McRoy as having a physical impairment that is protected under the ADA because, according to Bridges, McRoy has an “obnoxious chronic body order condition.” Bridges acknowledged installing air fresheners throughout the office and telling her bosses that other employees complained about McRoy’s alleged odor. In her lawsuit, Bridges argued that the city terminated her primarily because her association with McRoy distracted from the overall professional demeanor and productivity of the workplace.

The city moved for summary judgment on Bridges’ claims, stating that Bridges was actually terminated after the city’s investigation revealed that she was intimidating and harassing other employees, including McRoy. Bridges’ documented behavior included loudly announcing that something smelled whenever McRoy was present. She also told other employees that McRoy smelled and started a group chat about McRoy behind her back.

The city’s investigation further revealed that Bridges’ behavior included calling out any of her co-workers’ errors, rolling her eyes at them and making rude and inappropriate comments about them to fellow employees. The city argued that the ADA does not protect such behavior.

The city additionally argued that Bridges could not satisfy the elements of associational disability discrimination for several other reasons. First, Bridges can produce no proof that McRoy has a disability. For her part, McRoy denies being disabled and has never requested any sort of accommodation.

Second, Bridges cannot substantiate the requisite relationship or association with McRoy that would be necessary to sustain an associational discrimination claim. Last, Bridges cannot demonstrate that the city feared that her continued employment would cause it to incur additional expenses due to her association with McRoy, that she was likely to become infected and disabled herself, or that she would be distracted from her job because of her need to care for McRoy.

The summary judgment motion is pending review by the court.

Biracial Transgender Employee’s Discrimination Claims Dismissed


On March 28, 2017, McKinney filed a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC). The EEOC dismissed McKinney’s charge but issued him a right to sue letter in August 2017. McKinney’s PHRC charge was still pending at the time that he filed his lawsuit.

On Nov. 27, 2018, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania ruled on McKinney allegations that his white male manager’s harassment of him based on his race, national origin and gender led him to quit. McKinney claims included constructive discharge, retaliation, hostile work environment and violations of his rights under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA).

Specifically, McKinney alleged that his manager questioned his national origin, even though the manager allegedly knew that McKinney was black and white. McKinney further alleged that the manager referred to him as a “little boy,” suggested that he dress up in a maid’s outfit and said that people like McKinney should “get fixed” so they do not “sit around having kids” using “food stamps and welfare.” When McKinney reported these incidents to Supreme’s human resources department, the company terminated the manager one week later.
Supreme moved for dismissal of most of McKinney’s claims, and the federal court dismissed the constructive discharge claim because McKinney did not plead any proximity regarding the timing of the manager’s behavior and the circumstances of his separation from Supreme. In fact, McKinney never even pleaded that he resigned from Supreme due to unbearable conditions, which is an essential element of a constructive discharge claim.

The court also dismissed McKinney’s retaliation claim, stating that McKinney’s failure to establish that he was forced to quit damaged his claim that he was terminated in retaliation for complaining to human resources. The court likewise dismissed McKinney’s PHRA claim for his failure to exhaust his administrative remedies, as those claims were still pending at the time of the federal court review.

Last, the court dismissed McKinney’s Title VII claims, as his EEOC claim was not verified or sworn by McKinney. The court held that verifying a charge with the EEOC is mandatory and a condition precedent to filing suit.

Supreme did not challenge McKinney’s hostile work environment claim, which does not require administrative exhaustion, and McKinney will be allowed to pursue this claim.

Bank of America Teller Claims Retaliation for Reporting Discrimination and Lack of Breast Pumping Accommodation

Shanna Sanon, a bank teller employed by Bank of America in Nevada, filed a federal lawsuit alleging that she was forced to use her breast pump in the employee lunchroom at separate bank branches in North Las Vegas and Las Vegas (Sanon v. Bank of Am., Inc., No. 2:18-cv-02264-GMN-CWH).

On Nov. 27, 2018, Sanon filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada alleging sex discrimination, disability discrimination and retaliation based on her need to use a breast pump for 15 minutes twice each workday. She alleged that her branch manager in North Las Vegas berated her for taking short breaks to pump and that the manager told others that she was ignoring customers. She further alleged that this manager routinely yelled at her in front of other employees for taking breaks and disrupting “his” business.

In addition to the verbal abuse, Sanon claimed that Bank of America refused to provide her with reasonable accommodations so she could take her pumping breaks in private. Instead, she claims, managers at both branches made her use the employee lunchroom while she pumped. This resulted in her regularly being interrupted by other employees, causing her great embarrassment.

Sanon alleged that she reported the issue to corporate HR, which promised her that they would provide her with accommodations so she could pump in private. However, Sanon alleged, Bank of America “conspired” to send her to the branch in a “high-crime neighborhood” of Las Vegas that is far away from her home.

Sanon further claimed that she was given no reason for the transfer and has cause to believe that it was done in retaliation for seeking a reasonable accommodation and in hopes that she would resign. Last, she claimed that the Las Vegas branch location also lacked a private area where she could pump.

Appellate Court to Hear Employee’s Claim for Being Terminated Over Facebook Post Opposing Transgender Individuals Using Women’s Restroom

Bonnie O’Daniel, a heterosexual former employee of Industrial Service Solutions and Plant-N-Power Services, Inc. (ISS), alleged that she was discharged in violation of her right to freedom of expression under the Louisiana Constitution and in violation of Title VII’s prohibitions against sexual orientation discrimination and retaliation for complaining about sexual orientation bias (O’Daniel v. Indus. Serv. Sols., Case No. 18-30136).

In her complaint, O’Daniel claimed that ISS terminated her employment because she “posted a photograph on her Facebook page of a man wearing a dress at a Target store and commented on his ability to use the women’s restroom and/or dressing room with her daughters.” She further alleged that her termination was spearheaded by ISS’s president, who is a member of the LGBT community and who, she alleged, took offense at the post. O’Daniel claimed that she was discharged for the District of Nevada alleging sex discrimination, disability discrimination and retaliation based on her need to use a breast pump for 15 minutes twice each workday. She alleged that her branch manager in North Las Vegas berated her for taking short breaks to pump and that the manager told others that she was ignoring customers. She further alleged that this manager routinely yelled at her in front of other employees for taking breaks and disrupting “his” business.

In addition to the verbal abuse, Sanon claimed that Bank of America refused to provide her with reasonable accommodations so she could take her pumping breaks in private. Instead, she claims, managers at both branches made her use the employee lunchroom while she pumped. This resulted in her regularly being interrupted by other employees, causing her great embarrassment.

Sanon alleged that she reported the issue to corporate HR, which promised her that they would provide her with accommodations so she could pump in private. However, Sanon alleged, Bank of America “conspired” to send her to the branch in a “high-crime neighborhood” of Las Vegas that is far away from her home.

Sanon further claimed that she was given no reason for the transfer and has cause to believe that it was done in retaliation for seeking a reasonable accommodation and in hopes that she would resign. Last, she claimed that the Las Vegas branch location also lacked a private area where she could pump.

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On Jan. 2, 2018, a federal magistrate judge dismissed O’Daniel’s lawsuit, holding that Title VII does not cover sexual orientation. O’Daniel appealed this decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Daniel’s appeal, which was scheduled to be heard on Jan. 9, 2019, urged the appellate court to examine whether Title VII prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24
The EEOC filed an amicus brief in support of O’Daniel, stating that the meaning of “sex” has changed since Title VII was passed in 1964 and is now widely understood to include a person’s sexual orientation and gender identity. The U.S. Department of Justice has taken the opposite position.

Other federal appeals courts have recently examined this issue. Judges in the Second and Seventh circuits held that Title VII does prohibit sexual orientation discrimination, while the most-recent ruling out of the Fifth Circuit holds that termination based upon sexual orientation is not prohibited by Title VII. Similarly, a case brought before the Eleventh Circuit failed to result in the reversal of a lower court’s decision that Title VII does not prohibit sexual orientation discrimination.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court was scheduled to discuss whether Title VII prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation during its current term, the Court postponed that without comment.

Contact David B. Ritter at david.ritter@btlaw.com or (312) 214-4862. Contact Kelsey Schmidt at kelsey.schmidt@btlaw.com or (312) 214-4589. You can learn more about labor law cases by visiting www.btlaw.com and following our blogs at www.btcurrentsemployment.com and www.btlaborrelations.com.

Northern California Chapter Dissolved

The Northern California Chapter (NCCIPMA-HR) unexpectedly notified the Association in December 2018 that it had reorganized as the independent CalGovHR.

The change will not affect any national members’ IPMA-HR benefits, and Association leaders are working on ways to continue serving the local needs of public sector human resources professionals in the region. IPMA-HR Executive Director Neil Reichenberg is available at nreichenberg@ipma-hr.org to answer questions.
Let Go  CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

having key, often shared, members do formal and informal check-ins and reports of various sorts.

- Managers become coaches. Traditional managers are redeployed as coaches whose role is to enable effective teaming, mitigate conflict and provide feedback on performance.

Visually, this more progressive and simplified structure can look like Figure 2.

Figure 2. Agile Organization

Completing the Transition From Hierarchical to Agile

An agile organization reorganization should not be rolled out blindly and without carefully considering the strategic context. There are many different ways of bringing the core principles of an agile organization to life. For instance, front-office functions can be transformed into agile teams while back-office functions retain their legacy structure as they adopt agile ways of working. Similarly, there are myriad ways to create teams and pods to include the optimal number of people, the best mix of areas of expertise and the most-appropriate form of shared governance.

Based on the work my colleagues and I have done in guiding organizations’ transformations, a few elements have emerged as being critical to liberating innovation and productivity while ensuring ongoing tight strategic alignment and operational efficiency. These critical elements are

- Strategic clarity. Organizational strategy is distilled into one to three strategic priorities. This degree of focus ensures that all initiatives and opportunities stay in line with the overarching strategy, which reduces the risk of initiative overload.

- Strong and clear values from the top. Leaders set clear operating parameters by establishing and enforcing a strong mission and shared values. Doing this provides unwavering guidance to employees on how to behave, collaborate, execute and learn in the simplified and open structure.

- Information transparency. Anyone in the organization should have ready access to a constant stream of strategic insights, including customer/client trends, competitive moves and technology developments. Ensuring this fuels innovation by enabling ongoing prioritization and strategic decision-making.

- Careful recruitment and training. Not all people thrive in a small autonomous team environment. Some prefer defined roles, responsibilities and processes they can follow. Thus, recruiting the right people to work in an agile organization becomes essential. The ability and desire to team effectively must be increasingly emphasized in the recruiting process. Also, training programs that facilitate building relationships, collaborating and innovating in team settings should be designed and put in place.

- Performance management that recognizes team output. People should be recognized based on their team’s output in addition to their individual contributions. This incentivizes effective teaming without discounting individual effort.

- Redesigned career paths. Junior employees, especially millennials, desire lots of feedback and want to know that they are progressing in their careers. This means that establishing clear career paths plays an important role in fostering engagement and spurring organizational performance. In the small autonomous team structure, team members progress in seniority based on their contributions to the team. Their development is accelerated by the autonomy they have to try new things, innovate and learn from mistakes. There is also a lot of cross-pollination across team members and additional development support from floating coaches.

Human beings do not thrive in controlling environments. Given a clear mission and values, employees should be trusted to think, create and execute. Let’s finally say goodbye to 20th-century ways of working and embrace more progressive models that enable us to realize the huge innovative and productive potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Jesse Newton is the author of Simplify Work: Crushing Complexity to Liberate Innovation, Productivity, and Engagement. He is also the founder and CEO of Simplify Work, which is a global management consulting firm that helps organizations throw off the shackles of debilitating complexity and reignite top performance. You can connect with Newton via LinkedIn, email him at jnewton@simplifywork.com or follow him on Twitter. — JN
**MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

**Member News**

*Cindy Bezaury*, IPMA-SCP, has retired from the City of Phoenix, where she served as the assistant human resources director. She had previously worked for the cities of Tucson, Ariz., and Arlington, Texas. Bezaury also served on several IPMA-HR committees, including chairing the Member Alignment and Relevance Committee and the Conference Program Committee.

An active member of the Public Pension HR Professional Emphasis Group that IPMA-HR manages, *Patti Miller*, has retired from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. At the time of her retirement, Miller was the organizational development lead.

*Angela Setter* has left her position as human resources director for the Colorado Public Employees’ Retirement Association. She has also been active in the Public Pension HR Professional Emphasis Group.

*Kari Jo Zika*, IPMA-SCP, is now the assistant vice president for total rewards and HR operations with the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. She previously worked for the City of Arlington, Texas. —

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**IPMA-HR Welcomes Its New Members**

The Association looks forward to serving and connecting these organizations and individuals who joined during November 2018.

**New Agency Members**

- City of Fontana
  Fontana, Calif.
- City of Sherwood
  Sherwood, Ark.
- City of Wilmington
  Wilmington, N.C.
- Segal Company
  Tempe, Ariz.

**New Individual Members**

- Shannon Adams
  Phoenix, Ariz.
- Kate L. Bolos
  Denver, Colo.
- Richard Coburn Brown
  Columbia, S.C.
- Shanika Ells
  Orem, Utah
- Pamela R. Greene
  Lanexa, Va.
- Angela McLeod Kantor
  Pinehurst, N.C.
- Sharon L. Kitchin
  Pawtucket, R.I.
- Traci Malvich
  McCall, Idaho
- Sarah Pechacek
  Coon Rapids, Minn.
- Michelle Reed
  Berwyn, Pa.
- Glenn Silverstein
  Middletown, Pa.
- Darcel R. Vaughn
  Bozeman, Mont.
- Megan White
  Davidson, N.C.
- Jan Young
  Quincy, Calif.

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**Missed a Webinar? Catch Up via IPMA-HR’s Free Online Library**

Your Association membership gives you free and unlimited access to our extensive archive of 60-minute webinars on current and emerging public sector HR topics.

Bookmark [on.ipma-hr.org/04572](http://on.ipma-hr.org/04572) and stream relevant sessions when you have the time and bandwidth to get the most out of each learning and professional development opportunity.

Along with regular updates on federal legislation, major court decisions and labor issues, recent additions to the Webinar Library include

- Preparing Tomorrow’s Public Service
- Strategies to Support Employees Impacted by a Local Tragedy
- A Social Media Guidebook for Highly Effective Recruiting Strategies and Employer Branding
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Today

Visit today. Come back often. —
Congratulations to these newly certified individuals!

Cameron Averett, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Technician
City of Henderson
Henderson, Nev.

Lorena Cholula, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Analyst
Employee Services Agency
San Jose, Calif.

LaWan Croswell, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Liaison
City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Alexandria, Va.

Brittanie Fechner, IPMA-CP
Management Analyst II
Department of Public Utilities-City of Fresno
Fresno, Calif.

Gena Finch, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Manager
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Maribel Gomez, IPMA-SCP
Utility Administrator
Los Angeles, Calif.

Lisa Hogan, IPMA-CP
Coordinator of Staffing
Oakland, N.J.

Laura Howell, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Technician
Montgomery County HR
Christiansburg, Va.

Angela Jones, IPMA-SCP
HR Director
Robeson County Government
Lumberton, N.C.

Elizabeth Karger, IPMA-CP
Training and Organization Performance Analyst I
City of Henderson
Henderson, Nev.

Jessica McCormick, IPMA-SCP
Workforce Project Manager
Junction City, Ore.

Marisa Pacheco, IPMA-SCP
Human Resources Director
City of Pueblo
Pueblo, Colo.

Mike Phillips, IPMA-CP
Risk Manager/Safety Coordinator
City of Palestine
Palestine, Texas

Noelle White, IPMA-CP
Human Resources Specialist
Contra Costa County Office of Education
Pleasant Hill, Calif.

Leticia Yanez, IPMA-SCP
Director of Human Resources
City of Wylie
Wylie, Texas

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901 Marquette Avenue South, Suite 1900, Minneapolis, MN 55402

Mike Verdoorn
Principal Consultant, Public Sector and Higher Education Compensation Consulting
651.234.0845 | Mike_Verdoorn@ajg.com
### CALENDAR

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<td>Spring Public Sector HR Essentials Program</td>
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### Help Us Develop Entry-Level Officer, Police Lieutenant Assessment Tests

It’s not exactly a free lunch, but you can win a catered meal for your department when you donate a few minutes to completing job analysis surveys. IPMA-HR will use your responses regarding daily tasks and personal attributes for successful entry-level police officers and police lieutenants to create screening tools for hiring and promotions.

Visit our test development website (https://on.ipma-hr.org/currec48f6) to find the surveys and learn more about these projects. Each respondent earns their department a $100 voucher for purchasing existing assessment products and qualifies for the lunch drawing. Specific questions and additional insights can be emailed to Test Development Manager Yari Randall at yrandall@ipma-hr.org.

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### ENgage: Turn Your IPMA-HR Membership Into Your Greatest Professional Resource

Your member number is your key to **Engage** (engage.ipma-hr.org/home), a one-of-a-kind online community for public sector HR professionals. Log in to ask and answer questions, share best practices and learn about upcoming events like meetings, webinars and professional development activities. Engage is also the place to post and respond to job listings, catch up on public sector HR news and find resources like model policies. Learn from, educate and share with your professional colleagues across the country and around the world.

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Usher in a New Standard of Government Customer Service

IPMA-HR’s **NEW Customer Service Test Series** is designed for use across many different job classifications particular to public sector agencies including 311 Center representative, customer service representative, front desk positions, clerks and office assistants.

Discover how this new test series can help your agency.

[ipma-hr.org/CSR](http://ipma-hr.org/CSR)
There are few jobs that call on us to protect the lives and well-being of our community on our first day.

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