

TAHRA
P.O. BOX 1656
TRAVERSE CITY, MI

**DATES AND
EVENTS TO
REMEMBER**

JAN 8, 2008

LUNCHEON -
"INTERNAL HR
AUDIT READI-
NESS"
12:00 NOON—
2:00 PM WA-
TERFRONT
CONFERENCE
CENTER

FEB 12, 2008

LUNCHEON-
"LEGAL
ROUNDTABLE"
12:00 NOON—
2:00 PM WA-
TERFRONT
CONFERENCE
CENTER

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TAHRA

Traverse Area Human Resource Association

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

JAN / FEB 2008

The President's Corner

Happy New Year!

Through the hard work of our programming team, Karyn Oncu and Rita Dieki, we have a great programming line up for first quarter 2008. Be sure to mark your calendars for the 2nd Tuesday of each month. January is preparing for HR audits, February is the legal round table from questions you all submitted in December and March is balancing work/life in regards to elder care issues. All promise to be exceptional.

Also, thank you to Deena Murawski who stepped forward and is supporting the programming team administratively. Deena's involvement will help ensure RSVP's and other information is sent out so that we all can plan our calendars.

Thanks Deena!

One item that we all need to begin to think about is succession planning for the TAHRA Leadership Board for 2008/09. I have been fortunate to have some wonderful volunteer leaders to



work with over the last few years but many critical positions will be opening up in June. As we look ahead to next year's Board, I want to invite you to talk to members of the Leadership Board to find out ways you can get involved.

We have a really strong and dynamic

board; a lot of that is due to the blend of "old" and "new" volunteers we have each year. Many times we come up with some great ideas but don't have the people to help see them through. We need you! To get involved, give me a call or talk to any of the Leadership Board members.

TAHRA is a great organization and I am proud to be a part of this group. Thanks to all the volunteers that make TAHRA work!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ewing
President

HRCI Study Group

Spring 2008 HRCI Study Group

Attention TAHRA members:

Happy Holidays! A certification study group will be starting after the first of the year to assist you in passing the certification exam for the PHR, SPHR, or GPHR. If you would like to find out more about joining the study group, or for more information about how you can become certified through the HRCI Certification program, contact Bill Morrison at 932-9650 or email bmorrison@tcproducts.net.

- Bill Morrison
Certification Representative

Welcome New TAHRA Members

Diane Mallory—The Maples, Frankfort, MI
Human Resources

Michelle Baldwin—Human Resource Partners
Consultant/Partner

Jennifer Flick—Interlochen Center for the Arts
Coordinator of Seasonal Employment



We need your input! As always, we are looking for ways to continually improve, and would like your feedback on ways to make the newsletter better! Please email any thoughts or suggestions to jaewing@alcotec.com or lamitchell@waynewire.com.

Thanks for your suggestions—it means a lot to all of us at TAHRA!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Keep your eyes on these bills and contact your legislators so they can make accurate and informed decisions.

[Leave for Military Family Members](#)

Strong bipartisan backing and the White House have supported granting job protected leave for family members of wounded military personnel.

[Genetic Non-Discrimination](#)

The Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act would make it illegal for an employer to treat employees differently in job- and benefits-related matters on the basis of their family history of genetic conditions. There is concern that certain aspects of the bill could lead to expensive and frivolous litigation.

[Mental Health Parity](#)

This Act would require health insurance plans to provide equal coverage of both mental health and medical services benefits.

[Legal Employee Verification Requirements](#)

This would require all federal contracts to participate in the government's voluntary electronic employment verification system known as "Basic Pilot." If this unreliable system is approved, more than ten times the number of employers that currently use the system would be required to in the future.

Chris Davis
Legislative Representative



The right angle to approach a problem is the "try-angle."

7 TIPS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

No matter what type of business you're in, one of the most important things you do is solve problems. Whether you provide products to improve people's lives or services to help them, solutions are at the heart of all organizations – whether they are businesses, non-profits, or government agencies. The best products and services in the world solve problems in timely, cost-effective and innovative ways.

But, problem solving does more than just enhance what you offer to customers and clients. The ability to solve problems can also help your organization thrive as a whole. Employees who are skilled at solving problems can help your company in many ways, from saving money by improving a billing process, improving customer service by enhancing turnaround time, or getting more done by implementing more effective systems.



When everyone in your organization is a skilled problem solver, opportunities are limitless. That's because there will always be problems to solve, and for solutions-minded organizations, that's a good thing. As [Lee Iacocca](#) said, "We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems." Check out these seven tips for effective problem solving.

1. Discover and diagnose problems. Taking the step to look for and diagnose problems is a difficult one. It's easier to focus on maintaining the status quo, even when problems are staring you straight in the face, but this approach is worse for your organization and your employees. When problems are discovered, analyze and define them. Many organizations only react when they observe symptoms, but this costs time and money, and rarely results in improvement. Take time to research the problem and understand it, but don't get bogged down in overanalyzing it.

2. Take responsibility – whether it's yours or not. Some problems result from the mistakes of others. Others present themselves naturally. Still others may simply be systems or products that work but could be improved. Instead of spending time pointing fingers, focus on what you can do to remedy the situation. As the saying goes, "I must do something" solves more problems than, "Something must be done."

3. Eliminate red tape and bureaucracy. Have a reason for every policy and system. Don't refuse change because you are comfortable with how things are or because alternatives will stir the waters. In his book, *How to Be the Employee Your Company Can't Live Without*, author Glenn Shepard recounts stories of companies that saved millions simply by eliminating unneeded paperwork and processes. Make sure your systems are streamlined to be as time- and cost-effective as possible.

4. Listen to feedback. People rarely like dealing with feedback, because it typically comes in the form of a complaint or a reprimand. But, feedback is a powerful thing. Employee, co-worker, customer, and client feedback often highlights problems and provides ideas that lead to solutions.

5. Look for answers outside your system. Sometimes, bringing in a consultant is a great way to determine the best solution. Other times, it's best to look at other successful organizations and build models around their systems.

Don't be afraid to think outside your company's status quo when you're developing solutions.

6. Brainstorm ideas. Providing solutions can be a simple task, but it can also be a time-consuming, complex process. Don't be afraid to think big or small. Use the [seven steps](#) of effective brainstorming to uncover new ways of thinking. You never know where the inspiration for solutions will come from.

7. Invest in solutions. Solving problems is about more than simply developing ideas and brainstorming solutions. In order for solutions to work, they have to be implemented. This may mean purchasing better equipment or tools. It may mean training staff or educating clients. It could mean revolutionizing your product lines or offering new services. Solutions cost something – whether it is time, money, action, or the discomfort of change. But they are well worth the investment.

Problem solving is a sign of a highly effective organization. Use these seven tips for developing solutions to help your organization and workforce thrive.

TAKE YOUR JOB AND LOVE IT

Everyone would like to have a job that they love. However, too often this is simply not the case. If you examine your own situation, you may find the following is true: "I matched the position, but that doesn't mean the position matched me."

Martha Lanier of IGNITE Your Potential, Inc. presented an interesting session at the 2007 SHRM Annual Conference entitled "Take Your Job and Love It", which emphasized the fact that everyone has the power and the ability to enjoy their job or to make changes either to themselves or to their situation. If you feel you are in a dead-end job with nowhere to go, maybe you can make some changes in yourself that will help change this. Ms. Lanier proposes the following as steps any employee can take. Maybe some of these can help you turn around your career or that of your employees.

- Utilize your resources. Know what company benefits are available and use them.
- Join or form a mastermind group to brainstorm ideas, receive encouragement and share support.
- Find someone who is already successful doing what you want to do and ask them to be your mentor.
- Learn as much as you can about your company and key employees.
- Surround yourself with positive people and avoid the negative ones.
- Create a dream board that shows where you want to go with your career.
- Volunteer to work on projects that will utilize your strengths and natural abilities.
- Maintain balance in both your personal and professional life by making self-care a priority.
- Practice the 3 D's. DO what only you can do, DELEGATE what can be done by others and DELETE everything else that doesn't need to be done after all.
- Spend more of your energy focusing on solutions rather than on problems.
- Walk away from office gossip. Even if you aren't contributing, listening offers an opportunity for it to continue.

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TAHRA
 P.O. Box 1656
 Traverse City, MI 49685-1656

2007-2008 TAHRA Leadership Board

Newsletter Articles

The TAHRA Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication. Members interested in submitting articles for the newsletter or for press releases should contact Laura Mitchell at lamitchell@waynewire.com. Deadlines for submission are the 10th day of the month. TAHRA encourages its members to submit articles, information, or successes they've had that they feel others may find interesting. TAHRA reserves the right to alter submissions for space purposes. If you would like to be removed from the newsletter



President	Jennifer Ewing, SPHR
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Workforce Readiness	Barb Howard
Diversity Advocate	Bill Brundage
Marketing and PR Chair	Laura Mitchell
SHRM Foundation Director	Julijana Love
Student Chapter Liaison	Lori Hodek, PHR



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- Dress for success. You appear more successful when you dress professionally (regardless of what others are wearing).
- Take time for breaks and for lunch. These are great opportunities to refresh your mind.
- Show confidence through your body language by the way you maintain your posture and present yourself.
- Ask questions to gain clarity and show your interest.
- Clear the clutter and make room for priorities. A messy desk shows lack of organizational skills.
- Develop power relationships. Associate with people who are influential and who can help you.
- Develop public speaking skills. Employees who speak with confidence have a better chance of advancing their careers than employees who don't.
- Identify and eliminate energy drains such as emails, phone tag and negative people.
- Know the difference between being busy and being productive. Be known for being efficient.
- Maintain a positive attitude. This is one area of your life where you have total control.

Source: Session at the SHRM 2007 59th Annual Conference & Exposition presented by Martha Lanier, IGNITE Your Potential, Inc.