

TAHRA  
P.O. BOX 1656  
TRAVERSE CITY, MI

**DATES AND  
EVENTS TO  
REMEMBER**

**MAY 13, 2008**

LUNCHEON—  
"LEGISLATIVE  
UPDATE" 12:00  
NOON—2:00  
PM WATER-  
FRONT CON-  
FERENCE CEN-  
TER

**JUNE 10, 2008**

LUNCHEON-  
"AVOIDING DIS-  
CRIMINATORY  
PRACTICES RE-  
GARDING NA-  
TIONAL ORIGIN  
AND IMMIGRA-  
TION" 12:00  
NOON—2:00 PM  
WATERFRONT  
CONFERENCE  
CENTER

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# TAHRA

Traverse Area Human Resource Association

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

MAY/JUNE 2008

## The President's Corner

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, I attended the MISHRM Leadership Conference with Julijana Love, Janet Yankee and Terri Kopkau in Lansing, Michigan. This conference is organized by the MISHRM District Directors and is designed to help chapters by sharing ideas and resources. The day was well spent networking and learning new ideas. But also, two important thoughts came to my mind during the day.

First, there are some great initiatives that TAHRA can be taking in the future. For example, one chapter offers resume services to businesses that are closing or laying off individuals. Another chapter organizes a mock job fair for the local senior high to give students practice in networking and self presentation. It became clear to me that by being involved in MISHRM, TAHRA could continue to grow and push to become a greater player within the Traverse City business community.

So what was the second thought? It was how proud I am to be part of the TAHRA Chapter and to have been your President. Though TAHRA may not be the

largest chapter, or the richest chapter, or even the chapter with the most board members, we have a great chapter and we definitely provide for our membership. Our chapter offers excellent programming; has well established and functioning HRCI study groups; maintains a balanced budget and financial transparency; has a formal membership process;



and, was once again awarded the Superior Merit Award by SHRM.

We have a great website and a professional bi-monthly newsletter. We provide our membership legislative updates via e-mail, have established by-laws and possess a tangible history of meeting minutes. Our members help the community by working with the local schools and organizations. TAHRA has golf outings, provides relevant professional develop-

ment seminars and is willing to take on tough diversity issues. And let's not forget our willingness to step out and say "yes" to the risk of a large event such as the October Steven Covey presentation.

All of this, and more, is possible only through the hard work of our volunteers. As President, I have had the pleasure to work with a Board that is willing to take risks, work hard and push themselves to the next level. To each and every member of the Board of Directors, a sincere, "Thank you!" for all that you have done the last eighteen months. And I would also like to send a special thanks to Paula Sagala for her work with Special Programming.

Finally, thank you to all of the TAHRA membership for electing me President and giving me the honor of serving you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ewing  
President

## Mentor Program

mentor, n. wise loyal advisor.

This is often the definition we see in the dictionary. I see the mentor's role as an important one. A mentor always behaves in a positive, professional manner and keeps in mind they are an official representative of our professional organization. This is true of a mentor in your business as well. Mentors are a key component to the success of continued growth. A mentor has a high impact on how smoothly a new member or employee is integrated and how quickly they become productive.

What this means to us as TAHRA professionals is yet to be determined. I would like to see if there is any interest in developing a mentor program for our professional membership group? Would you like to be part of a small sub-committee to help determine if there is interest and be in on the ground level of developing the program if the interest exists?

I'd love to hear from you. Give me a call at 995-4703 or e-mail me at [janet.yankee@53.com](mailto:janet.yankee@53.com). Thank you in advance for your interest. I look forward to our conversation.

## Welcome New TAHRA Members

**Joseph Manguno**  
Director of Human Resources  
Goodwill Industries

**TAHRA membership is 78 members strong! We have had a great year—thanks to all new and current members - we look forward to a wonderful 2008-2009 season.**



# Final Reminder

## June 1—TAHRA Golf Outing

The Traverse Area Human Resource Association (TAHRA) will be holding a fundraiser golf outing on Sunday, June 1, 2008 to benefit the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation and TAHRA.

The SHRM Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that operates as the research and development arm of the HR profession. The foundation advances the profession and enhances the knowledge of competency of human resource professionals through its funding of research, publications, and education programs. The work of the SHRM Foundation is supported by tax deductible contributions made by individuals, companies, and organizations.

Here's how TAHRA members and others can help:

1. Please consider contributing an item or cash to the fundraiser for prizes. Items can be donated by you, your employer, friend, business or all. Some items to consider are gift baskets, gift certificates, wine or food items, etc.
2. You may also consider sponsoring a hole for \$100.

Prize contributors and hole sponsors will be recognized in event materials and in a news article following the event.

Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend the [golf outing](#) on **Sunday, June 1, 2008**. The event will begin at 1:00 p.m. with registration and practice, and dinner and awards will conclude at approximately 5:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Crown Golf Course on West Silver Lake Road in Traverse City. You are encouraged to bring a friend or colleague. No need to worry if you aren't a golf professional or have never played before, the game will be designed for all levels of players. The event will be a 9-hole scramble.

If there are any questions or you can donate a prize or sponsor a hole, give Chris Davis (933-1711) or Lori Kerlin (645-0169) a call.

The 2007 golf outing was a great success. Where else can you get 9 holes of golf, a great dinner and a good prize for only \$40?



## DOCUMENTING DISCIPLINE FOR NEW HR PROFESSIONALS

Often the new HR professional faces the task of coaching a supervisor on how to document discipline. If only this was a one-time education process that we could learn and apply to every situation! Unfortunately every situation is different, just as every employee is different, and even seasoned HR professionals face discipline problems that stump them. The following information should not be construed as legal advice pertaining to specific situations, but may provide some guidelines.

Jonathan A. Segal, Esquire presented an interesting session at the 2007 SHRM Annual Conference entitled “Documenting Discipline for New HR Professionals”. Employers choose whether they will hire employees as “at will” or not. In “at will” employment, either party can terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any or no reason, with or without prior notice. Many employers, which applies particularly in union situations, require “just cause” to terminate employees, meaning there must be significant deficiencies in performance or behavior, usually following progressive discipline. Mr. Segal felt that even if an employee is “at will”, documenting discipline is important and legally recommended even if not legally required. Some of the reasons are fairness to the employee and keeping within your organization’s culture; cost to the business since it is easier and cheaper to help improve an employee than to hire and train a new one; it decreases the likelihood of a claim; and it decreases the employer’s exposure in litigation.

There are three traditional steps in progressive discipline, oral warning, written warning, and final warning. All employers should have a written policy on discipline that outlines the steps but reserves the right to skip steps. “At will” employers should reiterate this in their discipline policies. There are at least two exceptions to progressive discipline:

1. Introductory/probationary period
2. Serious or summary offenses – behaviors for instant termination or other serious misconduct that can lead to termination

The core elements of disciplinary notice include:

- Expectation(s) that are not being met
- The specific failings in terms of performance or behavior
- Prior counseling or disciplines leading to the notice
- Expectations going forward
- Consequence of not meeting expectations, up to and including termination

Elements of documentation:

- Documentation should include the general expectation(s) not being met, e.g., “We expect our employees to work productively throughout the day.” The specific expectations should then be listed, e.g., “How this applies to you is....”
- Examples of the specific failings in terms of performance or behavior should be as objective and factual as possible. A mistake often made is to focus on the general conclusion instead of describing specific behaviors. The supervisor should list exactly what the employee said or did.
- When listing examples, suggest that it is all inclusive and does not apply to only these examples. “There have been a number of times that you have been late. Here are the two most recent....”

- Documentation should not include “absolutes” such as “never: or “always”. If the supervisor uses these terms and then can only back up with one or two examples, this can make the supervisor appear a liar or one who is trying to set up the employee.
- Using language that hedges, such as “it would seem” or it appears” implies that you don’t know for sure or there is no proof. Reframe this language into specifics that you can prove with examples. Including too much detail is overkill, and also implies that you have waited too long to address the problems. The longer you tolerate mediocrity, the longer you have to wait to terminate.
- Be careful that you do not bundle protected and unprotected absences together. Look at the list of absences one by one and exclude any protected absences, indicating, “We are not including the dates of January 10 through 22 when you were on FMLA.”
- Always restate the expectations going forward and always state a timeframe. “Going forward we need to see improvement in.....” Documentation should include the consequences of the current step:
  - Informal counseling will lead to formal discipline
  - Formal discipline will lead to more severe discipline, up to and including discharge
  - Final warning will lead to immediate termination without further warning
- It’s important that you are consistent when disciplining employees. However, a legitimate exception might be framed as follows: “Ordinarily you would be subject to termination, but due to your 20 years of service, this is instead a final warning.”
- Timeliness in documentation is important. Oral warnings must be documented in writing with a copy to the employee.
- If a final warning, you must state specifically that “this is a final warning” and that performance problems require improvement that is immediate, significant, and sustained. Do not limit the warning to the behavior that was the cause for the final warning, but also include any other problems with performance or behavior of any kind. Tools should be included in a final warning, such as a Performance Improvement Plan over a specified period of time, with the employee required to make and sustain necessary improvements both during and following the period.
- Documentation of discipline does not always require a signature of the employee, however if you do include this, require only an “acknowledgement of receipt” as opposed to “agreement”. If the employee responds by balling up and throwing away the document, you should save it as is and send another copy to the employee to show that they are still bound by the notice.
- Using certain adjectives could suggest bias, such as “too emotional” could be construed as gender discrimination or “too rigid” could suggest age discrimination.

Finally, when implementing and documenting discipline, every employee should be treated with dignity and respect.

**Source: Session at the SHRM 2007 59th Annual Conference & Exposition presented by Jonathan A. Segal, Esquire**

Submitted by: Carol Kasper, TAHRA Secretary

# What is the SHRM Foundation?

The SHRM Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organizational affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) founded in 1966. With assets of more than \$9 million, the SHRM Foundation promotes innovation, education, research and the use of research-based knowledge. A volunteer board of HR practitioners, academics and SHRM representatives governs the Foundation. All contributions are tax deductible.

## New from the SHRM Foundation

### *Trust Travels: The Starbucks Story* DVD

In today's business environment, trust is a fragile commodity. Although it is highly prized, it is often in short supply. Trust provides the foundation for exceptional performance and it underlies risk-taking, accountability and customer service. Yet many organizations struggle to build a workplace based on values such as honesty, integrity and respect. Starbucks is a company that has succeeded because it has stayed true to its core values. With 137,000 employees in 40 countries, Starbucks clearly demonstrates that trust and values can travel to different cultures. This DVD explores how Starbucks achieves financial success by treating employees well.

## Awards & Scholarships

The Foundation supports the following award programs:

- Regional Scholarship Program; \$100,000
- Co-sponsor of the \$50,000 Michael R. Losey Human Resource Research Award
- *New for 2008!* Student Scholarship Program \$50,000; Dissertation Awards; \$20,000

For a complete list of sponsored awards, visit [www.shrm.org/foundation](http://www.shrm.org/foundation)

These products are made possible by your generous tax-deductible donations to the SHRM Foundation.

*Thank you for investing in your profession!*

- *Julijana Love, SHRM Foundation Director*

## SHRM proudly brings you its 60th Annual Conference and Exposition

June 22–25, 2008  
Chicago, Illinois

The SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition offers — for the best price in the market today — the most comprehensive and relevant professional development programs. Attendance will improve your knowledge, skills and abilities as an HR professional.

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Register now:

<http://www.shrm.org/conferences/annual/>

SHRM's Annual Conference Keynote speakers will motivate and inspire you.



[Sidney Poitier](#)



[Patrick Lencioni](#)



[Doris Kearns Goodwin](#)



[Nancy Giles](#)



**Wednesday,  
October 22, 2008**

**Grand Traverse Resort, Governor's Hall  
Dinner and Keynote Presentation  
5:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

**Register Now!**

**(231) 922-3782**

[www.nwm.org/coveyevent.asp](http://www.nwm.org/coveyevent.asp)

Table of ten: \$1300 by June 1, 2008

Individual Tickets: \$150 by June 1, 2008

All Tickets *after* June 1, 2008: \$175

*This Event is Sponsored by:*

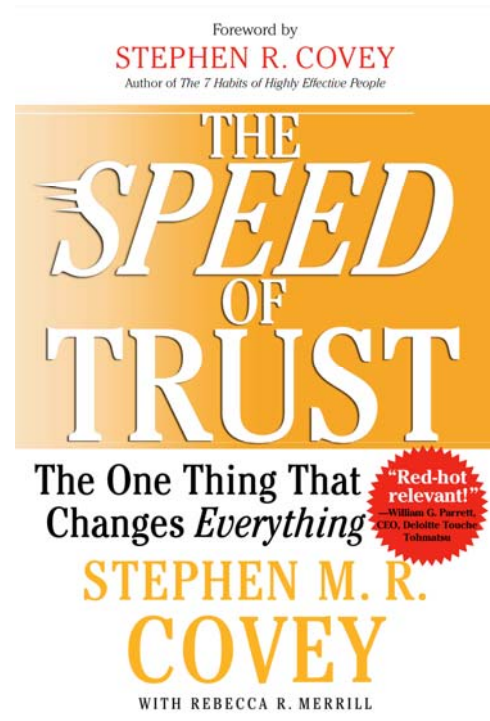
Traverse Area Human Resource Association and Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

## *An Evening with Stephen M.R. Covey*

### **What You Will Learn**

- The economics of trust
- The effects of trust on speed and cost in relationships and organizations.
- The taxes and dividends that flow from organizational trust.
- How to be an effective leader by inspiring and extending trust.
- How to restore lost trust.
- Myth vs. Reality of Trust.
- Who trusts you?

*New York Times* Bestselling Author!



# “Need HR Help NOW?? Get it with LIVE HELP from SHRM”

Click Here For  
**LIVE HELP**

## **What is Live Help?**

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

## **How does it work?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**TAHRA**  
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#### 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



#### 2007-2008 TAHRA Leadership Board

President	Jennifer Ewing, SPHR
Vice President	Janet Yankee, SPHR
Treasurer	Paul Hresko
Secretary	Carol Kasper, PHR
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Programming Administration	Karyn Oncu, PHR
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SHRM Foundation Director	Julijana Love, PHR
Student Chapter Liaison	Lori Hodek, PHR



2007 SHRM **SUPERIOR MERIT AWARD**  
CHAPTER

## TAHRA Receives 2007 Superior Merit Award

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in Alexandria, VA has awarded the Superior Merit Chapter designation to the Traverse Area Human Resource Association for its scope of work in perpetuating and supporting the mission of the organization in 2007.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. The Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 225,000 members in over 130 countries, and more than 575 affiliated chapters.

TAHRA is one of over 100 chapters receiving the distinction in SHRM's North Central Region comprised of 10 states and 150 affiliated chapters

"This recognition demonstrates both the leadership and the successful partnership the chapter has with SHRM to serve the networking and professional development needs of human resource professionals and to the advancement of the human resources profession" noted Pamela J. Green, SPHR, Chief Membership Officer for SHRM.

TAHRA receives a Certificate of Recognition, a specialized banner to display at its meetings and events, and is being recognized in SHRM's publications and at its conferences.