



HUMAN RESOURCES
ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK

Inside HR/NY

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One point of view: An informative and enjoyable EXPO

As HR professionals we are constantly responding to the continuous **changing world** of business. This **changing world** often poses important issues and challenges to HR professionals concerning military leave, legal issues and the rising cost of health benefits to mention but a few.

HR/NY EXPO 2004 *A CHANGING*

WORLD, at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, kicked off on Tuesday, March 23 with keynote speaker Al Franken, Emmy-Award winning political satirist and comedian. Franken was controversial, drawing cheers or jeers from the audience. On Wednesday, Ron Insana, Co-anchor of CNBC's *Business Center* and a financial expert, spoke on "The Message of the Markets." Insana offered insight into how to watch for changes in the market and how and when those changes may affect business. For me, this was a tiny glimpse into the financial crystal ball.

As an attendee of EXPO for both days, I can honestly say it was a great success — with 16 concurrent sessions, two keynote speakers and an exhibit hall filled with organizations showcasing an array of products and services.



(l-r) Ron Insana and Barry Manus

Creating a great workplace

The seminar sessions were both informative and enjoyable. I attended seminars on Legal Update, the Healthcare Cost Dilemma, and Creating a Great Place to Work. I especially enjoyed the latter. As an

Continued on page 6



(l-r) Christopher Elmes, Al Franken and Megan Griffault

IN THIS ISSUE

- Beyond 9 to 5 2
- Downtown Programs 3
- Integrating different cultures 4
- Thanks to EXPO sponsors 4
- Committee corner: PR 5
- Employment law & legislative conference 6
- Thanks – EXPO exhibitors 8
- Committee chairs 9

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Contacting the Association:
HR/NY

1 AAA Drive, Suite 102, Trenton, NJ 08691
Web site: <http://www.HRNY.org>
E-mail: HRNYwebmail@hq4u.com
Toll-free phone: 1-877-625-HRNY (4769)
FAX: 609-581-8244

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



EXPO 2004 — How did we do?

This is not a rhetorical question. Those of us responsible for planning this year's HR/NY EXPO 2004 *A CHANGING WORLD*, feel it went off without a hitch...well maybe with a little hiccup.

Overall the feedback was good-to-excellent for the concurrent session speakers. Only 30 of the hundreds of attendees completed and turned in the overall event evaluations. So, in mid-April, we e-mailed evaluations to all who attended. The overwhelming number of attendees who have taken the time to contact us by e-mail, phone or in-person, have said that the entire event was excellent. Even Al Franken, whose

presentation caused some controversy, was perceived as entertaining and enjoyable. (We probably could have done without the Elton John joke, Al.)

But controversial or not, the EXPO Planning Committee put much work into the selection of keynote and concurrent session speakers. I, for one, know you can't please all of the people all of the time. And the process of selecting speakers, which is done more than a year before the event, isn't an easy one.

"But Franken wasn't relevant to the HR audience," you say? Having decided to hold

Continued on page 7

Beyond 9 to 5 – Alternative work schedules

Organizations offer a buffet of alternative work schedules to choose from, designed as optional benefits to aid employees in the work/life balancing act, and improve retention and recruitment in the process.

The most common types are:

- **Flextime:** Employees work the customary eight hours per day, but with options as to when they may arrive and depart. Many such policies indicate core business hours (i.e., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) during which all employees must be present.

- **Compressed work week:** The natural extension of flextime; employees work more hours in fewer days.

- Most common is the **4/10** schedule: four 10-hour days each week.

- In the **9/80** schedule, employees work nine-hour days, and take every other Friday off. A variant allows half-days each Friday.

- **Job Sharing:** Two employees share a single job's responsibilities and benefits. Crucial elements are incumbents' communication skills and willingness to collaborate.

- **Telecommuting:** For employees whose jobs require neither direct contact with customers/coworkers nor frequent access to office materials or records, telecommuting allows trusted employees to work from home part- or full-time. Communication

regarding work assignments and performance is critical.

Organizations may implement some alternative schedules on a seasonal basis.

Coordinating a compressed work week is far easier for exempt employees, as pay and hours worked are unrelated. If you are considering a compressed work week for nonexempt employees, take state and federal wage laws into account. For instance, a 4/10 schedule is costly for employers with California staff, where overtime begins daily after eight hours of work by hourly employees.

“Common concerns regarding such programs are profitability and productivity.”

Consider work/life issues

In order to determine which of these schedules will work in your organization, consider the work/life issues. Flextime can help employees schedule childcare and education. A compressed work week can relieve



stress, and minimize tolls and parking fees symptomatic of a daily commute.

Common concerns regarding such programs are profitability and productivity. Keep tabs on the volume of completed work in your organization to prove the worth of alternative work schedules. If your hope is that alternative work schedules will lead to less stress and greater enthusiasm among employees, measure their output before and after implementation.

A well developed schedule, that considers the needs of the organization on each business day and ensures full coverage, further aids productivity and customer service.

To prove the link between alternative work schedules and improved retention/recruitment, consider an employee opinion survey on the subject. How much of an impact have the new schedules made on morale? How many new hires were swayed by scheduling when considering a position? The best source of data on these questions is your own workforce.

Telling indicators

Assuming an otherwise constant work environment, these indicators may help you determine if alternative work schedules are helping or hindering your business:

- Use of sick days
- Change in rate of absenteeism/tardiness
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Departmental profit levels
- Work completed more quickly/backlog of work
- Size/quality of applicant pool

– Jennifer C. Loftus, SPHR,
and Sharon M. Terry,
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Downtown programs: Benefits that won't bust your budget

On Thursday, February 19, 2004, the HR/NY Downtown Programs Committee presented "Benefits that Won't Bust Your Budget: Executive & HR Strategies" at the NYU Conference Center. The program was sponsored by Liberty Mutual.

The program panel, moderated by Donna DeLuca, Director of HR at the Daily Racing Form, was comprised of: Rose E. Higgins, Director of Human Resources at ICAP North America, Inc.; Izzy Kushner, President of HR Impact, Inc.; and Joseph Kocsis, Account Representative at Health Resources.

Higgins began with a brief reminder to HR professionals of the very limited number of mandated benefits. Many of the benefits that we consider a standard part of doing business, like health insurance, dental insurance and prescription drug benefits, are not mandated by any legislation, but are necessary to compete in today's environment. Additional programs, like Flexible Spending Accounts and Qualified Transportation Expense Plans, provide a tax benefit to employees and employer alike. They also strengthen an employer's ties to its employees.

At ICAP North America, Higgins has implemented additional voluntary benefits, including supplemental life insurance, long-term disability, an EAP, financial counseling, banking programs, and fitness club discounts — to name a few. In planning the strategy for these implementations, Higgins stressed the importance of deciding which programs would be welcome additions to a company's employee base. The next steps are to research the program thoroughly, propose it to senior management, and obtain their support. Good communication about the program to employees is paramount.

Encourage employees to ask questions and, after implementation, assess the program to evaluate success and/or possible changes for the future. Throughout the

year, Higgins suggests using the normal communication channels to remind employees of the program and encourage participation.

Kushner suggested monitoring trends in benefits. The reasons for doing this include gathering supporting evidence to bring to the organization's decision-makers when discussing program changes or new program implementation. He said, when monitoring, to keep in mind what "behaviors" the organization wants its benefit programs to support.

Good news from Benefits Survey

The Benefits Survey sponsored by the HR/NY Downtown Programs Committee had some good news for companies, including the fact that the average budgeted increase for health insurance in 2004 was 10.6%, trending down from 14% and 16% in 2003 and 2002 respectively. Many of the responding companies provide benefits that tend to be cost-neutral and relatively easy to administer. For example,

- 41% of respondents provide an EAP and 39% offer a gym reimbursement program, both considered cost neutral because they have proven to reduce medical claims and reduce absenteeism;
- 94% of respondents provide TransitChek or a similar program which is cost neutral due to the employer's tax savings; and
- 66% offer a medical FSA (median limit of \$3,500) and 74% offer a dependent care FSA.

When contemplating adding voluntary benefits, Kushner urged attendees to consider a variety of factors: the company's business and HR goals; what is competitive in your market; employee demographics; who the executives and decision-makers are; the cost and value of the new benefits; and the total compensation and benefits offering.

Kushner offered these additional possibilities: Access to "group" plans — LTC,

home/auto insurance, supplemental life/disability benefits; emergency backup childcare; and benefits statements which serve to remind employees of the available programs and show the company's investment in the employee.

EAPs for prevention

Kocsis defined Employee Assistance Programs as a worksite-based program designed to identify and resolve behavioral, health and productivity problems that adversely affect job performance. In addition to services normally associated with an EAP — 24-hour emergency services, counseling, crisis management, supervisor/manager consultation, and wellness seminars — EAPs can be most effective when the preventive services they provide are utilized. These often underutilized services can include management consultations and employee and management trainings. Kocsis offered several examples of situations where preventative services are helpful including threats of violence, worker's compensation, and downsizing. In relation to downsizing, getting EAP involved during the planning process could provide supervisors and managers the support they need.

On the day of a downsizing, the EAP is available for the affected employees, managers, and the survivors — people remaining with the employer who are often overlooked and who experience their own issues. EAP personnel can help companies strengthen relationships with these survivors by not allowing them to pull back, which is common in downsizing situations. By giving employees individual attention, control is given back to them in a constructive way.

Employers should consider which low- or no-cost voluntary benefits would best supplement their existing programs and offer the most value to employees.

— Lisa Tobio

Downtown Programs Committee

Integrating different cultures after a merger or acquisition

HR/NY's Career & Professional Development Committee's April 8th program was presented by David Lorenzo, a partner with the Gallup Organization. Lorenzo spoke about how best to handle the integration of different cultures arising from mergers and acquisitions.

A common-sense, logical and information-driven approach would best describe the suggestions put forth. Perhaps not too surprisingly, many organizations are not as well prepared as they might be in pursuing and implementing an acquisition or merger. Research has shown, however, that following an acquisition or merger, a well defined roadmap greatly increases the odds of success.

From the beginning, many questions need asking and answering, including the very reason for the acquisition or merger. Does it really make sense for the business? Will it enhance the value to customers and shareholders? Doing one's homework is critical to the decision to integrate. Some important issues to take into account include the size of the acquisition target, the ability to retain key contributors, compatibility of the cultures, chemistry among the leadership, and compatibility of existing technologies.

10% or more signals failure

Data has shown, for example, that when the target is greater in size than the acquiring entity by 10% or more, the integration is doomed to certain failure from the start. This makes perfect sense when you take into consideration that all too often the acquiring party is force-feeding its way of doing things upon the newly acquired party. This brings up another point: Since the company being taken over was thought to add enough value to be bought in the first place, perhaps some of its existing practices deserve to be emulated! Shouldn't careful analysis be made of what practices and policies from both sides work best to come up with a new mix constituting the best of both worlds? A great way of keeping employees from each of the combined cultures engaged and thus retain critical talent is to actively involve them on such integration committees doing the analyses. Make use of their experience and seek their input and ideas in putting forth the newly combined practices.

Acknowledge that stress exists

Lorenzo also said not to treat the stress inherent in the process as if it doesn't exist. He compared this to an invisible "white elephant" in the middle of the room that no one wants to mention. All too often employees are afraid to voice their concerns. Yet most of us know that when issues are not brought out into the open, assumptions get made that are not always accurate. These, in turn, can lead to misunderstandings, simmering frustrations and resentments. The overall impact on employee morale can be quite damaging.

So, what essential ingredients are needed to develop a strategic plan for integrating cultures? Be armed with as much information as possible. Anticipate risks and obstacles. As the boy scouts say, "Be prepared." And let's not forget the old standby — "Communicate, communicate, communicate."

— Susan Reeves, PHR
Porter Novelli

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Time commitments are minimal — 1 to 2 hours a week. There are no formal committee meetings to attend. The committee works hard, but has fun! And the service you will provide will make a difference to all who are a part of HR/NY.

If you're ready to join in the action, contact Jennifer Loftus, SPHR, Committee Chair, at jcloftus@astronsolutions.com or (646) 792-2517 today.

– Jennifer C. Loftus, SPHR
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Article deadline for the **June 2004** issue (last issue of the program year) is **May 3rd**. To get a copy of *Inside HR/NY Style & Submission Guidelines* e-mailed to you, contact the Managing Editor at lindsiml@aol.com

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Employment law and legislative conference

I attended the 2004 Employment Law and Legislative Conference held in Washington, D.C., from Monday, March 8 through Wednesday, March 10, 2004. A special meeting of State and Chapter legislative leaders kicked off the conference. SHRM's Government Affairs Team was very welcoming and we were introduced to their managers. Each area briefly informed us of their purpose and how they were available to help us as SHRM members.

We were seated regionally and I had the opportunity to network with Chapter leaders from N.Y., N.J., Pa., and Del. Over lunch and during our meeting, we were provided with an overview of SHRM resources available to us for use in our chapters. We also heard from three individuals who shared their chapters' best practices in the area of influencing their elected representatives.

The timeliness of the conference was evident as the 2004 national elections are almost upon us. Being in the nation's capital allowed us to gain insight and perspective on the many critical HR legislative, regulatory and judicial issues that HR professionals will face in the coming months.

We focused on efforts to ban genetic discrimination in the workplace, proposals to modify the current FLSA regulations, and initiatives to modify calculations for contributions to defined benefit plans.

Keynote offers election perspective

Featured keynote speaker Ari Fleischer, former White House Press Secretary and Assistant to President Bush, provided his perspective on the 2004 presidential election and gave insight into the areas that both the Bush and Kerry camps will need to address to achieve a November victory. Fleischer, a native New Yorker, was informative, humorous and delightfully non-partisan and got a rousing standing ovation.

On Tuesday, we got an inside peek into the behind-the-scenes work that went into the proposed changes to the FLSA by the honorable Tammy D. McCutchen, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor (DOL). McCutchen leads the DOL agency responsible for administering and enforcing some of our nation's most comprehensive labor laws, ranging from the minimum wage to the Family and Medical Leave Act to the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act. In a methodical, informative and secretive presentation, McCutchen said that, as the final regulations had not yet been released, she could not share the specifics or "meat" of the regulations. Later that afternoon, we had our meetings at the Capitol.

On Wednesday morning, CNN veteran broadcast journalist Judy Woodruff, the station's prime anchor and senior correspondent, presented an insider's view of politics, the state of affairs on the road throughout this election year, and the politics at play from a national and global viewpoint.

In addition, I attended several sessions

that addressed changes in the law, which affect me as an HR practitioner.

Visiting Senator Clinton's office

The most memorable part of the conference for me was my visit to Capitol Hill. Along with members from HR/NY and other chapters from around New York State, I visited Senator Clinton's office. Our NY team was fortunate to have Tom Minnick, SPHR, SHRM New York State Legislative Director and The Business Council of New York State, Inc. at the lead of our assault on the Capitol. Tom introduced our group and proceeded to voice our support of the DOL's proposed FLSA regulations. Senator Clinton's staffer was polite and attentive but informed us that the Senator had made up her mind about the regulations and she was not in support of them. I informed the staffer that we were hurting as employers in the area of providing health insurance for our employees. We urged no mandated coverage as in the California Pay or Play regulations.

Our day at the Capitol concluded with a cocktail party hosted by SHRM in the U.S. Botanic Gardens, with great food and some down time to get to know other chapter members.

I urge anyone with an interest in Legal and Legislative Issues to join me next year at this conference and on Visit Albany Day. Look to future issues of Inside HR/NY for dates and registration information. Or if you're interested in joining the Legislative Committee, please contact me at jstewart@stmaryskids.org or (718) 281-8964.

— Jeanne Stewart, SPHR Chairperson,
Legislative Committee

POINT OF VIEW *continued from page 1*

HR professional, I was intrigued and challenged by the philosophy that any company could be a great place to work. This seminar focused on how to create a workplace where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy their co-workers. Sounds like a perfect world, right?

At the close of EXPO, many lucky participants left with winning fabulous prizes in the

drawings, such as a dinner cruise or theater tickets. While I didn't win any prizes, I did go home with a bag full of "toys" — from pens to calculators to luggage tags. I had a great time, and enjoyed being able to get away from the daily stress and routine of HR life, and recharge at the HR/NY EXPO. Now back to the office to figure out how to create a great place to work!

— Donna Abrusci, HR Manager,
NADAP



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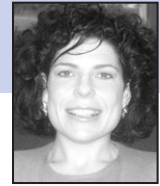
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EXPO addresses HR in a changing world

HR/NY EXPO 2004 A CHANGING WORLD. Well, you can certainly say that again! After attending the session entitled “Legal Update: What’s Hot and What’s Not” presented by Philip Rosen, Esq., of Jackson Lewis, LLP, we as HR practitioners have several “hot issues” coming down the pike. One of these is the Department of Labor’s (DOL) new Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) regulations. As we all anxiously awaited the March 31st final regulations, we were informed that the DOL had submitted the final regulations to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

OMB has 90 days to review the regulations. A spokesperson for OMB has indicated that it is not clear how long the review will take. So what can we do in the meantime to prepare for the new regulations? The first step those in our profession and our organizations should take is to educate top management about the FLSA. We will need to explain that many wage-hour violations and lawsuits are due to misclassifying non-exempt employees as exempt, and that the Wage and Hour Division of the DOL is “cracking down” on unpaid overtime violations.

Once the new regulations are finalized we will need to educate ourselves on the changes, conduct a wage-hour audit, and remain committed to making the necessary changes based on the analysis. Easier said than done!

Other hot issues that surfaced at EXPO include these (just to name a few): “the definition of an applicant” according to the



EEOC; the focus on “Homeland Security changes;” the focus on Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPPA, and Military Leave. Let me not forget to mention the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), which provides an individual with unpaid leave for up to five cumulative years, applies to voluntary and involuntary service, entitles an employee to reinstatement to an “escalator position,” and applies to all employers regardless of size. Given the state of world affairs, we need to know this law.

On a personal note, one of our HR/NY chapter members, Paul Belczak, (former co-

Chair of the Managers’ Forum and active member of the Compensation SIG), was recalled to active duty in the Army. Paul is currently stationed at Ft. Wadsworth, Staten Island and anticipates going overseas this summer. Our thoughts and good wishes are with Paul and other HR/NY members who are on military leave serving our country.

Please feel free to share your comments regarding the EXPO, *Inside HR/NY*, or HR-related topics. I look forward to hearing from you.

– Stephanie Strozak Takano, SPHR
Editor, *Inside HR/NY*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from page 1

the event over two days, it gave us the opportunity to have two keynote speakers – one an entertainer and one more business-related. We didn’t ask Franken to speak about HR issues. We simply expected him to entertain — and that he did. At least that’s my feeling.

The committee has to consider cost, availability and other issues when selecting speakers and planning the EXPO. And I applaud them for a job well done.

We welcome input from you, our members. Feedback is one way; involvement in the planning process for the next EXPO is another.

Let me know your thoughts. Write to me at BarryM@bravohr.com

– Barry R. Manus, President
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Contact the committee Chairs and Co-Chairs listed below.

Benefits SIG:

Izzy Kushner izzy@hr-impact.com
Eric McGahhey emcgahhey@ahm-usa.com

Career Planning & Professional Development SIG:

Leslie Willmott leslie_willmott@lhh.com
Glenn Courounis gcourounis@lenoxhill.net

Committee Coordination & Development:

Carol Karlin carol.karlin@bovislendlease.com

Compensation SIG:

Schevon Holden schevon.holden@itochu.com
Randi Glinksy rbg2003@med.cornell.edu

Directors' Forum:

Arlene Newman anewman@lhw.com
Constance Gerard cgerard@adcouncil.org

Employee Relations/EEO/Diversity:

Terry Clifford cliffordt@jacksonlewis.com
Leonora Galletti leonora_galletti@aoncons.com

Downtown Programs:

Donna DeLuca ddeluca@drf.com
Nancy Robinson nancy.robinson@capitalz.com

EXPO 2004:

Megan Griffault mgriffault@us.loreal.com
Christopher Elmes chris_elmes@dbm.com

HRIT SIG

Greg Fittinghoff greg.fittinghoff@timewarner.com
Stephen Cristella stephen.cristella@timewarner.com

International HR SIG:

Susan Farwell sf@executivecommunicator.com
Ariel Boverman abovhr@aol.com

Labor Relations SIG:

Dina Wald-Margolis, PHR margolisd@uswa.net

Legislative:

Jeanne Stewart, SPHR jstewart@stmaryskids.org
Stephanie Strozak Takano, SPHR stakano@optonline.net

Managers' Forum:

Jeanne Stewart, SPHR jstewart@stmaryskids.org

Mental Health SIG:

Liisa Chider Semp lchider@cliffreeman.com
Dr. Jeffrey Kahn jeffkahn@aol.com

Midtown Programs:

Karen Miller karen.miller@ey.com
Marian Stoltz-Loike mstoltz-loike@seniorthinking.com

Networking:

Tony Iodice tiodice@ogdon.com
Ed Witherell edward.witherell@right.com
Lorri Zelman lzelman@strategicworkforce.com

Newsletter:

Stephanie Strozak Takano, SPHR stakano@optonline.net

Not-for-Profit SIG:

Lynne Plavnick, SPHR lpavnick@voa-gny.org
Grace Beasley-Matthews, SPHR gbeasley@nac-inc.org

Orientation:

Schevon Holden schevon.holden@itochu.com

Public Relations:

Jennifer C. Loftus, SPHR
CCP, CBP, GRP jcloftus@astronsolutions.com

Staffing:

Charles LaManna clamanna@congressfinancial.com
Carol Karlin carol.karlin@bovislendlease.com

University Relations:

Ina Willers iwillers@ihrgroup.org
Madalyn L. Flewelling maddie58@cs.com

Women's Issues SIG:

Barbara Adolf, SPHR badolf1006@aol.com
Lisa Ayala layala@catalystwomen.org

Comp SIG Seminar SEMINAR HAS BEEN POSTPONED... new date will be announced soon.

8:00am, registration; 9:00am – 4:00pm, presentation.

Program moderator: Bob Nadel. Speakers: Anthony Farina, Director, Corporate Compensation, Citigroup; Lee McCullough, Performance Measures and Rewards, Mercer; and David Pelligrino, Vice President, Compensation & Benefits, OppenheimerFunds, Inc.

Helmsley Hotel, 212 East 42nd Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. 3rd floor.

For information, contact llucivero@hq4u.com

AFFILIATE OF



SOCIETY FOR
HUMAN
RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

May 5

Networking Group

“How to Find Your Next Job Using Social Network Software.”

Speaker: David Teten, CEO Nitron Advisors & Chairman, Teten Recruiting.

12:00 - 1:30pm. Met Life Building, 200 Park Avenue

(adjacent to Grand Central Terminal), 26th floor.

For information, contact llucivero@hq4u.com

May 5

HR/NY Social Networking Event

6:00 - 8:00pm. Windfall Lounge, 23 West 39th Street.

To register, RSVP by May 1st to pwhiteside@hq4u.com with your complete contact information

May 6

Restructuring & Security in the Post-9/11 Era

A forum sponsored by Polytechnic University and the SHRM Student Chapter in cooperation with HR/NY.

5:30pm - 6:00pm, registration; 6:00pm - 9:00pm, Forum with buffet dinner.

Executive Conference Suite LC400 at Polytechnic University,

Dibner Library Building, 5 MetroTech Center, Brooklyn.

For information, contact hkaufman@poly.edu

May 13

HR/NY Breakfast*

“Outsourcing: A Tool for HR Professionals – Whether They Use It Or Not.”

8:00-8:30am, networking & registration; 8:30 - 10:00am, breakfast & presentation.

Helmsley Hotel, 212 East 42nd Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Knickerbocker Room

May 19

Benefits SIG Seminar

Morning program: **“What does the ‘Future of Health Care’ Really Mean to You?”**

8:00am, registration, breakfast & networking; 9:00am - 12:00pm, presentation.

Afternoon program: **“Planning your Employees’ Future Now!”**

12:30pm, registration, lunch & networking; 1:30 - 4:30pm, presentation.

Helmsley Hotel, 212 East 42nd Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. 3rd floor.

For information, contact llucivero@hq4u.com

May 25

Career Planning

“Lifetime Employability: New Work Habits for Changing Corporations.”

8:00am, registration; 8:30 - 10:00am, presentation.

The Yale Club (Trumbull Room) 50 Vanderbilt Avenue (between 44th and 45th Streets).

For information, contact llucivero@hq4u.com

Save June 29th for all-day Legal and Legislative Conference

HR/NY’s all-day Legal and Legislative Conference is scheduled for Tuesday June 29th at the Bar Association of the City of New York. For information, contact Jeanne Stewart, SPHR at jstewart@stmaryskids.org

Note: Fees are charged by some groups. Call for information and to register.

*To make reservations for HR/NY Breakfast or Luncheon meetings: Mail or fax the form in your program announcement. *Please, no phone calls.*