

Newsletter: December 2018



Happy **HOLIDAYS**
FROM LEAP SOLUTIONS GROUP

Leaping Into 2019

We're ready to leap into a new year of opportunities and promise—and the 20th anniversary of Leap Solutions! But before we do, the Leap Solutions' staff wants to offer our wishes, recommendations and commitments for making 2019 a year of strength, accomplishment and prosperity.

Standing by Your Employees

Chuck McPherson, Partner

As we close 2018 and reflect upon the one-year anniversary of the Sonoma County fires, I want to express gratitude for all the personal and client relationships we have experienced through these times of turmoil and rebuilding. At Leap Solutions, we are stronger and closer as a family than ever, and our work in various industries has allowed us the privilege of hearing countless stories. In light of the recent fires across the state, it's more evident than ever that the impact of trauma on ourselves and on our employees was—and still is—much greater than anyone could have imagined.

Stress, PTSD, environmental impacts, visual impacts, memories and more have almost crippled our mental health care system locally and have cost businesses in absences, down time and lost productivity. What can we do as employers to continue to support our employees and ourselves more than a year later?

- Allow people to talk about the fires and tell their stories when and how they choose. Remember, people react on different timelines, and people react differently over time. In our office alone, some were incredibly strong for the first 3-6 months and then broke down or became distant in cycles thereafter. Individuals process trauma individually.
- Listen and be empathetic and patient. Some are still negotiating with insurance companies, and some are starting to rebuild. Others can't rebuild at all. Everyone continues to be affected in unique and lasting ways.
- Recommend Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) where available.
- Consider redirection to professional support. Most of us lack the capability or knowledge to help beyond listening and empathy, but distractions directly affect employee wellbeing and overall business.

Holidays are a time to focus on the people that matter most to us. Do your part as an employer to give peace, love and happiness this season by showing those around you a little extra care.



Giving Back

Bianca Rose, Recruiting/Human Resources Coordinator

This season, instead of worrying about your menu for the upcoming holiday dinner, consider feeding your soul by giving back to the community!

Understanding the significance of community service is just as important as actually doing it. Here are just a few reasons to volunteer this holiday season:

- **Feel thankful.** A powerful way to show gratitude for everything we have is to give back to those who may be less fortunate.
- **Spread the holiday spirit.** While many of us will spend the holidays with our loved ones, others cannot. Sharing your time with someone who may otherwise be alone is a great way to spread holiday cheer.
- **Relieve stress.** The holidays are stressful, and a change of environment can be therapeutic. Need a break from the office? Help out at the local animal shelter! What could possibly be more soothing than spending time with furry friends?
- **Bond.** Volunteering together provides an opportunity to spend quality time with friends and family.
- **Take advantage of free time.** With school out and employees likely to have days off, the holiday season is a particularly convenient time to volunteer.
- **Get to know your community.** Volunteering at nonprofit organizations means getting to know the community as we interact with other volunteers, staff and others.
- **Find new purpose.** Exposure to community nonprofits is a great way to find a cause we feel passionate about and might want to be a part of in the coming year.

Sonoma County offers a plethora of nonprofits eager to work with volunteers like you. Even if their holiday volunteer shifts are filled, these organizations offer all sorts of ways to make an impact, including donating, working behind the scenes or even committing to serve in 2019. After all, community service is a year-round reward!



Gifting Opportunity

Claudia Sarmiento, SPHR, Human Resources Consultant

‘Tis the season for giving! Quality development and training opportunities are a gift to your employees—a gift that keeps on giving.

When you invest in your employees’ development, you show them that you believe in their potential, you support their growth and success, and you value and appreciate them. In turn, your employees feel greater job satisfaction and motivation, they bring new knowledge and skills to their work, and they deliver improved job performance and productivity. Happy, empowered employees are likely to work harder and stay loyal.

Shopping for the best training and development opportunities can be overwhelming. Start by determining what your organization and your employees need; consider compliance training as required by law as well as performance improvement and career enrichment training options. As you think about your choices, keep in mind:

- As of January 1, 2020, all employers with five or more employees are obligated to provide Sexual Harassment Training to all employees; those with more than fifty employees have more specific training obligations.
- Effective communication skills positively impact productivity in the workplace. Whether it’s an employee in a supervisory role or someone struggling with addressing difficult conversations, anyone can benefit from developing stronger communication within (and beyond!) the workplace.
- Training and development can help employees acquire new skills or enhance existing ones.
- In-class, online, or self-directed...effective training and development opportunities come in all varieties to fit your unique needs and workforce.

If you’re struggling with the perfect employee gift idea, during this holiday season or any time throughout the year, Leap Solutions can help you tailor the ideal training and development opportunity. So what’s in your shopping cart?



Transforming Your Culture

Susana M. Morales, Organizational Development Consultant and Coach

Leap Solutions is committed to helping transform culture in organizations. People often take for granted the culture of the communities in which we work and live...until something goes terribly wrong. When we don't live our culture and honor our cultural values, we create imbalance and discomfort. We lose our identity, team members, loyalty, dedication, commitment and ultimately productivity.

We are all impacted by the culture of our organization, so it takes the whole village to foster, nurture and successfully transform a culture. Here are some ways you can engage your community to affect and embrace a cultural pivot:

- **Create a culture of listening.** Listening is a simple act that is all too often an afterthought. Set up multiple vehicles to really hear your community. Leap Solutions conducts surveys, interviews, world cafés, focus groups and listening tours...we show up and listen!
- **Create a culture of challenge.** Questions and discourse are always welcome and always deliver better team results.
- **Create a culture of clarity.** People tend to fear change when they have no clarity about what is happening. At Leap, we lean toward over communication so that people know and feel as comfortable as possible with the direction we are heading.
- **Create a culture of positivity.** It only takes one negative person to change the tone and mood of a room. Model positivity and a solution-based attitude.

Retaining Your People

Mary Henderson, Client Relations

The North Bay labor market is tighter than ever. Workers are in short supply and high demand, so employers must compete not just to find people but to keep them.

Beyond salary and benefits, successful employers are looking for more creative ways to retain employees and add value to their jobs.

Consider offering flexibility in scheduling and remote workdays where appropriate, gym membership, meals, parking, rideshare stipends, product discounts, technology and more. These kinds of perks can go a long way toward minimizing employee burnout and maximizing employee satisfaction.

Smart employers also offer employee development, coaching and training programs, which improve teamwork, job skills and industry knowledge as well as personal growth. *Really* smart employers use Succession Planning as a retention strategy as well—identifying leaders, letting them know that you see long-term value in them, and empowering them to envision and achieve an even brighter future with your company.

My hope is that more and more employers will see the immense value in making these investments and reaching out to resources like Leap Solutions to support you in your efforts to keep your employees happy, engaged and loyal.

Shaping the Future of HR

Christine Rodman, PHR, PHRca, SHRM-CP, Human Resources Consultant

As January 1st rolls around, we are faced with the implementation of yet another set of new rules in the workplace. HR professionals often feel that many of the laws are set without full understanding of how they could impact employers and employees. How many times have we held our breath and thought, “what in the world were they thinking?”

As HR professionals, we do have the ability to voice our concerns and share our experience and expertise with the lawmakers who develop the workplace policies that directly impact us. **How can you get involved with HR advocacy?** It’s simple. Research your local legislator and reach out to schedule a meeting. Members of Congress are committed to hearing out their constituents, and they rely on and value the input of HR professionals. Most HR associations, including Next Concept HR Association (NCHRA), Professionals in Human Resources Association (PIHRA), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Professional Association of Sonoma County (PASCO), also have advocacy programs; look to these organizations to seek out advocacy opportunities as well.

Share with legislators the impact of a bill or issue, the reasons they should support or oppose it, and a personal story or real-life example to give relevance and credibility to your position. HR professionals like you are the real experts

on employment policy, and in light of a newly elected 116th Congress, there's no better time to do everything you can to help move our profession forward.



Thriving with Teamwork

Teri Lohrmann, Office Manager

Whether it's a sports team, Navy ship or fire or police department, there's no doubt the captain needs and appreciates teamwork. The same goes for the leader of the band, manager of the hotel or surgeon in the operating room. Working together brings unity, trust and strength to any group of individuals who want to achieve success together. We model that philosophy here at Leap Solutions.

Teamwork **brings fresh ideas** for progressing in a competitive world; **solves problems** through collaboration and creativity; **supports initiatives** by increasing efficiency and quality outcomes; and **builds morale** as ideas are valued and implemented by everyone. Failure is inevitable when teams work in siloes or members set their intentions on personal gain. However, success is just as inevitable when there's consideration, encouragement, trust and communication throughout, and members aim to benefit the team as a whole.

Teamwork helps businesses thrive and relationships grow stronger, and, ultimately, it helps each individual be a true asset to work, life and family alike. "Teamwork makes the dream work!"



Living Your Culture

Scott Ormerod, Partner

At Leap Solutions, we talk frequently with our clients about their organizational culture and how it lives within their company. We share these observations as a way for you to examine your own culture:

- When we ask our clients to define the “culture” of their organization, they find it difficult. While they can easily come up with a description of what it’s like to work at the company, they find it challenging to express the culture in words.
- We then ask our clients to describe the organization’s values and beliefs, customs, sayings and language, artifacts, and heroes and legends. The answers are anthropological facts that begin our articulation into words of the cultural foundations of the organization.
- From this work, we begin to form a set of words, images and perspectives that will help shape the framework of a defined culture. However, we must engage in introspection to move from a verbal description of what currently exists to a deeper understanding of our desired state. This vital shift allows cultural components to surface for review, affirmation or revision, and finally leads to a well-thought written documentation of the organization’s culture.

Why is it important to describe your organizational culture in writing? A written culture captures what exists and what is envisioned, and it can be consistently communicated and shared among long-term and new community members alike.

Bottom line: a communicated culture is a lived culture. In 2019, we recommend exploring your organization’s culture—to understand what is implied that ought to be clearly articulated so that your intended culture can be incorporated into every aspect of every day, and your people feel confident and content within your organization.

As always, we at Leap Solutions remain steadfast in our commitment to the health, vitality, security and success of our clients and our community. We wish your and yours a genuinely happy 2019.

Mark your calendars!

Leap Solutions Group Anniversary Celebration

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 Open House 4:00–7:00

Wild Oak Saddle Club

Are you ready to Leap?