

# THE HUMAN RESOURCE

FALL 2010

An official publication of SHRM-Atlanta



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## Our Common Goal

By Nancy Vepraskas, SPHR, CCP



### DEAR SHRM-ATLANTA MEMBERS,

Welcome to the fall edition of *The Human Resource*. It's time to start focusing on you, your career and your ability to make an impact! SHRM-Atlanta is committed to working for a better Atlanta. This is a strong business community with the potential to be one of the best. And becoming "the best" requires setting a goal, understanding the obstacles, generating a plan and gaining commitment.

At SHRM-Atlanta we begin with our pledge to you—the individual HR practitioner and resource partner. We want to ensure that you have the skills, knowledge and relationships to do your best—to meet your personal goals, to create a vibrant network of folks you trust, and to develop opportunities for innovation.

The Fall Conference, with its seven tracks, provides ways for you to re-set your priorities, reestablish your network, upgrade your skills and update your talking points. I hope you will make every effort to be in attendance. Please come with a plan of what you want to learn and who you want to meet.

The sponsors and resource partners who support your attendance are looking forward to meeting you. They know what you need to learn and who you need to be connected to, so make time to get to know the folks who influence your professional community.

As part of SHRM-Atlanta's member commitment, we are launching our BHAG (our Jim Collin's Big Hairy Audacious Goal) at a Senior Business, Government, and Education Luncheon Symposium during the Fall Conference. We'll

be announcing SHRM-Atlanta's intent to focus in three areas as we help set the table for a thriving Atlanta Business Community. Those focus areas include:

1. **Building Better HR Professionals**—providing programs, connections, and volunteer opportunities for individual contributors and leaders, specialists and generalists who work every day to create great businesses here in metro Atlanta.
2. **Developing Emerging Leaders and Their Businesses**—providing clear business and community expectations and opportunities for leadership who can and will contribute to "best in class" work cultures and to the betterment of the community.
3. **Building a Better Atlanta**—contributing to meaningful discussions and action plans, connecting government, education, media, advocacy groups, and business to create a well recognized and well valued metro Atlanta marketplace for thriving businesses.

We all benefit when Atlanta does well. We look forward to hearing from you—at the conference and in the community as we begin to create specific opportunities to improve business opportunities and business results in the metro area. We welcome your thoughts!

Nancy Vepraskas  
SHRM-Atlanta Chair of the Board of Directors  
Human Capital Consulting

# Michael Esposito

## Paying it Forward in Atlanta

By Erina Nichols

**MICHAEL ESPOSITO DID** not invent the “pay it forward” concept, but he sure has perfected it. Today, he’s known across town as being a connector—connecting people with common interests and opening doors. And speaking of doors, he works for a company that sells front doors, back doors, garage doors and practically everything under the sun you might need for your home and business—the Home Depot. Esposito proudly serves as the director of associate relations for the company’s Northern Division, which suits this former New Yorker just fine!

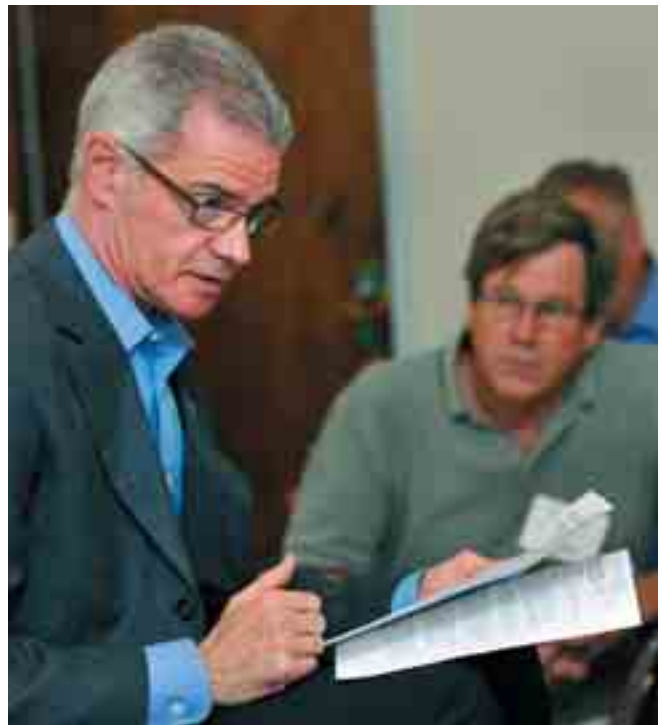
How does a busy HR guy find time to pay it forward? Easy. Virtually every week he has lunch with someone who is unemployed. Esposito has a special place in his heart for job seekers because years ago he found himself unemployed. With an impressive educational background and a great track record working for companies like Exxon, ADT Security Services/Tyco and AutoNation, Esposito never expected to be unemployed. “You may have a big job today and assume you’re well connected, says Esposito. “But, once you leave the workplace, those connections tend to mysteriously evaporate. It’s the out of sight - out of mind factor.” The secret is putting in the time and effort to develop stronger relationships through giving back. Esposito refers to it as “the law of reciprocity.”

Esposito moved to Atlanta in 2006, where he earned his SPHR in 2008 and currently supports the SHRM-Atlanta chapter. SHRM-Atlanta’s president-elect, Tamara O’Neill, thinks Esposito is one of the best examples of an HR leader giving back to his fellow colleagues. “Esposito is in a class by himself when it comes to paying it forward,” says O’Neill, president, Careers On Course. “He was instrumental in our HR Helping HR event for professionals in job transition.”

Esposito recommends volunteering as a way to build relationships and enhance your leadership skills. He serves on the board of directors for The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business and has expanded their footprint in the Greater Atlanta market. He also serves on the board of the American Red Cross and encourages everyone he meets to support this remarkable organization that helps people throughout the world when disaster strikes.

Another thing you might not know about Esposito—he was on LinkedIn before LinkedIn was cool. And he leveraged LinkedIn to help others. In March 2009, he started “Esposito’s HR Group,” which is dedicated to helping HR professionals in transition. The doors he’s opened for others are too numerous to count, and indeed he cautions one against counting. As he puts it, “Helping others is not about keeping score. It’s simply about helping others and seeing the good things happen. You end up creating a positive buzz about yourself while becoming a great ambassador for your company. It’s all good.”

Mike and his wife, Ann, love life in Atlanta and enjoy entertaining friends in their home in East Cobb. They have a daughter, Emily, and a son, Benny. Mike’s wife is a yoga instructor so he catches her class whenever he can. And, no, Ann does not allow networking during class.



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# Emerging Leadership Practices

## *Responding to Changing Demands*

By Christi Olson, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Regional Talent Solutions Director



The economic downturn has fundamentally altered perspectives on how we move forward over the next two to three years. The economic picture is slowly stabilizing, though far from certain. Organizations have restructured through acquisition, growth or cost containment strategies. For business and HR leaders, this has meant dramatic shifts in focus and behaviors. Leaders must simultaneously lead change, develop talent, address complex issues rapidly, and prepare for a different kind of future. They are forced to adapt to a new order that demands both strategic skills and tactical talent. Through it all, leaders must also have a strong moral compass to guide them through decisions that require complex thinking and that balance profitability and responsibility.

Lee Hecht Harrison recently completed interviews and focus groups with senior HR global business leaders to identify emerging leadership practices needed for the immediate future. The discussions ranged from the challenges and opportunities impacting the development of leaders at all levels in their organizations to generational differences and desired leadership behaviors in the workplace.

### Soft Skills Are the Hard Skills

As they try to increase the capacity to lead change successfully, HR leaders face many challenges and opportunities. Here are the top six that we've identified:

**1. Engaging employees**—developing an engagement mindset and exploring ways to reengage employees around the organization's vision and goals. The HR leaders made a clear link

between leaders developing leaders and high employee engagement.

- 2. Retaining high-potential/high-performing and emerging leaders**—focusing on retaining the organization's top leaders as the economy slowly recovers. In what is expected to be a massive problem—industry estimates range from 35 percent to 50 percent of top talent to be at risk of leaving—HR leaders want leaders at all levels in their organizations to focus on engagement and retention as a daily practice and not a one-time event or episode.
- 3. Overcoming employee resistance to change**—doing a better job of working with leaders to assist employees with navigating successfully through change so they can make a positive contribution to the organization's initiatives. HR leaders want their business leaders to lead change, and they see that as a way for employees to more quickly reengage and refocus on results.
- 4. Doing more talent and leadership development with less time and money**—rethinking leadership development programs so that they touch more employees and are in alignment with key challenges around leading change and getting results.
- 5. Preparing for succession and responding to generational issues compounded by economic pressures**—how to better select, assess and develop for succession given the prolonged Boomer careers that could get in the way of developing Gen X and Gen Y leaders.
- 6. Developing leaders to manage change**—there is a chorus of concern regarding the capacity of leaders to

lead change successfully and influence and lead cross-functional work teams. Leaders need to more fully lead complex change through greater influence skills and removing cross-functional barriers to change.

### Leaders Developing Leaders

A greater capacity for leaders to develop other leaders is the new leadership mantra. This is critical as organizations have restructured and thinned the ranks. All organizational work is now done in work teams, and the ability to motivate and engage people to get results is what matters most going forward. When asked what new and desired leadership behaviors are needed as leaders respond to the changing economy and workforce, the senior global HR leaders responded with their top six desired behaviors:

- 1. Developing future leaders**—senior leaders, high-potential and emerging leaders, and middle managers need to spend more of their work time focused on developing others. HR leaders suggest creating a talent development plan for your team and taking the time to get to know team members. Get and keep people engaged so they can make a contribution and a difference.
- 2. Evolving leaders to push accountability to teams**—or, as one HR leader remarked, “Be a leader; don't be a super doer.” Dare to let go; choose which projects or activities can be led by others within your team; delegate. Use the opportunity to develop leaders.
- 3. Valuing coaching as a key development tool**—senior HR leaders expressed a greater desire for their

*(continued on page 8)*

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CEO and senior leadership team to embrace coaching as a positive and effective way to increase performance and retention for high-potential leaders.

4. **Increasing trust among senior leaders**—improving trust among senior leaders was cited as an important ongoing development for senior leadership teams. HR leaders viewed building trust as crucial to an organization’s ability to have difficult conversations and dialogue in order to meet the new challenges and make the hard decisions going forward.
5. **Developing a personal touch**—leaders need to express interest and spend more time with their direct reports and/or work team colleagues getting to know them on a more personal level in order to assist in their development and engagement. Retention is highly impacted by leaders knowing their people, their contributions, and treating employees as assets.
6. **Modeling a more consistent approach**—when communicating the organization’s vision and direction, being clear about the organization’s direction and communicating it at all levels helps develop the necessary motivation for people to engage and commit their intellect and passion to their team’s purpose.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

The clear message for leaders is to invest in developing the “soft skills” that are fast becoming the “hard skills” of the future and to develop other leaders as a leadership and organizational imperative. Leaders are the core of



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Missy Herbert, CPA, [mherbert@bnkj.com](mailto:mherbert@bnkj.com) – 14 years EBP experience

a successful employee engagement and retention program. Acquiring a real people engagement and development mindset is the first step. Here are actions you can take to immediately get yourself in the engagement and development mindset:

- 1. Take the calendar test**—look at your calendar over the past two weeks and jot down how many hours you spent in engaging and developing conversations with your direct reports or peers. Is it zero? Two hours? 10 percent of your time? We suggest 30 percent of your time per week is spent on conversations with people related to engagement and development. Even doubling the current amount of time you spend will start to yield results.
- 2. Reserve time to talk about employee performance and engagement**—get your entire team involved and create opportunities for employee participation in everything you do. Make it a structured part of your regular staff meeting so people know it's important and you are serious about taking action.
- 3. Bring people together and ask them what matters around engagement**—encourage focus groups or engagement surveys so you can start with a solid data-driven foundation. Partner with HR and the business to develop targeted programs and activities.
- 4. Focus on your own development**—what “soft skills” and behaviors do you need to develop now in order to be better prepared for what's next? Consider coaching as an integral competency—how to have coaching conversations with others, building strategic relationships, developing a strategic mindset and accountability for results as potential options.
- 5. Make engagement and development the core of your leadership philosophy**—the payoff is enormous; it's the best investment you can make today to achieve results in the future.

For more information on emerging leadership practices, please contact Lee Hecht Harrison today at 800.611.4LHH or visit [www.LHH.com](http://www.LHH.com).

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# The Secret to Creating a Sustainable Workplace?

*(Hint... Embrace Green Technologies for Payroll and HR)*

By Kerry Patterson, Director of Product Marketing, Ultimate Software

**M**any companies today are realizing the tremendous benefits of “going green.” And they’re not just related to improved conservation of natural resources. By focusing on green initiatives, companies save money, create efficiencies, better meet organizational goals and contribute to environmentally sound business practices—all of which adds up to a more “sustainable workplace” for long-term business success.

Where can companies see the biggest impact from “going green?” Payroll and HR functions have typically required tons of paperwork, printed paychecks, forms, handbooks and manuals. The potential for significant impact is one reason why more and more companies are adopting the latest payroll and HR technology solutions to automate processes and halt the paper trail.

Payroll and HR managers across all industries are deploying employee self-service (ESS) to allow their companies to go “paperless.” Paperless payroll and HR can mean huge contributions to environmental preservation in addition to major business benefits like improved efficiencies, convenience and employee satisfaction.

Web self-service allows employees to do everything from viewing and updating personal work-related information, to receiving paperless paychecks, to requesting personal time off and

applying for internal job openings—all without a single piece of paper. Managers and employees are even using the Web to put a stop to the shuffling and filing of paper applications and resumes by using ESS in the recruitment process.

But implementing Web self-service technology at your company is only the first step. You can’t reduce reliance on paper if your employees don’t embrace the new processes. Getting employees to adjust to self-service can be difficult, but by neglecting user adoption, payroll and HR managers miss out on enormous opportunities to reduce administrative workloads, empower employees, and contribute to creating a sustainable workplace.

Focus initially on the convenience and benefits they’ll experience, such as faster answers to questions, changes implemented without waiting and immediate access to pay history. Hassle-free access will be provided any time, day or night, from anywhere.

In order to gain traction, companies should build a communications campaign around the rollout of an ESS program. Promote the workforce portal in your company newsletter, through emails, at events, via posters, etc. Announcing a firm timeline to “go all ESS” can work wonders for rapid adoption.

- **Stress the Benefit to the Greater Good:** While many ESS users appreciate the convenience of being able to easily view, change and update personal HR information, tying employee self-service to a larger communal benefit like the environment can make a big impact on adoption. Use numbers if you can. Show employees the impact that a reduction in paper forms, paychecks and documents can have both on the business (savings) and the environment.

- **Make it Accessible...to All:** Just as airlines have encouraged printing tickets at airport kiosks, many companies are strategically placing kiosks for employees who don’t have easy access to the Internet. Access via a kiosk is especially important for those who do not always have access to a computer during work hours, such as restaurant employees or those on shop floors.
- **Train Your Employees, then Let Go:** Rolling out an ESS program can’t be successful if you don’t train employees to interact with the new system. But with a strong ESS solution, training needs should be limited. The solution should be intuitive and easy-to-use.

A few live demos and hands-on training sessions should be all you need for employees to learn the ins and outs of the site. Providing quick FAQs on the Web site is another great teaching guide. Then, let your employees talk it up. Some of the best adoption promotions are spread by word-of-mouth from managers and co-workers who are frequent users of self-service.

Self-service yields major benefits to employees, businesses and the environment. However, the success of these programs is reliant on employees buying-in and using self-service tools. By using the tips above, companies should see widespread adoption of employee self-service throughout the organization, at all levels.

To encourage employees to use ESS and to realize its benefits, payroll and HR managers can apply the following best practices—which are all about tailoring communications:

- **Make it Simple:** Make your company’s new employee self-service site for payroll, benefits, and HR easy for employees to find. Link to it from email announcements and internal Web pages; show employees how to bookmark it.
- **Keep it in Front of Them:** Use ESS as the entry point to your company portal and place company news, frequently visited links and company events on the site to draw employees to it. Employees should be able to easily access company and HR information. If they can’t find it, they won’t use it.



# Compensation Litigation

## *Recent Changes in Compensation Law*



**W**ith the passing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in January of 2009, and the possible passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act this year, employment attorneys warn that employers' responsibilities to ensure fair pay practices could increase dramatically (Weirich, Mollen, & Pulman, 2009). There are several actions employment attorneys recommend (e.g., Littler Mendelson, P. C.; Robinson, 2009) to protect organizations from compensation litigation.

According to the Lilly Ledbetter Act, if there are existing pay differences based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability (i.e., a gap in the pay between a man and a woman), there is no statute of limitations in identifying the discriminatory decision that resulted in the current pay gap. If a significant salary increase occurred for male, but not female, employees in the same role in 1980, and is still accounting for a pay difference between those same employees today, the female employees would be eligible for two years of back pay. The intent is to alleviate the ever widening gap that perpetuates over time from such actions. Note that the decision must affect current pay. By raising the salary of the affected employee(s) to equal that of relevant others, the organization may afford itself some degree of protection from litigation.

According to employment attorneys at Paul Hastings, the Paycheck Fairness Act, although not yet passed, is a top priority of the current administration and of congressional leadership, and if passed will dramatically increase employer liability with regard to compensation discrimination (Weirich, Mollen, & Pulman, 2009). The legislation would amend the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) of 1938 and

would change the way the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) and OFCCP (Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs) enforce prohibitions against pay discrimination.

Although it has received less publicity than the Lilly Ledbetter Act, the Paycheck Fairness Act would actually be more influential. The legislation would allow for compensatory and punitive damages in pay discrimination cases, as well as make it easier to file a class action lawsuit under the law by changing it from an "opt-in" class action model to an "opt-out" model (Weirich, Mollen, & Pulman, 2009). Moreover, it would require pay differentials be accounted for by factors that are "job-related with respect to the job in question" or are "consistent with business necessity." Previously established procedures for determining "job-relatedness" in selection settings (according to Federal EEOC guidelines) now become relevant to compensation regulations. The Paycheck Fairness Act also prohibits employers from retaliating against

employees for discussing or disclosing pay information with one another.

Based on the implications of the Lilly Ledbetter and Paycheck Fairness Acts, we recommend implementing the following 5 actions for protecting your organization against compensation litigation:

- 1. Conduct a Pay Equity Analysis:** Taking a proactive approach with a Pay Equity Analysis allows for the evaluation of employee pay to identify current pay differences based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. Employers can act quickly to rectify the impact of past discriminatory decisions and identify if there are job-related factors that account for the differences in pay, helping organizations protect themselves. This process is also used in an OFCCP audit.
- 2. Evaluate and Respond to Perceptions of Fairness:** A climate assessment allows employees to anonymously provide their opinions about the fairness of the compensation system. Areas of misinformation,

*(continued on page 12)*

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in addition to actual inequities identified in the Pay Equity Analysis, can be better addressed. Separating responses according to location, department and even work groups can help organizations isolate where problems might exist.

- 3. Conduct a Formal Job Analysis and Create Valid Job Descriptions:** Federal guidelines recommend that a formal job analysis be conducted for identifying job relatedness. Without a job analysis, it is difficult to develop valid job descriptions.

In order to be in compliance with the Paycheck Fairness Act, effective documentation will be more important than ever before, as they will be required for determining the job relatedness of pay differentials.

- 4. Facilitate Valid and Legally Defensible Performance Evaluations:** Performance appraisal processes can be riddled with bias, lacking in variance (i.e., everyone is a 4 or 5), and unrelated to the job. Pay decisions based on such a system will have difficulty standing up in court as the basis for

job-related pay differentials. When developed properly, a performance management system can provide valid information to differentiate employees from one another.

- 5. Decrease Discretion in Compensation Process:** Managers often make pay decisions without formal standards or appropriate training. With objective standards (identified in a job analysis) for determining initial pay and pay raises, you can be more confident that pay decisions are based on job related factors.

A recent SHRM poll indicates that the majority of HR managers believe that using behavioral competencies enabled the hiring of more qualified candidates. Moreover, evaluating and addressing fairness perceptions, increasing objectivity in performance appraisal systems, and decreasing discretion in the compensation process are likely to increase employees' perceptions of justice, which are related to increased commitment to the organization, decreased turnover (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Simons & Roberson, 2003), and even improved customer service (Masterson, 2001).

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*Written by Liz Roling, M.A., Consultant and Research Associate, Turknett Leadership Group, and Randall Lucius, Ph.D., Vice President and Senior Consultant, Turknett Leadership Group.*

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*Disclaimer: Turknett Leadership Group is not a law firm, and the information in this paper is meant to provide general information to explain the legal implications of recent and future legislation for HR. We strongly recommend that you consult legal counsel to completely understand how the legislation will affect your organization.*

### Top 5 Precautions:

1. Conduct a Pay Equity Analysis
2. Evaluate and Respond to Perceptions of Fairness
3. Conduct a Formal Job Analysis and Create Valid Job Descriptions
4. Facilitate Valid and Legally Defensible Performance Evaluations
5. Decrease Discretion in Compensation Process



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- Motivate and support your HR staff by encouraging attendance and professional development
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