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Nuggets From Alaska SHRM



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Inside:
The Benefits of Association Membership
Religious Discrimination, Harassment and Accommodation

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Religious Discrimination, Harassment and Accommodation

By Anne Gagliardi, HR
Executive Director, Alaska SHRM State Council

Throughout the year, individuals observe, celebrate and discuss their beliefs at work in various ways and events. In addition, some individuals choose not to observe or celebrate these same events due to their religious beliefs.

Most human resources professionals are aware that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination (or harassment) in employment based upon various protected bases, including religion. In addition, an accommodation for an individual's religious beliefs is reasonable if it does not cause an undue hardship on the employer's operation.

Religious Discrimination. Religious discrimination in employment includes treating an applicant or employee unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, and other terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

An example of religious discrimination might include job segregation or assigning an em-

ployee to a non-customer contact position because of actual or feared customer preference, for example, due to an employee's religious clothing or grooming practices.

Religious Harassment and Hostile Work Environment. Harassment includes offensive remarks about a person's religious beliefs or practices, or even including something in the workplace if an employee instantly and repeatedly notices a connection to his/her church. Harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Accommodation. When an employer or supervisor is accommodating due to his/her religious beliefs, employers should consider the request and determine if it can reasonably accommodate the request. As needed, the employer and the employee would engage in an interactive process to discuss the request. Examples of common religious accommodations include flexible scheduling, voluntary shift substitutions or swaps, job reassignments or modifications to workplace policies or practices.

Retaliation. Retaliation against an employee is prohibited for filing a complaint, opposing an allegedly discriminatory practice, participating or assisting in a complaint proceeding.

If an employee filed a complaint about participating in a "Terry Fox Run" or donating up to a Halloween costume on the grounds that it violated his or her sincerely held religious beliefs, it would be illegal for the employer to retaliate against the employee for raising the concern.

As HR professionals, we can't possibly be an expert in all religions and customs. However, we can be respectful of individuals' differences, learn and consider thoughtfully those issues brought to us. Recognizing that we're all different in many ways and valuing the differences will develop and strengthen our core values of integrity, compassion and respect.

Ways HR professionals can help their employers and fellow employees:

- * be knowledgeable on regulatory requirements and be aware of various religious customs and events

STORYTELLERS FROM ALASKA SHRM

The Benefits of Association Membership



If there is one thing almost every person in the U.S. can agree on, it is the fact that the last few years have been financially challenging ones. Costs have risen, which has hit most people pretty hard in the wallet, but so have the demands being placed on our time. Even if you've joined one or more associations in the past, you might reasonably feel a little hesitation when you are looking at membership renewal. After all, what do you get in exchange for the money you spend to be part of a specific organization? Would your money, and maybe your time, be better spent elsewhere?

You are the only person who can really answer that question, based on your personal circumstances and your past experiences. But it is likely that your association can (and did) give you much more than you give them. If they don't, then maybe you don't belong in the right ones, or you aren't taking full advantage of the opportunities they can offer.

U.S. associations have their roots in British public law but they also have a great deal in common with the democratic ideals that formed this country. As early as 1215, a French writer and historian named John de Tequesville took a note through the U.S. and commented that one reason democracy was succeeding was because of the associations that had been formed within communities. People of all ages, economic circumstances, and dispositions would form

1,238,201 organizations focused on charity or philanthropy

Some of these associations and societies are registered under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. Philanthropic ones are organized under 501(c)(3). They have been tax-exempt since 1913 because Congress has recognized the benefits they offer to the public, under the theory that the government would have to use public funds to pay for these benefits if the associations did not exist. In other words, the government has traded a financial burden for lost tax revenue. Tax-exempt organizations are not allowed to make a profit that benefits private individuals. Any profits that are made are dedicated to providing better programs and initiatives that will benefit members and the general public.

These groups could not possibly survive if they didn't offer substantial benefits. They certainly would not be able to sustain a tax-exempt status. How much of a difference can association membership make? Here's one startling statistic to consider: the President's Emergency Initiative (PEI), which is a trade association, has found that 88 percent of the businesses that did in their field didn't have involvement in their trade association. If the right association membership might mean the difference between staying in business and failing, wouldn't you want to know that key advantage so you could stack the odds in your favor?

Association members can enjoy many professional advantages that are limited only by the resources you are able to invest in them. For example:

- * Association often help their members continue their educational and professional development by giving members access to exclusive opportunities, association events, conferences, and seminars. As a result of your membership in an association, you may have understood the most pressing issues for your profession, be informed about important developing trends, and find out about current or upcoming legislation

STORYTELLERS FROM ALASKA SHRM

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12 Global Tidbits

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The mission of the Alaska State Council is to be a strategic partner with individuals, businesses, community organizations, SHRM and NHRMA in order to encourage the advancement and knowledge of dedicated human resources professionals by providing communication and professional development resources throughout Alaska.

Alaska SHRM State Council *message*

Patty Hickok, SPHR, GPHR



Alaska is on the SHRM map!!



For the first time ever, the Alaska SHRM State Council has received the Platinum SHAPE Award for its 2012 activities! The Platinum award is the highest recognition that a chapter and state council can get. Not only that, we also found out that we were 1 out of 8 State Councils (out of 50, obviously) that got this designation! We are very excited about our accomplishments and our activities for 2013 are on track for a repeat performance!

This year we have already accomplished quite a few goals and this is a sampling:

- Received the 501(c)6 tax-exempt status from the IRS
- Partnered with Junior Achievement to teach Skills for Success at Central Middle School
- Held 3 complimentary, HRCI pre-approved webinars to date, with 3 more scheduled for the fall
- Lobbied for the Comp Time bill, that has passed the Senate and is now in the House
- Participated in Round Table discussions on a Market Analysis for Continuing Education and Training with the University of Alaska Anchorage Community and

Technical College and the Anchorage Economic Development Center

- Assisted with the reactivation of the University of Alaska Anchorage Student Chapter
- Contributed funds to the SHRM Foundation
- Our social media presence on Facebook has grown by 200%!!

Some of our upcoming goals include holding a SHRM A-Team event (A=Advocacy), releasing recently conducted HRCI certification survey results, scholarship award, lobbying during Capitol Hill visits in November and more.

We are not only working on goals for this year, we have started to tackle 2014 as well. We are happy to announce that the 2014 Alaska State HR Conference will be held May 12 -13, 2014. More information is available within this newsletter. We hope to see you all there!

We hope you all have had a great summer. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming webinars. Make sure to check our website at <http://alaska.shrm.org> for tons of great information. *



The Alaska SHRM State Council is proud to present its 2014 Alaska State HR Conference, "Energize and Engage." The conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel & Spa in Anchorage on May 12-13, 2014.

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Religious Discrimination, Harassment and Accommodation

By Anne Sakumoto, PHR
Diversity Director, Alaska SHRM State Council

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Throughout the year, individuals observe, celebrate and decorate their home or office for various holidays and events. In addition, some individuals choose not to observe or celebrate these same events due to their religious beliefs.

Most human resources professionals are aware that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination (or harassment) in employment based upon various protected bases, including religion. In addition, an accommodation for an individual's religious beliefs is reasonable if it does not cause an undue hardship on the employer's operation.

Religious Discrimination. Religious discrimination in employment includes treating an applicant or employee unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, and other terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

An example of religious discrimination might include job segregation or assigning an em-

ployee to a non-customer contact position because of actual or feared customer preference, for example, due to an employee's religious clothing or grooming practices.

Religious Harassment and Hostile Work Environment. Harassment includes offensive remarks about a person's religious beliefs or practices; or even includes proselytizing in the workplace if an employee insistently and repeatedly invites a coworker to his/her church. Harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Accommodation. When an employee requests an accommodation due to his/her religious beliefs, employers should consider the request and determine if it can reasonably accommodate the request. As needed, the employer and the employee would engage in an interactive process to discuss the request. Examples of common religious accommodations include flexible scheduling, voluntary shift substitutions or swaps, job reassignments or modifications to workplace policies or practices.

Retaliation. Retaliation against an employee is prohibited for filing a complaint, opposing an illegally discriminatory practice, participating or assisting in a complaint proceeding.

If an employee raised concerns about participating in a "Harry Potter Night" or dressing up in a Halloween costume on the grounds that it violated his/her sincerely held religious beliefs, it would be illegal for the employer to retaliate against the employee for raising the concern.

As HR professionals, we can't possibly be an expert on all religions and customs. However, we can be respectful of individuals' differences, listen and consider thoughtfully those issues brought to us. Recognizing that we're all different in many ways and valuing the differences will develop and strengthen our core values of integrity, compassion and respect.

Ways HR professionals can help their employers and fellow employees:

- be knowledgeable on regulatory requirements and be aware of various religious customs and events

- recognize that workplace celebrations should respect the diverse opinions of employees
- ensure that events are voluntary and employees aren't pressured to participate
- if you decide to allow employees to observe a holiday or event in the workplace, be prepared for dialogue if someone:
 - o indicates that s/he is offended or
 - o requests to not participate.
 For example, a birthday, "Secret Santa" or a Christmas gift exchange are events that certain religions do not acknowledge
- recognize that allowing decorations which some employees find offensive could contribute to creating a hostile work environment

As an example, some individuals specifically do not celebrate or participate in the Halloween parties or costume dress-up because certain concepts and characteristics, e.g. ghosts, witches, etc. are contrary to their religious beliefs.

More Resources.

For more detailed regulatory information, check out the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission compliance manual, Section 12 on "Religious Discrimination" at <http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/religion.html> and additional guidance at <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/religion.cfm>

Informative articles such as "Religious Inclusion Requires Year-Round Attention" by Rebecca R. Hastings, SPHR, September 12, 2012 can be found on the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) website.

The following University of Missouri website lists a number of religions and events with dates helpful for planning purposes <http://diversity.missouri.edu/get-involved/religion/holidays.php>

Although it's difficult to know everything about the many different religious customs, being authentic and open to hearing about different religious customs and employee's needs will benefit an HR leader and his/her organization. For diversity purposes and the valuing of differences, this is yet another way to expand one's personal and professional horizons.

Don't miss this final resource! A complementary and HRCI pre-approved credit webinar sponsored by the Alaska SHRM State Council. It is scheduled for November 1, 2013 on "Religious Discrimination, Harassment and Accommodation in the Workplace." The webinar will be led by Sean Halloran and Doug Parker, Littler Mendelson. Be on the lookout for an email coming your way or visit <http://alaska.shrm.org> for registration information on this and other educational opportunities. ★



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The Benefits of Association Membership



If there is one thing almost every person in the U.S. can agree on, it is the fact that the last few years have been financially challenging ones. Costs have risen, which has hit most people pretty hard in the wallet, but so have the demands being placed on our time. Even if you've joined one or more associations in the past, you might reasonably feel a little hesitation when you are looking at membership renewal. After all, what do you get in exchange for the money you spend to be part of a specific organization? Would your money, and maybe your time, be better spent elsewhere?

You are the only person who can really answer that question, based on your personal circumstances and your past experiences, but it is likely that your associations can (and do) give you much more than you give them. If they don't, then maybe you don't belong to the right ones, or you aren't taking full advantage of the opportunities they can offer.

U.S. associations have their roots in British guilds, but they also have a great deal in common with the democratic ideals that formed this country. As early as 1830, a French writer and statesman named Alexis de Tocqueville took a tour through the U.S. and commented that one reason democracy was succeeding was because of the associations that had been formed within communities. People of all ages, economic circumstances, and dispositions would form

associations so they could support each other and help each other solve common problems, and he was impressed by the results.

We live in a much higher-tech world today than was the case in 1830, but that has only made personal service more valuable than ever. An association can give its members a sense of identity within a specific community. Members can network and participate in ways that would simply be impossible without the support of the association. Today's associations have the same goals that they've always had: combining efforts and working together in order to get things done.

It shouldn't be hard to find one or more associations that would benefit you. According to ASAE, which is the Center for Association Leadership, there were 90,908 trade and professional associations in 2009, as well as

1,238,201 organizations focused on charity or philanthropy.

Some of these associations and societies are organized under Section 501(c)(6) of the tax code; philanthropic ones are organized under 501(c)(3). They have been tax-exempt since 1913 because Congress has recognized the benefits they offer to the public, under the theory that the government would have to use public funds to pay for these benefits if the associations did not exist. In other words, the government has traded a financial burden for lost tax revenue. Tax-exempt organizations are not allowed to make a profit that benefits private individuals. Any profits that are made are dedicated to providing better programs and initiatives that will benefit members and the general public.

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- Associations often help their members continue their educational and professional development by giving members access to academic opportunities, association events, conferences, and seminars. As a result of your membership in an association, you may better understand the most pressing issues for your profession, be informed about important developing trends, and find out about current or upcoming legislation

that could impact you and your way of making a livelihood. You may also find leadership opportunities that will help you grow professionally.

- Members pool together their information, research, and statistics, both formally and informally. Although the Internet has created an unprecedented ability to access all kinds of information that were never easily available before now, there are still some kinds of information that can be hard to get. Associations can fill in that gap. They can do so in a much more personal way than the Internet usually does because of one simple fact: if you are an active member in an association, chances are good that other members have become your friends.
- People outside an association are often interested in ways to determine whether someone has the ability to provide a particular service. By setting standards, providing a code of ethics, and even offering certification to members where appropriate, it becomes easier for a member to credibly demonstrate excellence and integrity to current and potential customers.
- Associations provide jobs. People can make a career working for associations because it is essentially public service in any area you care to name: business, media and marketing, government relations, the law, information technology, and so on. Since the focus is on service, people who work for associations often have an enthusiasm for their work that you just can't find in any business that limits itself to profit-and-loss statements.



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Knowing that you are changing the world for the better, it turns out, makes for a pretty great job and enormous job satisfaction.

- Sometimes the best way to solve a problem is to find solutions as a group. Associations provide a forum for doing just that, either online or in person.
- Many people working together can do more than one person working alone. Associations are an ideal vehicle for putting together community service projects of all varieties. They are also candidates for group discounts.
- The community service that associations offer is invaluable because of the way associations can focus on specific needs. They can do the following:
- Step in when there is a natural disaster, urgent need, or some other emergency.
- Write product standards for a variety of industries that range from traffic and airline safety to children's toys.
- Provide the training you might expect from a graduate program so that people can more easily advance their education after they have received their degrees.
- You should know that the first year of membership is often the most expensive, especially if there is a one-time fee for your first year; the second year and after are often cheaper. If more than one person from an organization joins an association, sometimes there are group membership discounts, or different levels of membership. For example, if you are a student, there's a good chance that you could get a student discount.
- Having made the financial investment, however, it is important to realize that you need to follow that with an investment of your time. It's time for you to look around and see how associations can enrich your life, professionally and personally. Then follow through, and watch for wonderful results. ★



Rainmaking 101

The Basics of a Personal Network

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The term “rainmaker” comes from the Native American culture, where a rainmaker was a person who used magical powers to bring rain. The tribes needed rain in order to grow the crops they ate. If a drought went on too long, the people in the tribe would be weaker as they began to starve. The choice was to wait for rain and risk dying from starvation, or to move somewhere else.

Today, the term rainmaker refers to a person who brings revenue into an organization, usually in the form of clients. And interestingly enough, for those who don’t know how to make rain, the process does appear to be magical. Clients just keep coming, work makes its way through the firm, and the firm grows. In any given firm, depending upon the size, there are usually three to fifteen rainmakers who tend to generate an enormous amount of new client relationships. Their work brings in most of the new business for the firm. As a result, rainmakers are among the highest paid and most successful people in any organization.

Here are two well-known truths about any rainmaker:

- They have an extensive personal network of carefully cultivated relationships.
- They eventually retire or move on – because they can.

Your personal network of relationships is the most valuable career asset you have. Take it seriously. If you are not receiving or making at least one viable introduction a month – one that leads to a cli-

ent relationship – you are probably not fully engaging your personal network.

Currently, most professionals look towards Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter for their network of friends, colleagues and associates. Many people think participating in social media can automatically turn them into a rainmaker. If that were the case, however, everyone in any given firm with a Facebook account would have an endless flow of clients and could be making as much money as they could possibly want. Although social media gives you a set of tools, those tools are no substitute for knowing how to create the right kind of network.

Having a Facebook or a Twitter account only gives you a way to keep in touch. You can conceptualize and map your network all you want, adding friends and sending out tweets about the last book you read or where you had lunch, but if you can’t effectively request and broker introductions, all your activity adds up to a lot of nothing.

In the early 1990s, a psychologist named Robin Dunbar studied the social connections within groups of monkeys and apes. He theorized that the maximum size of their overall social group was limited by the small size of their neocortex, which is also known as the gray matter of the brain. Based on our neocortex size, Dunbar calculated that humans should be able to maintain relationships with roughly 150 people at a time. Interestingly enough, by science or default, Dunbar also found that many businesses and military groups organize their groups of people into units of about 150.



“Your personal network of relationships is the most valuable career asset you have. Take it seriously. If you are not receiving or making at least one introduction a month – that leads to a client relationship – you are probably not fully engaging your personal network.”

As a result of Dunbar's research, someone coined the phrase Dunbar's Number of 150. It is the maximum number of relationships we can realistically manage; that is, the number that can fit on an individual's internal memory card.

You may have heard of the game called 6 Degrees of Kevin Bacon. It is based on a concept called “six degrees of separation” and is based on research that was done by Stanley Milgram and Duncan Watts. They established that the Earth is one massive social network. Every person is connected to every other person by no more than about six intermediaries.

The theory is correct academically, but when it comes to meeting people who can help you professionally, you don't need six. You only need three. Three degrees is the magic number because when you're introduced to a second- or third-degree connection, at least one person out of the three will personally know the person you want to meet. Being able to draw on an existing friendship with the friend of a friend

is how trust is preserved, referrals really happen and business appears. So how many people should be in a personal network and who should those people be?

There's research for that. Several years ago, a sociologist named Brian Uzzi did a study of why certain Broadway musicals made between 1945 and 1989 were successful and others were not. The explanation he arrived at had to do with the people behind the productions. For failed productions, one of two extremes was common:

- The creative artists and producers all knew one another. When there were mostly strong ties, the production lacked the fresh, creative insights that come from diverse experience.
- None of the artists had worked together before. When the group was made up of mostly weak ties, teamwork and group cohesion suffered. This makes sense to people who follow sports; typically, a team with a lot of new people doesn't perform well.

Rainmaking 101 | *continued on page 14*



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The picture of the meet-and-greet between the Microsoft founder and Ms. Park on April 23, 2013, was front page news across the country. Some newspapers cropped out the offending pocketed hand, but most chose to highlight it.

“Cultural difference, or an act of disrespect?” the JoongAng Ilbo wrote in the accompanying caption.

“Disrespectful handshake? Casual handshake?” the Dong-A Ilbo asked.

While the presidential Blue House declined to comment, social networking sites were clogged with opinion.

“Even considering the cultural difference, there is an appropriate manner for certain occasions ... how can he put his hand in his pocket when meeting a leader of the state?” tweeted @msryu67.

Some news portals posted montages of Mr. Gates shaking hands with other world leaders, which showed that he has some form when it comes to informal greetings.

In a 2008 meeting with Ms. Park’s predecessor Lee Myung-Bak, Gates also kept one hand pocketed, although a 2001 picture with then-Pres-

ident Kim Dae-Jung showed him adopting a more respectful, two-handed shake.

“Gates is a casual man who’s not bound by customs so he shakes hands in this manner even when meeting heads of international organizations or top political figures,” Dong-A Ilbo quoted an unnamed friend of his in Seoul as saying.

Some Koreans suggested the media criticism was misplaced.

“Please, people ... don’t think your Confucian mindset is a universal norm elsewhere in the world,” tweeted @itanomaly.

Mr. Gates was in South Korea as chairman of the nuclear start-up TerraPower, promoting its project to develop a next-generation nuclear reactor.

Ms. Park, meanwhile, was seeking the Microsoft founder’s advice on her plans to build a “creative economy.” ★

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/bill-gates/10011847/Bill-Gates-disrespects-South-Korean-president-with-casual-handshake.html>



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CORE LEADERSHIP AREA DIRECTORS

Position Available, Diversity

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K. Michael Ward, SPHR, GPHR, Government Affairs Director.....907-277-1616
Ca'Trena Kendrick, PHR, Government Affairs Co-Director..... 907-317-9060
Bonnie Dorman, College Relations Director..... 907-244-4383
Rose Pisciotto, SPHR, Education & Certification Director...907-777-3489
Brandi Kirk, PHR, Education & Certification Co-Chair907-929-9217
Sandi Weber, PHR, Education & Certification Co-Chair...907-222-9350
Karen Zemba, SPHR, SHRM Foundation Director 907-777-8226
Monica Ulmer, SPHR, SHRM Foundation Co-Director907-777-8244

COMMITTEES

Patty Hickok, SPHR, GPHR, Programs907-602-5129
Terrie Stark, PHR, Hospitality..... 907-223-6726
Mary Hilcoske, SPHR, CLM, Awards & Recognition907-317-8868
Janice Wilson, Community and External Relations.....907-334-8322
Dale R. See, SPHR, Webmaster..... 907-240-1331
Christine Seal-McAlpine, SPHR, GPHR, Webmaster Co-Chair.....907-223-6077
Position Available, Public Relations
Christina Bloom, AIRS CIR/CDR, PHR, Sponsorship & Exhibitor 907-677-4974
Annette Brown, Volunteer Coordinator907-440-0380



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Kelly Mercer, Past Chapter President PHR 907-586-0227
Lisa Purves, Treasurer/Secretary PHR
Available, Membership/Diversity Chair
Joan Cahill, Website/Communications Chair SPHR..... 907-796-1541
Vacant, Education Chair
Vacant, Legislative Affairs Chair



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Alice Williams, PHR, College Relations Director 907-761-1302
Charlene Avril, Membership Director 907-746-7423
Gary Richardson, Programs Director 907-982-6850

Rainmaking 101 | *continued from page 11*

In contrast, the social networks of the people behind successful productions had a healthy balance: there were some strong ties and some weak ties. They had some established trust, but they also had enough new people in the system to generate new ideas.

You want to cultivate relationships that offer the same mix. You want strong allies, of course, but you also want acquaintances who can give you fresh information and ideas you wouldn't otherwise get. Working with people who can offer you the depth of a long-term relationship won't give you the width of fresh ideas. Develop a relationship network where you have both kinds of people. The ideal number within a personal network should be about 1,000 people, where your relationships with them have been built over at least a five-year period, and with 150 of them, at any given time, filling that 1st degree relationship space.

The goal can be broken down in the following way:

- Focus on 15 or 16 qualified prospects for your personal network each month. Make sure you include some people whose ties to you are weak, and others whose ties to you are strong. You should have more than 150 by the end of the year.



- Gather 150 of these relationships each year over a five-year period.

After about five years, you will have built your own personal network of carefully cultivated relationships; if you've done it right, you will then have the use of a network that will keep you in business year after year. *



2013 Northern Alaska Chapter Board Members

Teresa Brand Sharpe, PHR, President/Membership Chair.... 907-458-5740

Marianne Guffey, PHR, President Elect and Diversity Advocate..... 907-452-1751

Kathryn A. Strle, CPA, PHR, Past President/Membership Chair..... 907-459-7512

Sallie Stuvek, SPHR, Treasurer and Legislative Representative..... 907-459-1187

Debra Hagen, PHR, SHRM Foundation Representative..... 907-452-2000 x387

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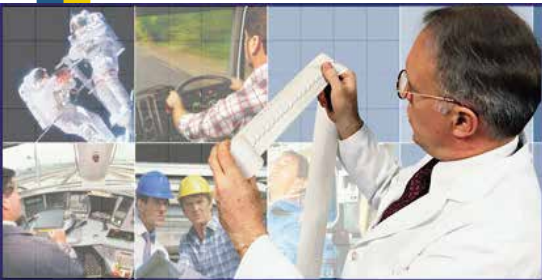


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