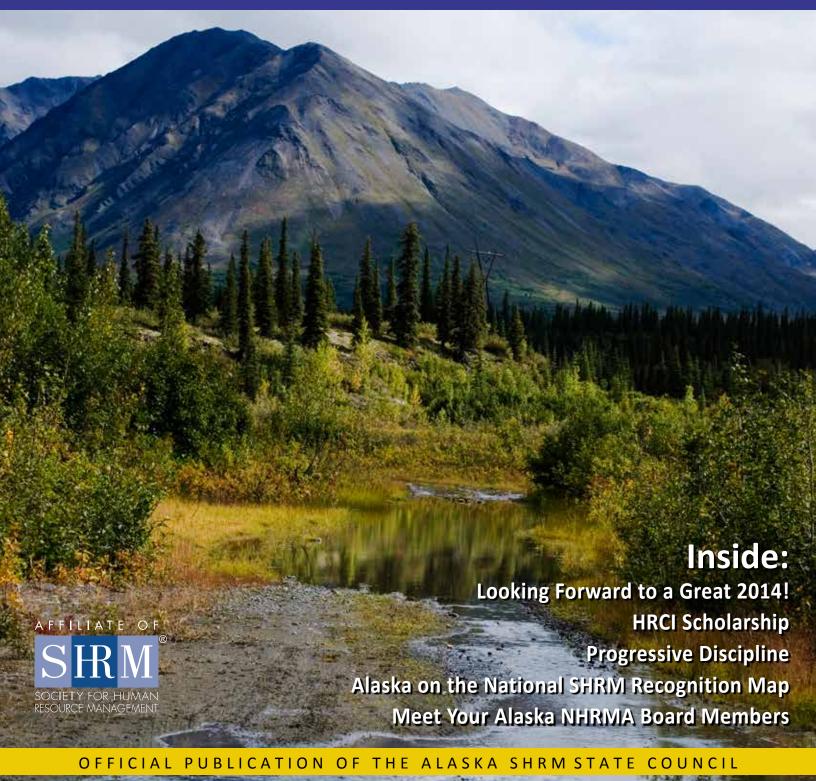
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HRCI Scholarhip



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The Northwest Human Resource Management Association (NHRMA) provides professional development opportunities for HR professionals and students in the states of Alaska, Oregon and Washington who are members in good standing with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

2014 ALASKA STATE COUNCIL SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



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Mission Statement

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

Nancy Miller, SPHR Director, Alaska SHRM State Council

Looking Forward to a Great 2014!



am very honored and excited to begin my term as the Alaska SHRM State Council Director for 2014-2015. Following in Patty Hickok's footsteps is no small feat. She led the State Council to new heights including the SHRM Platinum Excel Award and our first Pinnacle Award! I am confident that with the dynamic Board of Directors that we have this year, we will do great things and make her proud!

Last November, I had the pleasure to attend the SHRM Leadership Conference. Not only was I able to network with many wonderful HR colleagues from all around the country, but I also had the honor of accepting two Pinnacle Awards! The first on behalf of the Alaska SHRM State Council for our innovative webinar program "WEB-INAR: Alaska—Where Technology, Certification and Common Sense Converge". The second award was accepted on behalf of the Anchorage chapter for "The Last (Recertification) Frontier". 2013 was a great year for Alaska!

2014 is already shaping up to be another year of outstanding webinar programs. Our Pinnacle award winning webinar series continues with a full schedule throughout 2014. It is a wonderful way for us to meet the needs of our Alaskan members by offering complimentary, first class presentations while earning preap-

proved HRCI credits. Visit http://alaska.shrm.org for more information.

Our association with Junior Achievement is continuing this year. Our volunteers have been busy teaching 8th grade students at Central Middle School a program called "It's My Future". This program focuses on informing students of the different types of jobs available to them and the required education and training they will need for those jobs. The students also learn about resumes and interviewing skills. Last but not least they learned how to keep (or lose) a job once they have it! If this sounds like something you would like to get involved with, please let us know. We are always looking for volunteers to help out!

The Alaska State HR Conference will be here before we know it. Be prepared to "En"HR"gize and Engage"! Our conference is scheduled for May 12 – 13, 2014 at the Anchorage Sheraton. The two day conference has been preapproved by HRCI for 12.5 general credits and 9.5 strategic credits. We have a great line up of keynote speakers and presenters. We are trying something new at our evening event this year, Speed Networking! I will be sure to let you know how it turns out. If you would like more information, visit http://alaska.shrm.org/conference. **



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.

SAVE THE DATE & ADD A LINE IN YOUR 2014 BUDGET FOR THE CONFERENCE

- 2 Full Days –for the first time ever!
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SHEILA BALISTRERI

Sheila is the award-winning producer and anchor of the "Morning Edition" at Channel 2, where she has worked for the past 20 years. She has been recognized in the most recent five years with national awards from the Alaska Professional Communicators, previously known as the Alaska Press Women, for "Best Newscast, Television" and "Best Presentation, Television" and many other awards at the local, state and regional level. We are honored to have her as our Master of Ceremonies.

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SCOTT FERRIN SHRM's Southwest Central Field Services Director Energize and Engage: How Inclusion Supercharges Employee Satisfaction and Performance

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It's not too late to register. Your competitors will be here. Make sure you are too. For more information including registration, visit http://alaska.shrm.org/conference

HRCI Scholarhip



n 2012, the Alaska SHRM State Council started offering a \$500 scholarship towards HRCI Certification preparation. The scholarship was awarded to a member in Southeast Alaska in 2012. In 2013, the recipient was Carla Ibanez from Anchorage.

Carla entered the human resources profession in 2000, when she worked for the HR department of a Puerto Rico subsidiary of a multi-national pharmaceutical company. Prior to that, she has been an entrepreneur, as she founded and managed first a gift shop and then a restaurant-café.

Carla is originally from Bolivia, but lived in Puerto Rico and for the past three years calls Anchorage her home. Carla is bilingual. Her first language is Spanish, and she continues to find ways to improve her English. She has worked for the Pioneer Home and currently works as the HR Generalist for Anchor House, an assisted living home for mentally ill individuals.

Cable Starlings, Ph.D., her current boss says "Carla works as the sole HR staff for Anchor House. She came to us a year ago with great

energy and willingness to take on the Human Resources position. We had only budgeted for a half-time position, and Carla was eager enough to take on the job. With Carla's help we have been able to modernize our HR program."

Carla says that her goal is "to continue working as an efficient professional in the HR area. I would also like to work in a company with subsidiaries in foreign countries or with a vision to expand into international markets. I believe in challenges, and new geographical markets means opportunities to create and learn about maintaining quality standards inside and outside of the original country. I want to create changes and continue using successful strategies, a very important skill to develop."

Carla has a Bachelor's degree in Human Resources and Business from the Interamericana University of Puerto Rico. She is pursuing her PHR certification in 2014. We wish her luck in her efforts and congratulate her as the 2013 Alaska SHRM State Council HRCI Scholarship recipient. *



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ometimes businesses hire people whose performance doesn't live up to the initial expectations. Sometimes the problem isn't so much about performance as it is behavior. Either way, you already know you can hurt your business if you hire the wrong employee, but you will hurt it even more if you don't put a comprehensive, consistent procedure in place to use when employees present problems. You might even be able to redirect problem employees so they can be assets instead of liabilities.

One of the best procedures is something called progressive discipline. It starts with training. You can only expect employees to live up to your expectations when you have given them a clear understanding of what you require of them as employees. The usual way to do this is through job descriptions and employee handbooks.

Once employees understand your expectations, the progressive discipline generally consists of the following steps:

• An oral warning: The oral warning is more complicated than it might seem. For example, a manager can only reasonably give an employee an oral warning after the employee has been

- trained and then counseled about the specific problem. If you haven't trained the employee adequately, you don't have grounds for complaining about noncompliance. The first goal is to find out whether an employee understands what you want to see in terms of behavior and performance. If the first conversation is not enough to correct the problem, though, then the supervisor needs to have a second conversation. Document any conversations you have about the problem in one memo or more, and place the documentation in the employee's file.
- The written warning: If the problem still exists after the oral warning, then it is time for a written warning. A written warning consists of two parts: a written discussion about why the employee's behavior or performance is a problem, and a list of one or more potential consequences if the problem is not corrected within a certain amount of time. Depending on how valuable the employee is, a manager might choose to provide multiple written warnings. For example, perhaps it has been a while since the last warning, you think you were not clear enough, or you are pretty certain the employee misunderstood you.

- Suspension or demotion: Sometimes you don't have to apply the worst possible penalty that is available to you. Perhaps suspending an employee temporarily, or moving the employee into a lower-level job, would be enough. If you do decide to suspend someone, it's a good idea to have a standard way of proceeding with that as well. For example, you might want to start with a one-day suspension and work up to a five-day suspension, if necessary, over time.
- Termination of employment: If the time specified in the written warning has gone by and the employee's behavior or performance are still a problem, or the employee just refuses to cooperate, then the best solution might be letting the employee go.

The key to being effective about progressive discipline is documentation. You need to keep detailed documents so it is clear that you have followed your own procedures and given the employee every chance to correct performance and behavior. Also, you should keep an eye on the amount of time that passes. Maybe someone has earned the right to move backward in the process as well as forward. On the other hand, you don't want problem behavior to continue indefinitely. Letting a problem drag on too long makes you look ineffective — not the message you want to send your employees.

You might feel uncomfortable about the idea of disciplining employees, but the reality is that discipline has a vital role in the workplace:

- Everyone benefits when they know managers are going to follow a specific disciplinary procedure that is fair and is consistently applied to all employees.
- Discipline can correct performance and behavior so employees
 can comply with the standards and expectations you've set.
 Obviously, the best outcome is not firing someone. Doing that
 is expensive; it will cost you in lost productivity and higher
 SUTA payroll taxes. Not only that, firing someone can cause
 bad feelings, especially when the process is done poorly.
 Instead, the goal is helping all employees succeed in your
 specific business environment.
- Give employees a chance for self-defense. Sometimes you will find that an employee has a good case to make. You might be able to correct problems you didn't even recognize you had.
- Discipline encourages all employees, not just the problem ones, to live up to the expectations set by the company for their behavior and ethics. Having a standard doesn't just tell you when employee behavior is a failure; it also tells you

- when employee behavior is a success. Use that fact to your advantage.
- Discipline shows a good-faith effort on the part of your business to follow an impartial process when dealing with any employee problem so that if it does become necessary to terminate someone's employment, it will be clear to everyone that the company was fair and gave the employee every chance to correct whatever problems existed.

You may be surprised to realize that your employees appreciate having a well-documented, fair process for working through employee problems in a timely way. Even though nobody wants to see another employee lose a job for what seems like arbitrary and unfair reasons, people also don't want to see another employee getting away with obvious bad behavior. Making the effort to try and correct behavior, and firing someone only when necessary, will reassure your remaining employees that you aren't weak or a fool. These are good points for them to understand about you.

To make your progressive discipline program succeed, you will need to do the following:

- Write a formal policy. It should be included in employee handbooks and in any documentation about how your company works that you will be giving to employees.
- Train your managers so they know how to implement the progressive discipline program.
- Spend the time and energy to make sure you document and follow up with problems. You might want to consider having someone be present as a witness or to take notes during any disciplinary procedure. Just don't choose someone who is a peer of the employee being disciplined. You could also allow the employee to select someone to act as witness. The idea is to balance not embarrassing an employee with making sure that the process is open, fair and impartial.
- Recognize that a progressive discipline program can alter
 or suspend the rules of at-will employment until it becomes
 clear your best alternative is actually firing an employee.
 Being scrupulous about how you implement the plan, and
 demonstrating patience throughout the process, works to
 benefit you in the long term. That way, no one can accuse
 you of being arbitrary or not giving an employee enough of a
 chance.

The goal is to use the weakest effective action so that you don't escalate any situation unnecessarily. That doesn't mean going through the steps has to be rigid, though. There might be cases where it is appropriate to skip some of the steps. Suppose you find out an employee is stealing, fighting, or using or selling drugs or alcohol. In a case like that, you may have to just fire the employee immediately. However, even that can be explained ahead of time in your formal policy. *

Alaska on the National SHRM Recognition Map



he Alaska SHRM State Council and the Anchorage (ASHRM) Chapter were honored in November 2013 at the SHRM Leadership Conference in National Harbor, Maryland. Nancy Miller, 2014 Director of the Alaska State Council, accepted the awards on behalf of the two groups.

Both organizations received a Pinnacle Award – the highest honor given to SHRM state councils and chapters for highly notable contributions to the human resource profession. Created in 1991, the award is the highest achievement SHRM state councils and chapters can attain, and it honors programs that exceed the standard activities of SHRM affiliates in enhancing the creation of effective HR management.

The Alaska SHRM State Council got its first Pinnacle Award for its revolutionary program (907) WEBINAR "Alaska—Where Technology, Certification and Common Sense Converge." As you already know, our webinar program is in its fourth year. We are able to provide relevant and timely information to all our Alaska members on a complimentary basis – and all the programs are HRCI pre approved! At SHRM's request, we have recorded a (yes) webinar to walk any chapter or state council through the steps of creating similar programs. The recording can be found on the SHRM's webpage at http://www.shrm.org/Communities/VolunteerResources/Pages/Alaska2013Pinnacle.aspx

The Anchorage chapter got its fourth Pinnacle Award. This time, it was for ASHRM: The Last (Recertification) Frontier. This is a program entering its 9th year of existence, in which the Anchorage chapter has provided HRCI pre approved programs at all its monthly

luncheons. Any certified professional holding the PHR/SPHR could get all recertification credits over the 3 year recertification period by attending the monthly programs!

Some of the past ASHRM programs that have received the award include:

- 2007 ASHRM's Partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage's Mayor's Diversity Week
- 2002 HR & Order
- 1998 HRCI Certification Study Group Project

A recording of the steps to recreate the program can be found on the SHRM website at http://www.shrm.org/Communities/Volunteer-Resources/Pages/Anchorage2013Pinnacle.aspx

"Winners of this award are SHRM affiliates that have shown leadership in the HR profession through innovative and forward-thinking programs," said Henry G. (Hank) Jackson, president and CEO of SHRM. "Their efforts are a testament to our members, HR professionals, and their commitment to aligning people and business strategies. This year's winners offer solutions to timely and real-life challenges facing workplaces today, including the skills gap and helping military veterans return to the civilian workforce."

A special recognition goes out to Patty Hickok, SPHR, GPHR, for leading the efforts on both of these initiatives since their inception. Winning programs selected from nearly 73 applications received a \$1,000 prize, given by ADP Inc., which has sponsored the award for over 20 years. *

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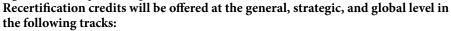
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he Northwest Human Resource Management Association (NHRMA) provides professional development opportunities for HR professionals and students in the states of Alaska, Oregon and Washington who are members in good standing with the Society

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THIS MAGAZINE IS DESIGNED AND PUBLISHED BY MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS INC. 801.746.4003



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