

CLEVELAND SHRM

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CLEVELAND SOCIETY FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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LETTER FROM THE CLEVELAND SHRM PRESIDENT

Stephen Ligus



Welcome to 2017!

This year promises to be an active one for the HR community! Already we have seen an injunction stopping enforcement of the new overtime rules that consumed so much attention in 2016. There is near certain change that will come to the health insurance programs offered to employees with the promised repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act. And soon we will be into the throws of debate over a new Supreme Court nominee that may shape the Court for years to come.

Meanwhile, many employers continue to struggle with finding qualified candidates to fill the positions that they have available; finding ways to maintain competitive employee Total Rewards programs that meet the needs of multi-generation workforces; and, ensuring that they are compliant with ADA, ERISA, EEOC, NLRB, ACA...the list goes on.

Yes, 2017 promises to be a year of change! What we promise is to provide programming that will help to keep our Cleveland SHRM members informed, competitive and compliant!

As I begin the final months as President of Cleveland SHRM, I would like to take a moment to highlight what our team has ready to deliver on that promise.

NOHRC Conference

This year's conference will be held Thursday, March 9th and Friday, March 10th. The Speaker Committee has put together a tremendous schedule including strategic HR planning,

recruiting compliance and more. Please be sure to visit www.nohrc.org to review the complete schedule and register for the conference.

Special Interests


Throughout the year, our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will be delivering content to provide the latest information about the specific effects changes may be having on the HR field. However, more importantly, best practices to help you to understand and manage the effects on your organization. With seven areas of specific interest, our SIGS provide content that is specific to a deeper dive in direct areas covering Total Rewards, Legal, Learning & Development, Diversity, Recruitment, Education and HR Technology.

Monthly Programming

I am excited to announce that once again our calendar is set for all meetings through the end of the program year. We look forward to having you join us for our monthly meetings in person whenever possible, but, if you're not able to be there, attend through our live webinar option launched in 2016. Please check the registration links for further details. And if you registered for the luncheon, but your plans have changed, let us know and we are happy to provide the login information so you can join us on the webinar.

CSHRM Foundation

Cleveland SHRM remains committed to advancing the HR interests and education of our HR community. Please see the overview of the CSHRM Foundation later in this newsletter.

In closing, thank you for continuing to support Cleveland SHRM and choosing us as your HR organization of choice. We look forward to serving your needs throughout 2017! 

Should you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas anytime at stephen.ligus@hylan.com.

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TOP NINE TIPS FOR INCREASING YOUR PROJECT MANAGEMENT ACUMEN

Val Grubb

Managing projects can be challenging, especially if they span multiple divisions, time zones, and even countries. When project management is done wrong, it can destroy careers (or even companies!). But when it's done right, it can help vault you into senior leadership.

Short of obtaining your project management professional certification (a great idea, by the way), you can also develop your project management skills by following these 9 tips. They can help you improve your ability *right now* to lead projects to successful completion!



1. Define the goal in absolute terms.

Defining what's "in" and what's "out" forms the foundation of your project plan and provides direction to the various teams and departments involved in its implementation. Before the project starts, make sure everyone understands what the goals are (including deliverables and their requirements). Once the project is under way, keep teams focused on its primary objectives and don't let them get distracted by ancillary issues that can often pop up on large, complicated projects (save those for round 2).

2. Define quality expectations.

Failure to meet quality standards can have serious negative consequences for your company. In addition, the cost of preventing mistakes is typically much lower than the cost of correcting them. Defining quality constraints (in areas such as meeting stakeholders' needs, aligning with company culture, targeting customer needs, and providing accurate and consistent results) *before* the project begins will ensure that teams understand that how goals are delivered is just as important as meeting them.

3. Pick the most qualified team members.

If you've ever managed a project, you know that many team members are selected because of their availability—not their qualifications. But if you want your project to succeed, you must have the best people working on it. Before picking your people, create a list of the skills needed for major tasks, then evaluate each possible team member's skill set against those lists. You should also evaluate each individual's ability to learn new things and work with others (critical attributes for anyone who's part of a large team). Once you've selected your team, clearly define each person's roles and responsibilities (including time frames for their completion). Although availability should not be the determining factor, it is still important, so make sure that key team members' priorities have been adjusted so they can give their best work to your project.

4. Determine communication tactics for your team.

Many project problems can often be traced to poor communication—or the lack of any communication plan at all—within project teams. Defining communication expectations before the project kickoff puts communication on the project schedule and ensures that team members stay fully informed right from the beginning. More importantly, a good communication strategy enables early identification of problems—and their solutions.

An effective strategy addresses these questions:

- Who will provide regular updates?
- What will be communicated within the team and when?
- Where and how will the team communicate?
- How does the communication plan change if team members are spread across the USA (or are scattered around the world)?

5. Identify risks and constraints.

The project leader's goal is to anticipate what can go wrong two or three steps down the road and mitigate those issues before they arise. He or she must also manage customer expectations, because risks (including those associated with ensuring the availability of resources such as employees, vendors, suppliers, technologies, and equipment) occur throughout the life of a project.

6. Hold team members accountable.

To make it easier to hold team members accountable for deliverables and timelines, get their buy-in on these issues before the project starts. Connect their involvement to the larger project and to the success of the division (or company), and make it clear that you'll regularly report the team's progress to each member's manager and to senior management. Give feedback to any team member who fails to meet deadlines—

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don't ignore the problem or fill the gaps yourself. If his or her performance doesn't improve, be persistent in pursuing a solution (which may involve escalating the issue to higher-ups), particularly if the problem will affect the timeline or other project-performance requirements.

7. Communicate regularly with stakeholders.

On projects with multiple stakeholders, a tight project schedule can make it difficult to keep everyone updated. However, regular communication helps maintain excitement and buy-in from both team members and senior leaders. Make updating stakeholders regularly a priority and go easy on yourself by following this quick formula:


- Progress since last reporting period.
- Scheduled and actual completion dates of major tasks.
- Progress that was not completed.
- Progress expected next reporting period.
- Any significant challenges.

8. Follow up and follow through.

When problems, questions, or challenges arise, roll up your sleeves and get in the trenches to identify the necessary steps to get things back on track. If, before the project begins, you understand how the team will handle changes or setbacks, you'll find it easier to react quickly to any problems that do appear.

9. Achieve closure.

Get your client's signoff that the project was completed to his or her satisfaction. Then conduct a post-implementation audit so that future teams can learn from your mistakes - and successes.

A strong, disciplined approach to tackling projects both small and large can help you ensure success consistently. 



Valerie Grubb is the Principal of Val Grubb & Associates Ltd. which she founded after holding a succession of leadership roles within major corporations including NBC Universal, Oxygen Media, InterActiveCorp (IAC) and Rolls-Royce, plc. She specializes in coaching and training for senior leaders. Valerie obtained her BSME from Kettering University and an MBA from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. Her book entitled

Clash of the Generations: Managing in the New Workplace Reality was published from Wiley October 2016.