JACKSON COUNTY Chamber of Commerce
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CHAMBER News

EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS THIS SPRING IN JACKSON, MI

Casey Hansen / Marketing & Development Manager

As the snow melts, the grass gets greener and flowers start to bloom, a new energy buds among Jackson, MI as spring arrives. Winter gear is put away and out come the frisbees, sunglasses and golf clubs. Spring in Jackson, MI means anticipation for the summer and fun and excitement for all ages.

Spring is the perfect time to get outside and explore the beauty of nature in Jackson, MI. With so many trails, parks and outdoor attractions, Jackson remains an excellent destination for any outdoor enthusiast or anyone craving some fresh air. Experience Jackson even offers a helpful guide to experiencing trails in Jackson, MI. Download Experience Jackson's most popular guide at ExperienceJackson.com/trails.

Golf remains a spring favorite for many as well. With the courses being closed over the winter, there is no better feeling than finally getting the clubs out to touch up on your golf game on a warm sunny day. Experience Jackson offers a plethora of golf resources to visitors and locals on ExperienceJackson.com/golf. Check out the Tips & Secrets Guide to golfing in Jackson and you will be a pro in no time. There are even golf itineraries for weekend or weeklong golf trips to Jackson, MI. The most popular resource is the annual Stay & Play Golf Packages that are offered in partnership with local golf courses and hotels each spring, summer and fall. These include a great room rate at one of the participating hotels paired with excellent discounts available at participating golf courses. New this year, any golfer that books a golf package will receive complimentary specialized golf gear courtesy of Experience Jackson.

Each year spring also brings the anticipation of upcoming events, whether in person or virtual. Get information on Jackson's upcoming events like the Fairy Festival, Free Jackson County Museum Day, Southern Michigan Winter Beer Festival, the Orthopedic Rehab Specialists Race Series and many more by visiting ExperienceJackson.com/calendar.

WHAT DOES A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DO?

Craig Hatch / President and CEO
Jackson Chamber & Experience Jackson

Every community should have a Chamber of Commerce with the goal of furthering the interests of local business by hosting events, training, informing, advocating, and charitable work.

A base membership gives access to member to member discounts, training programs, networking events, and a whole lot more. Valuable for sure if utilized. It's unlikely that you will find any group or association, that with a classic membership you'd have as much at your disposal.

The exceptional value of a chamber is reaching out with a challenge or a need. We cannot always accomplish your goals when asked, but we are one of the biggest resources you have. Why are we such an asset? Because we are connected. The Chamber has hundreds of businesses, community leaders, county officials, city officials, and training programs at their disposal geared for your growth, your organization, and our community.

It is not to say we know all the CEO's, Presidents, Owners, and VP's. It is to say that we know many important people in the community, like you! We are connected to the community.

Chances are your organization, employees, volunteers, sales, and the community you serve are in Jackson. The Chamber is by far the largest and most successful organization within that community whose sole purpose is to grow our commerce. Being a part of that community is easy. Getting the most out of it is up to you.

A Chamber of Commerce is not a "magic button" to achieve success. You will get out of it what you put into it, but the value of belonging to The Chamber is immeasurable. There aren't clean, concise metrics that show what impact being a Chamber member has directly on your business's sales, profits, growth, and reputation. By having a Chamber Membership you are provided the opportunity to actively participate in creating your success and positively affecting the overall success of your community. A Chamber of Commerce serves with a goal of providing the best possible opportunities for local businesses and the community to thrive and grow.

*Content written by outside sources do not reflect the views & opinions of the Chamber.

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CHAIR:
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VICE CHAIR:
Mollie Bolton | Edward Jones Investments

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR:
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TREASURER:
Chrissy Siders | TRUE Community Credit Union

SECRETARY:
Jeff Beal | Jackson Public Schools

AT-LARGE:
Kyle Hockley | Picture This ... Jackson
Cory Richardson | Stop 1 Insurance Agency
Stuart Kail | Walton Insurance Group

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Andy Hawley | JTV
Valerie Herr | Ella Sharp Museum
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Teri Ogg | Manpower Inc
Steven Patch | Lally Group, CPA's
Dr. Daniel J. Phelan | Jackson College

YOUR CHAMBER STAFF

The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce staff is fully dedicated to your success and will continue to protect your business, connect your business, and grow your people.

CRAIG HATCH
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Contact Craig for:

- Organizational Leadership
- Strategic Vision
- Financial and Operational Oversight
- Long Answers to easy questions
- Board of Directors for Anchor Initiative & Michigan Works! Southeast

CRAIG@JACKSONCHAMBER.ORG

TIM BOOTH
EVENTS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

Contact Tim for:

- Event schedules and info
- Advocacy and Legislation
- Professional development opportunities
- Stories about DIY Projects gone wrong
- Board of Directors for Versiti

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PATRICK O'DOWD
MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Contact Patrick for:

- Business and community connections & introductions
- Promotional opportunities or suggestions
- Membership benefit questions
- Board of Directors for Home of New Vision, ARE Inc. and Center for Family Health -Ambassador

PATRICK@JACKSONCHAMBER.ORG

CALLIE MASTEN
FIRST IMPRESSIONS ASSISTANT

Contact Callie for:

- Member information
- Any and all questions about #JacksonMI
- Currently looking for opportunities to serve our community

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MARY SCHUESSLER
ACCOUNTANTING DIRECTOR

Contact Mary for:

- Any question on billing or invoices
- Accounting best practices
- Puns, riddles, or general humor
- Was a part of daVinci school Board for many years

MARY@JACKSONCHAMBER.ORG

KELLY SHARRER
PROJECTS & OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Contact Kelly for:

- Board communications
- Event registrations and payments
- Building or leasing opportunities
- Questions about Member Information Center (MIC)
- Stories of sloths told slowly
- DDA - Board of Directors, ALPACT (Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust) and JOBstar

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$15 MINIMUM WAGE, NO THANKS

Legislative Update

Tim Booth / Events and Community Affairs Director / Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

I am guessing you have heard there is some energy in DC to double the federal minimum wage from $7.25, where it's has been for over 10 years, to $15 by 2025. Michigan's current minimum wage is $10.65.

Raising people out of poverty should be a main concern. But $15 an hour? This is a foolish solution at an unprecedentedly bad time for small businesses in Jackson County.

Firstly, one size doesn't fit all. Does $15 an hour in New York, Los Angeles, or Dallas work? I don't honestly know, don't live there. I am much more experienced and confident that a $15 minimum wage isn't good for Jackson, Springport, and Concord. There's no comparison. Not by a damsite.

I recently heard at the barbershop, where wisdom is as plentiful as clippings on the floor, "The government can order businesses to a minimum wage, but the government cannot order how many people that businesses employ or how many hours to give 'em." Yup, I would agree with that wholeheartedly. But that's just the tip of the iceberg of consequences as some people innocently salivate over such a windfall.

Job losses are the most obvious outcome, but such a drastic change would have many more unintended consequences. The Congressional Budget office found that a $15 minimum wage would pull 1.3 million workers out of poverty. That, in and of itself, is great. But at the cost of between 1.3 million and 3.7 million jobs. It would also simultaneously reduce family income by 9 billion.

Beyond fewer jobs and reduced hours, a $15 federal minimum wage would drive up deficits, increase inflation, interest rates, raise food prices, make childcare unaffordable for many, increase outsourcing and encourage businesses to automate lower paying jobs.

An increase of the federal minimum wage of over 100 percent would have disruptive impact on the economy, particularly small business. Some will be of the mindset, "Those greedy corporate fat cats can afford it. Take it from their inexcusably offensive profits."

Let's be clear. 98% of American business are companies with fewer than 100 people. Half of American workers are employed by small business. Many small businesses in our community are often just trying to stay afloat, much like their workers. Consequently, that explanation as to where the estimated 5 billion in costs for the first year of such change would come from is not entirely accurate.

This minimum wage could perhaps have the worst consequences for first time, lower skilled, less educated, and younger workers. The precise groups intended to be helped. The loss of these employment opportunities, and the significance of not gaining work experience at an early age, could often lead to a lifetime of lower earnings.

Frankly, many of these workers are not capable of contributing more than $15 an hour value to an organization until they have more experience and/or education. Unfortunately, both of which would be more difficult to obtain with the reduction of entry level jobs (again in part because some of the jobs that didn't produce $15 an hour in value went the way of automation) and the lack of that income to invest in additional education.

Additionally, how are people with more experience, education and more complicated jobs going to understand making close to minimum wage? What seems to be an initiative to help those struggling at the bottom of the economic ladder may very well find that rung gone entirely.

Local influence of a minimum wage, a wage that is manageable for employers and appropriate for the economy, supply, demand, cost of living and in due course, a competitive job market, is the best way to produce enhanced economic opportunities for all.

THANK YOU
Renewing Members

Modern Machine Tool Company
80 Years

Pioneer Foundry Company
73 Years

Alro Steel
71 Years

Emmons Service
62 Years

Rehmann
62 Years

Art Moehn Chevrolet
58 Years

Jackson College
55 Years

Jackson Glass Works
50 Years

Jim Winter Auto Group
50 Years

OmniSource Michigan
49 Years

Marcoux, Allen, Bower, Nichols & Kendall, P.C.
47 Years

Jackson YMCA
45 Years

Ladwig's Culligan Water Conditioning
43 Years

Krupa's Boat Mart
41 Years

Manpower
41 Years

Specialty Eye Institute (36)
Baymont Inn & Suites (35)
RW Mercer Company (35)
JFP Benefit Management, Inc. (33)
ALLEGRA Marketing, Print, Mail (32)
Ambs Call Center (32)
Jackson County (29)
Meade, Wheeler Financial Group (29)
Paramount Wealth Management (29)
Plating Systems & Technologies (29)
Big Brothers Big Sisters (28)
McCleer Power (28)
Thinking Real Estate (28)
Garcia Clinical Laboratory (27)
Country Club of Jackson (26)
True Community Credit Union (26)
Applegate Heating & Air (25)
GPGR (25)
LifeWays (25)
M.I.S. (25)
Jackson County Fair (24)
Marvin Huizenga (24)
Boyers Tool & Die (23)
Blake Woods Medical Park Surgery Center (22)
Nonprofit Network (22)
Accident Fund Insurance (21)
Aeroquip Credit Union (21)
CITGO (21)
JTV (20)
Bella Notte Ristorante (19)
Knight's Steakhouse & Grill (19)
Mid-Michigan Mechanical Contractors Association (18)
EXIT Realty 1st (17)
Automated Logistics System (16)
Barker Weber Insurance Agency (16)
Good Earth Real Estate (16)
CertainTeed Corporation (15)
(SCHRMA) (15)
Springbrook Meadows (15)
Jackson Coffee Co. (14)
Junior Achievement (14)
Northwest Community Schools (14)
Willbee Transit-Mix (14)
Willis & Machnik (14)
Tripp's Auto Shop (13)
Reynolds Management (12)
Full Spectrum Solutions (11)
Jackson Host Lions Club (11)
Pentar Stamping (11)
Airmaster Fan Company (10)
Delores Jackson (10)
Edward Jones - Mollie Bolton (10)
GuideStream Financial (10)
Northwest Tool & Machine (10)
Elm Plating (9)
Industrial Steel Treating Company (9)
Mortgage 1 (9)
Tamrox Automotive (9)
Vermeulen Furniture (9)
Advertising Solutions TODAY! (8)
D.E.P. (8)
Save the Date Events & Décor (8)
Aware (7)
Fitzgibbons Fleet Fabricators (7)
Johnson Sign Co. (7)
Minuteman Sewer and Drain Cleaning (7)
PC Solutions (7)
Best-One Tire & Service (6)
Effectv (6)
ITC Holdings (6)
Jackson School of the Arts (6)
Jackson Speedway (6)
Klavon's Pizzeria & Pub (6)
Richmond Brothers (6)
WLNS-TV 6 (6)
Beltone Hearing Aid Center (5)
Center for Family Health (5)
Commonwealth Associates (5)
Dawn Food Products (5)
D.H.H.S (5)
Kubota of Jackson (5)
RE/MAX Irish Hills (5)
Smiles on Wheels (5)
Special Olympics Area 19 (5)
US Drive Right (5)
Arbors at Lakeside/Heritage Place at Lakeside (4)
Comfort Keepers (4)
Fritz Advertising (4)
Graphics 3 (4)
Meiers Lombardini Lemanski Insurance (4)
State Senator Mike Shirkey (4)
Technique (4)
Vision Tire & Auto (4)
Arbor Hills Veterinary Clinic (3)
Ceramic Filters Company (3)
Dahlem Conservancy (3)
Ralph Nichols Group (3)
Emerald Outdoor (3)
Forty Nine South (3)
Hampton Funeral Homes (3)
Kelly Imports (3)
Leland K. Basset (3)
Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists (3)
Pro DJ's (3)
Prolific Family Chiropractic (3)
Save Our Youth (3)
Vito's Espresso (3)
Worthington Specialty Processing (3)
308 Brass Rail (2)
Andy's Pro Shop (2)
Bullseye Pest Defense (2)
Charles Schwab (2)
Cook Foundation & Flatwork (2)
Flick's Plumbing (2)
Lean Rocket Lab (2)
Level One Bank (2)
Michigan Heating and Cooling (2)
Moretz Technologies (2)
O&W (2)
Partnership Park Chiropractic (2)
Alzheimer Association (1)
Ballet Chelsea (1)
Crown Talent Assets (1)
Dance Illumination (1)
Dr Martins Foot & Ankle Clinic (1)
Linda Furgason (1)
Intuitive Memories (1)
Jackson Candle Company (1)
Kroger (1)
Martini Spa & Lounge (1)
Meridian Wealth Management (1)
Midbrook (1)
MI-SBDC (1)
Neighbors of Jackson (1)
On Two Wheels (1)
Our Neighbor's Keeper (1)
Precise Test Lab (1)
The Brokerage House (1)
The Crazy Cowboy (1)

WELCOME *New Members*

Avenue Auto
Leader Level Membership
2703 W. Michigan Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202
517.780.0022

Auto Merchants
Leader Level Membership
2424 W. Michigan Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202
517.789.7161

Wilcox Lawn and Landscaping
Partner Level Membership
3027 Blue Ridge Rd.
517.206.7709

Kingston Properties
Classic Level Membership
Jackson, MI
734.330.1865

Multum Media
Classic Level Membership
133 W. Michigan Avenue
Jackson, MI 49201
517.945.6010

First Glimpse
Classic Level Membership
1035 Laurence Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202
517.784.1814

ZenBusiness
Classic Level Membership
Austin, TX
512.814.6420

K & J Tire and Auto Repair Northwest
Classic Level Membership
2025 W. Parnall Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201
517.784.2522

K & J Tire and Auto Repair Spring Arbor
Classic Level Membership
8029 Spring Arbor Rd.
Spring Arbor, MI 49283
517.990.9690

Jackson Healing Clinic
Classic Level Membership
Jackson, MI
734.219.3314

George D. Lyons and Associates
Classic Level Membership
205 W. Franklin St.
Jackson, MI 49201
517.841.6021

Adler Mortgage Team
Classic Level Membership
1035 Laurence Avenue
Jackson, MI 49202
517.803.4732

KickStart Nutrition
Membership Provided by Monster Motors
105 5th St.
Michigan Center, MI 49254
517.513.3128

4 Tha Soul
Membership Provided by Monster Motors
107 Hague Avenue
Jackson, MI 49203
517.936.9432

Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
Nonprofit Membership Level
606 Greenwood Place
Jackson, MI 49203
517.788.4239

Soar Jackson
Membership Provided by Printer Source Plus
Jackson, MI
517.212.0035

Soar Café and Farms – Soar House
Membership Provided by Printer Source Plus
300 Brown St.
Jackson, MI 49203
517.787.4830

Tompkins Historical Society
Membership Provided by Experience Jackson
10138 Tompkins Rd.
Rives Junction, MI 49277
517.569.2100

Chamber Committee Members
POSITIVELY IMPACT THEIR ORGANIZATION

Tim Booth / Events and Community Affairs Director / Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

At the organization's basic, and most important level, the Chamber's commitment to its members is to Connect their Business, Protect their Business and Grow their People. It is our obligation, as the caretakers of the fidelity of that mission, to provide our members those opportunities.

Chamber Members, big and small, have countless decisions to make with regards to staff; engagement, attitudes, schedules, productivity, retention, compensation etc. Chamber Members, big and small, have countless decisions to make with regards to their exposure, brand, awareness, and image, etc.

The Chamber's six volunteer committees (Jaxpo, Ambassadors, Leadership Jackson, Economic Luncheon, MLK/Challenge Day, and Public Policy & Advocacy) can positively influence all those critically important efforts, simultaneously.

Firstly, and most importantly, leadership buy-in is key. As is the case with any successful chamber membership, there is work required. The organization, at its highest levels must support, encourage, and acknowledge this service for maximum benefit to the organization, the employee, The Chamber, and the community.

Once endorsed, the advantages of staff involvement with a committee begin with the personal and professional development of that committee member. While generously giving of their time and talent, they will develop, and or enhance, transferable skills of leadership, organization, confidence, and communication. They also are presented with the opportunity to develop and demonstrate skills that they might not otherwise have the occasion to use at work, participating in something different than their typical day to day responsibilities, benefiting the organization at the same time.

Not only can it create awareness of your organization, but Chamber service also helps attract and retain staff in a whole new way. People want to be a part of an organization that gives back. Millennials and Gen Z are engaged with perks that aren't necessary about getting, but giving.

Encouraging a community focused, chamber member culture sends a message of responsibility towards community. One to give back and do good by, both the organization, the employee and the community in whole. You never know what unexpected relationships can be born out of this effort.

Lastly, involvement with a Chamber committee can aid in creating a positive and supportive work environment where employees feel respected and help with a better overall working environment. Staff satisfaction and retention can be a challenge with some organizations. It might be challenging to increase pay or vacation time. Encouraging employees to take time for community involvement/ chamber involvement is seen as pushing your team, providing opportunities to better themselves and advance. Such commitment and encouragement to more closely work with the chamber and the community can ultimately and incrementally positively influence work environment and attitudes.

If you are looking for more or different ways to give back, enhance your team, your brand and presence in our community, I welcome that interest at tim@jacksonchamber.org or at 517-782-8221.

THE POWER OF INTENTION

Mollie Bolton / Financial Advisor, Edward Jones

Twenty-one years ago, I was strongly encouraged to serve on the Chamber Ambassador Committee when I took a job with a local business. It was explained it would enhance my community knowledge and broaden my connection network. I was skeptical. I am a Jackson native, have enjoyed living here and thought I knew my community, its assets, and dynamics. Deciding to take that step to become an Ambassador was literally life changing. As I began attending Chamber functions in various locations (typically businesses), I realized how diverse and extensive our community is. I also found new ways I wanted to volunteer, new places to explore, shop and dine.

Through making connections, a fellow Chamber member introduced me to a local financial firm looking for a marketing director. That introduction led to a new career path for me that has lasted 20 years. The value of serving on the Ambassador Committee and being involved with the Chamber is not isolated to business; the relationships made with the committee members and the community have supported me in personal ways through life's difficulties.

I vividly remember walking out of my mom's funeral to a group of fellow Ambassadors (friends) tearfully waiting to see me. This involvement and these connections led to being asked to serve on the Chamber Board of Directors and shortly after also invited to serve on the Chamber Executive Committee. As I prepare to become the Chair of the Chamber Board of Directors in 2022, I am so glad I was urged to take that step into becoming involved with the Chamber. That choice changed the lens that I saw my community & career through. I am proud and feel very privileged to be a part of a vibrant, intentional Chamber.

I have seen their skills and purpose from the inside; they work hard to create a healthy, engaging environment for their members. The key is to be intentional about your membership; be involved, be committed & make the time to connect; I guarantee you will not be disappointed.

The Jackson Chamber's AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE

Sponsored By experience jackson.com

- Michelle Shields, Jackson College
- Mollie Bolton, Edward Jones
- Tammie Furgason, Comerica Bank
- Tessa Simmons, County National Bank
- Tim Bair, Consumers Energy
- Vicki Steele Christoff & Sons
- Lisa Schweizer, Girl Scouts
- Kelly Lubbe, Pearle Vision
- Chelsea Woods, Soar Jackson
- Katie Osmon, Flagstar Bank
- Josh Solomon, JAX 60
- Joe Sharpe, Printer Source Plus
- Curtrina Brenner, Save the Date
- Christie Hale, Advance Employment
- Bridget Simone, Community Choice C.U.
- Adriene Davis, McKibbin Media Group
- Deanna Leicht, Securian Financial
- Kittyanne Hudson, Production Realty

TRUE EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Heather Harback / VP of People & Culture

A What if you had joy every day as you walked into work AND had joy every day when you left work to head home? While it's not something most people can expect to experience each day of their working lives, it certainly gives leaders at TRUE Community Credit Union a compelling cause to strive for.

As a part of the credit union movement, a people-first mentality is inherent in our approach to business. It is reflected in our TRUE commitment to our members, our communities, and to our team and carried out through our values – which include both a focus on people over profit, process, and product as well as our stewardship of the interests entrusted to our care. Those interests include our employees, who we lovingly refer to as our "wickedly-talented" team.

Talent development is a core function of our work in employee engagement and one of many factors we know contributes to creating joy for our employees. This means investing in sound training for an employee's current work, professional development for their future goals, and coaching to explore and unleash their gifts in new and meaningful ways.

Our LEGACY Leadership Development program is one avenue by which we invest in our employees. This program includes comprehensive assessments in emotional intelligence, 360-degree perspectives, and thinking and behavior styles. Grounded in a greater self-awareness, our employees are then poised to establish and deepen relationships across the organization and build key leadership traits and competencies.

Another approach is through valued external partnerships. TRUE Community has a long-standing commitment to send two employees annually to the Chamber's Leadership Jackson Program. This program provides incredible value to our team as they learn crucial leadership skills, form relationships with a diverse group of seasoned, new, and emerging leaders across various industries in our community, gain a greater understanding of our local government and agencies, and become plugged into the places they live, work, and play. We also partner with Jackson College in the Michigan New Jobs Training Program to ensure our growing organization leverages additional resources and supports designed specifically for the training and development of our employees.

In the first months of employee onboarding, our newest hires engage in #TRUEgiving by spreading random acts of kindness in our communities. Service continues to be reinforced through employee participation in community events, fundraising activities, and charitable giving. We encourage our employees to invest their time and talents serving on local boards and committees and by volunteering for any number of nonprofit and local service organizations.

As a service-minded organization, fostering a spirit of service through our hearts and minds and acts of service by way of our hands and feet are integral components of our employee development approach. Investing in our employees isn't a strategy we deploy, it's the embodiment of who we are. Together, we can all commit to the good work of making joy common in uncommon places.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Best Practices

JESSICA WEBB / BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, RECRUIT SPECIALIZED STAFFING

Employee development is the process during which employees, with the support of their employer, go through professional training to improve their skills and grow their knowledge.

Employee development has several "best practices" to apply within your organization. Leading best practices are continuous education, defined career paths, and demonstrated commitment. These are beginning practices in supporting professional development. Prioritizing employee development ensures that team members' skills continue to evolve following industry trends. These practices are to define and refine, an employee's skills and knowledge to enhance their career advancement.

What are the "best practices" of education to incorporate in your culture and environment? Facilitate a learning-first organization. The employee and the organization should work together to identify areas where relevant training is required for the employee to build competencies, and to fulfill future job requirements. Instilling processes of creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge with a hands-on learning culture encourages continuous learning which increases efficiency, productivity, and profit. It also increases employee satisfaction and decreased turnover. Education overall improves mindset among employees and builds a sense of ownership and accountability. The desire to learn should be encouraged and attainable for all employees.

"Best practices" of defining a clear career path establishes an explicit idea to the employee about future positions and job responsibilities. Management should communicate the organization's direction in defining career paths. Career paths are essential to accelerating employee engagement. Employee engagement improves retention and can be a motivational tool for advancement and to drive focus on becoming an effective team member. With defined career paths your organization becomes an experienced workforce, allowing you to benefit again from higher profits and low turnover. Career paths make it clear to value them as an employee, and you are committed to their success. Creating development paths and providing relevant training can take your team to the next level of performance.

Demonstrating a commitment to your employees is crucial to establish employee value within your organization. Value encourages commitment to work and in return, the employee will be more motivated and committed to the organization's values. Informing your employees their work is making a difference in the company requires paying attention to how your employees' unique abilities and personalities align with company values.

A best practice is to show the employee their value is more than just being a team member, that their value and commitment contributes to the organization's goals and objectives.

Remember, employee development "best practices" begins on day one when an individual joins your organization. Ensure induction best practices are focused on continuous education, defined career paths, and demonstrated commitment that is meaningful and not just a mere formality. Progress of best practices should be measured to find out how employee development plans are benefitting both the employees and the organization. Find out whether employee development plans are helping employees in their career growth. Is the organization experiencing higher profit margins and low turnover? If yes, your organization is supporting employee development, and your employees are truly dedicated.

THE ABC's OF SELF-CARE

Rebecca Calkins / Public Relations Coordinator, Lifeways

We all have stressors in our life but now with the added stressors of COVID-19, stress seems to be at an all-time high. Whether you're going into work or still working from home, you may be dealing with the uncertainty of the future, negativity in the media, or the isolation of social distancing. However the pandemic may affect you, we could all use some tips on how to practice self-care.

Awareness of Your Emotions and Limits

First, we want to recognize when we are in that peak stress and recognize when those big emotions, like anger, sadness, or anxiety, are showing up more frequently. Imagine you are driving around without a gas gauge, blissfully unaware of how much fuel you have left in the tank.

When the car stops moving, the situation becomes an immediate crisis. If we have a gas gauge, we will notice when that level getting closer to "E" and we'll get ourselves to the gas station to prevent the potential crisis of ending up on the side of the road.

The same goes with our stress levels. The better we are at noticing those warning signs of stress, the better we can cope with stress before it becomes a crisis. Those warning signs are unique to each individual: For some it may be physical signs like headaches, muscle aches or upset stomach for others it may be those big emotions or a shorter fuse when interacting with our friends, family and coworkers. We want to be able to recognize these signs, so we can recognize when we most need self-care.

Balance of Taking Care of Yourself and Others, Between Work and Play

Now that you recognize your need for self-care, you must find that balance between caring for others and caring for yourself. You can start with taking care of your body. Eating healthy, getting enough exercise, and getting enough sleep are not just important for your physical health, but they are important for your mental health too.

Find a balance between work and play as well. Taking regular breaks at work can make you more productive. Research published in the Cognition Journal shows that brief diversions vastly improve your focus. There are several time management techniques to consider. For example, the Pomodoro Technique uses a timer to break down work into intervals – traditionally 25 minutes in length – separated by short breaks.

Consider using those short breaks to practice some other self-care. You can try relaxation techniques like deep breathing, meditation, or mindfulness, start a gratitude practice, or just go for a walk to clear your mind. There are so many different techniques out there! Try searching YouTube videos, guided meditation apps, or looking for a gratitude journal. Find the technique that works for you. Not every self-care strategy works for every person, but there is a technique out there to help you cope with stress.

Connection to Yourself and Others

During this past year of COVID-19, social distancing has left a lot of us lonely. We may have to get more creative when it comes to socializing. Reach out to your friends, family, and coworkers – especially during this time. A text or an email is a great start but why not try a phone call, a Facetime, or a Zoom call? Try to create a regularly scheduled event like a virtual book club, a Netflix party, or online game night.

Generosity also happens to be a great self-care technique. Helping others improves your own sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of a mental health challenge. Noticing signs and symptoms of a mental health challenge and connecting to appropriate professional help is the most powerful thing you can do. Consider taking a free virtual Mental Health First Aid class to learn those noticing skills (LifeWaysCMH.org/MHFA).

Finally, once you have recognized a mental health challenge or crisis in yourself or your loved ones, connect to professional help. Crisis Services at LifeWays are expanding to be available on site 24/7 Spring 2021.

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COTERIE JACKSON

Michelle Deer, NCPT / Functional Movement Specialist / Founder - Coterie Jackson

With many of us spending the majority of 2020 at home, we have adopted or at least have tried to adopt a healthier lifestyle. As the workforce starts to come back to their offices, employers should consider encouraging employees to keep up with their healthy habits. Michelle from Coterie Jackson is going to share a few ideas on how employers can help their employees start or even continue their healthy lifestyle.

Tip 1- Whenever possible encourage your teams to take breaks throughout the day. Many employees don't feel like they can take a break and walk away. It is so beneficial for the brain and helps to reduce tension and stress. Encourage your team to take a walk around the office and maybe even going outside to walk. Desk breaks can also be beneficial, just close your eyes for (5) minutes and take deep inhales and exhales. Encourage lunch breaks away from the desk, just getting up and changing the scenery can help reset the nervous system.

Tip 2- When possible consider bringing in a trainer a few times per week to hold classes. These can be lunchtime or after work sessions. This will help employees avoid the excuse that they can't make it to the gym. More importantly it shows that you care about their health as an organization.

Tip 3- Create a reimbursement program. This is a very popular employee benefit some of my clients receive and they are super thankful for it as well. Allow employees to use the reimbursement

on Massage, fitness classes and even gym memberships. Some clients have given them the nudge to get moving or enjoy a massage, but most importantly it helps the local community.

Michelle is a functional movement specialist and founder of Coterie Jackson. She specializes in helping clients find movement that they did not think was available to them previously. Coterie offers virtual and in studio classes that focus on lowering stress and releasing tension from the body as well as 1-1 focused movement sessions. Our classes are kept small to allow each client the individualized attention they need without the "interruptions" that some big gyms may have. Coterie also offers corporate classes via zoom or in person for those employers looking to give their staff a much-needed break from the desk.

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REMOTE COLLABORATION

Kristen Rosas / DBI Business Interiors

Adapting to digital work takes a lot of effort, especially if you are part of a team working in a fast-paced, highly collaborative environment. Remote work has a ton of perks- no lengthy commutes, the ability to work in your PJs, and fewer interruptions are a few of the major ones that come to mind. Anyone who has worked remotely knows that working from home comes with its disadvantages, especially when your part of a team. Despite the significant challenges that remote teams can face, there are basic practices you can implement to overcome them and help your team thrive in a remote workplace environment. Here is our quick take on some strategies you can use to nurture team collaboration- while preserving everyone's sanity during social isolation.

1.Encourage Real-Time Communication

Video chat is a stronger, more valuable form of team communication than written or over the phone. Video chat helps you remember your teammates are real people and enables you to feel closer to them. Plus, it can convey important body language that is not captured in the other remote communications, meaning fewer misunderstandings and more effective discussions. Learn to love video chat and setup up fun ice breaker video conferences to help boost team bonding.

2.Set Solid Goals

At DBI, we realize that setting clear, detailed monthly goals can help remove any uncertainty around what is expected of your team members. It also improves remote communications, maintains productivity, and makes it easier to track progress. We strongly believe in over-communicating. Your team should always know what their goals for the month are. While it's easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day work, everyone on the project needs to focus on the set outcomes for the month, and how their daily work helps the team achieve those outcomes.

3. Encourage Friendly Competition

At DBI, we have a few different sales teams and have learned that a little friendly competition can go a long way. Aside from hitting goals, employees are sometimes driven by other small rewards. Competition is good for the soul and keeps the spirit alive. During your next monthly meeting, throw in a competition with the reward of a Grubhub or Visa gift card and you'll be sure to get your employees ready to sell or engage in the task at hand. After all, many of us are not eating out as much anymore so home delivery is always nice.

4. Setup Recurring Meetings

It's always challenging to find meeting times that work for everyone. To help remove this obstacle, find a time early on that works for as many people as possible and set it to be recurring. When people know a meeting is coming in advance, it's much easier for them to schedule their work and lives around it.

When given the choice, people are drawn to the places that make them feel the best and most productive. Why do people value being in the workplace? To collaborate, create, and innovate. To connect socially. To leverage the teams, networks, and processes that help them perform their best. To be inspired. Its purpose has shifted from where we had to work to a place that's more dynamic and experiential than ever.

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