

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2023 AND HOW EMPLOYERS CAN PREPARE



### Can You Imagine A Better Workplace?

#### THE EVOLVING WORKPLACE

Prior to the pandemic, we saw a shift happening in our workplaces – whether driven by the Millennials or the social/economic/political climate – employees are craving more flexibility, transparency, and growth opportunities in their work. This shift was accelerated by Covid-19, which forced employers to reevaluate their recruitment policies and rethink their retention and engagement strategies.

#### THE LABOR SHORTAGE CONTINUES

As the 'Great Resignation' continues, employers are finding it difficult to attract and retain top talent. The tight labor market is predicted to continue in 2023, and employers will need to be vigilant in how they are hiring. 'Quiet Quitting' has now reached an all-time high. This phrase was coined to describe the lack of motivation to go the extra mile at work and has caused employers to reconsider how they are motivating their workforce.

#### NEW WAYS TO ENGAGE ARE NECESSARY

Because of shifting employee expectations and the fact that employees have more bargaining power than ever before, employers may want to review their pay structures, benefit offerings, and how they are recognizing and rewarding employee performance. Additional resources, more effective communication, and fair and balanced policies are needed to make sure employees feel supported.



### HR IN 2023 – WHAT WILL CHANGE?

More companies will begin to automate their HR operations (if they haven't started down this path already!). Whether it's hiring and onboarding new hires, managing a performance review process, or communicating key employment policies, much of these tasks will be automated in the near future. Choosing the right HR platform will be critical to successful implementation. However, it's important to remember that the tool is only as good as the people using it. Please reach out if you are contemplating a new HRIS/payroll system – we have great resources ready to assist and can offer evaluation/implementation support!

# 2023 Priority – Retaining Top Talent



Study after study reveals these motivators as the most important to today's employees – company culture, effective management/leadership, competitive salary/benefits and flexibility.

Knowing that these areas are what employees care about the most, employers should closely examine where they stand compared to their competition and whether they can make improvements. One of my clients, for example, spent last year diving deep into management training and professional development to enhance the effectiveness of their managers. They made sure all managers led by example, held their teams consistently accountable, and maintained a 'true leadership' mindset. What a difference this made!

Another client conducted a compensation analysis and employee benefits evaluation to ensure they were being proactive and offering a 'total reward' package that was competitive in the market. When the analysis/evaluation was complete, it became apparent that improvements needed to be made – incentive pay and tuition reimbursement were added as well as other benefits that were particularly appealing to their workforce (i.e. additional PTO and flex work arrangements). Once again, slight enhancements made a significant difference when it came to retaining employees.

Two other ways I've seen my clients do a great job retaining top talent is by rewarding and recognizing their employees' hard work and dedication and also providing resources to employees to help with the plethora of 'burnout issues' – ranging from low grade anxiety and depression to full blown mental health or substance abuse issues. Employee Assistance Programs and other counseling services have enabled employees to get the help they need.

Below you will read about a 'gift-giving' company started by two incredible sisters. They work with organizations across the country in helping them design gift packages for their employees. This is a remarkable resource for employers looking for creative ways to show their appreciation for their employees. You will also read about a mental health resource that has provided businesses a cost-effective way to assist employees during tough times. There is no doubt that the pandemic and other external forces have caused employees to feel elevated levels of stress.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to these amazing individuals if you are looking for opportunities to enhance your benefits and invest in your people.

# SPOTLIGHT ON NICI & ANDI LUCAS, CO-FOUNDERS

## THE DAYS OF GIFTS

*Because every day is a gift.*

Nici and Andi Lucas are not only sisters, but they are heartfelt sisters who have always loved to give and receive gifts. It all started over 20 years ago when Andi was living in Boston and on crutches, suffering from a broken ankle. To lift her spirits, Nici, who was living in Ohio, sent her 12 gifts – representing the 12 Days of Christmas. Every few days, a box arrived with three or four gifts to be opened on certain days. It was the exact pick-me-up that Andi needed and many of their friends would say “I wish someone would do that for me!”

Nici and Andi started their gift-giving business with one simple mission in mind – to provide a multi-day gift-opening experience that would let the recipient know that they were cared about and appreciated. They recognized the inherent feeling we all get when someone takes the time to send a gift (or multiple gifts!) and how this can really make a difference in someone’s life.

After several years of success, Nici and Andi recognized that there was an opportunity in workplaces. They started to talk with HR professionals and other business leaders and realized their unique gift-giving packages would be ideal for employers looking for ways to reward and recognize their employees. It’s also a perfect holiday treat for co-workers, colleagues and customers!



For more information and spectacular gift-giving ideas, contact Nici Lucas at [nici@thedaysofgifts.com](mailto:nici@thedaysofgifts.com).



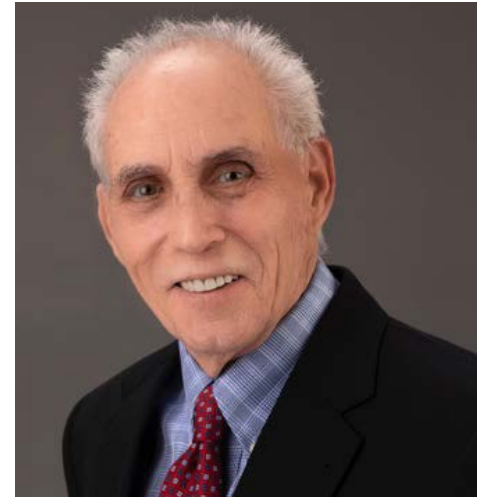
[www.thedaysofgifts.com](http://www.thedaysofgifts.com)

# Meet Bill Willis of Buckeye Health Alliance!

I had the pleasure of connecting with Bill and learning about his vast array of experience in healthcare and benefit solutions. Bill has worked in all size markets but has a heart for the small employer, nonprofits, and associations that are often overlooked and underserved in the insurance marketplace. Bill contacted me at the exact time I had been contemplating how to better assist clients in the 'mental health' space. Since the pandemic, many organizations have reached out asking how they can better support their employees who are struggling with mental health issues (since 1 in 5 employees face mental health issues).

While I often discuss an employer's legal obligation to provide time off or a reasonable accommodation from a legal perspective (FMLA, ADA, etc.), Bill reminds me that we must go beyond merely doing what the law says we should do. To really take care of our employees and provide them with the necessary support they need, employers can and should offer a resource for employees experiencing depression, anxiety, grief, anger, addiction, suicide and other health issues that can negatively impact a person's well-being. Many of my clients are recognizing how important it is to address these issues head on. And the organizations that are providing meaningful support for employees going through a difficult time have reaped the benefits of continued loyalty, productivity, and a thriving work environment.

Bill and Buckeye Health Alliance have partnered with telehealth solutions to provide a comprehensive care solution that addresses mental health needs. This is a standalone program and may complement existing plans. Features include zero-dollar copay, unlimited access to digital content, health coaching, and tele-therapy and psychiatry.



Contact Bill at 330.807.9991  
or  
[bill@buckeyehealthalliance.com](mailto:bill@buckeyehealthalliance.com)



## What Will HR Focus on in 2023?

In addition to enhancing benefits, retaining top talent and transitioning to automated HR tools, there are several other initiatives HR professionals and business leaders are focusing on to gear up for the new year. There is no doubt that the last few years have caused a historic amount of disruption in how we live and work and this will only continue into the future. Here's what many HR leaders are saying about the challenges and opportunities ahead:

1. Transforming managers to leaders will be imperative. As organizations and society evolve, so do the expectations for what managers are responsible for, making their roles increasingly complex. Managers can no longer afford to be individual contributors promoted only for their technical know-how. To help their companies grow and prosper, they must think like leaders and take on genuine leadership qualities. Today's work environments require managers-leaders to be more authentic, empathetic and adaptive. The days of a command-and-control style of management may damage a company's reputation, trigger high levels of turnover, and cause liability.

Continue on page 5...

Continued from page 4...

2. Companies will have to reevaluate their 'employee experience.' The future of work depends on employees developing the right skills to maintain high standards of productivity. This can only happen when employers help employees map out career paths and stepping stones to employee growth. Developing employees and creating an employee experience that includes investing in professional development for each and every employee will be key to an organization's long-term success. Employers must discuss a clear path with employees and support their growth and development to ensure they have the on-going skillset necessary to meet the future demands of the business.
3. HR policies, handbooks and forms must be written differently. Today's workers want to understand the 'rules' of the workplace and appreciate employers who have professional policies in place. However, they cringe when things become overly bureaucratic and want to feel that there is a healthy balance between rules and flexibility. Simplifying the employee handbook and your performance review and corrective action forms will be a welcomed change in 2023.

## Final Note...

As we head into the New Year, we are once again provided a chance to reflect on where we've been and learn from past mistakes. While we should always make sure to celebrate our wins and accomplishments, it's also an important time to reflect on "lessons learned." If you experienced a workplace challenge, struggled with hiring and retaining quality people, spent most of the year putting out fires and being more reactive than proactive, or faced your first EEOC or OCRC charge, it's OK. All we can do is learn from what happened and make sure we are prepared for future issues.

Over the last few years, I've recognized an important shift that I believe can help employers function more effectively and worry less about liability - KEEP IT SIMPLE. With employment policies, agreements, and any other HR documentation, keep it simple and straightforward (don't unnecessarily inundate your employees with legal jargon and wordy provisions that make employees feel overwhelmed and distrusting). Employees today want to understand what they are reading, and they want to know that the company's policies make sense and are aligned with the broader organizational goals. Lastly, establish a strong and authentic vision and mission within your organization... they can set a positive tone and be the guiding principles for all to follow.

As always, feel free to reach out if you need any employment law or workplace advice! We have a team of consultants, coaches and trainers that can be deployed depending on your needs. And, of course, happy holidays to all of you - grateful for your support, appreciate the opportunity to work with many of you, and wishing you a happy new year of possibilities, potential and prosperity!



Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. I will continue to share important information on relevant workplace topics and spotlight businesses and consultants here in Northeast Ohio making a difference. Feel free to reach out anytime at [stella@imaginehrconsulting.com](mailto:stella@imaginehrconsulting.com) or 440.897.1991 for more information.

*imagine* HR [imaginehrconsulting.com](http://imaginehrconsulting.com)