

Summary of 11th Annual HR Executive Conference

September 15-17, 2020 presented virtually

With an emphasis on the business significance and the financial impact of human resources leadership, this year's HR Executive Conference had three overriding themes. Each day consisted of 12 sessions (see Agenda), in turn developed through EFCG short presentations, frequent balloting, insightful comments from CHROs and HRDs and extensive Q/A interactions with registrants across the US and globe.

Day one topics emphasized where we have been and what has been learned in this unprecedented year. The initial topic covered the Industry Status, emphasizing the extent to which 2020 is both similar and quite different from prior years. The COVID-19 impact was then explored in the many dimensions related to employees, leadership, clients, families and communities. Participants then selected between assessing the contribution of technology in support of distributed work and new demands on the HR function or reviewing the change impact – and added requirement for – closeness of the HR leadership team with the top executives of the firm. In that session, the CEO and HRD of a firm, GeoEngineers, were co-panelists having many questions from attendees.

The focus of day two was on change leadership. The initial session addressed compensation, particularly the wide differences in salary reductions/withholdings and furloughs/layoffs experienced by a plurality of attending firms, counterbalanced by greater work in others. Perhaps surprisingly, HR firm leaders project the COVID-19 impact to be more severe in 2021 than 2020. Next discussed was the mental and emotional health toll taken this year, the positive actions to minimize/mitigate, yet the same conclusion that influences in 2021 will be very tolling. Participants then selected between exploring how to reinvigorate the talent management cycle as issues of recruitment, development and retention become heightened with changes in business levels or a more detailed focus on largely deferred mentoring processes corporate-wide, in-person leadership development, coaching and other such programs.

Looking ahead was the theme of day three, beginning with a focus on required catch-up in inclusion, diversity and equity, all of which require leadership action and funding of recruiting and developmental programming for women and minorities in order to respond to societal concerns and expectations. Attendees then selected between a focus on the challenges of cultural integration following an acquisition and on culture change generally or a session on workplace violence, prevention and mitigation. Everyone then came together to discuss the greatest future needs and challenges, primarily in gaining back everyone possible, in restoring incentive/bonus processes, in creating new forms of recruitment outreach for minorities and in emphasizing top-to-bottom leadership advancement of women and minorities by targeted developmental programs and career-enhancing assignments.

HR EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE 2020 SESSIONS, INCLUDING TAPES AND PRESENTATIONS OF ALL SESSIONS, ARE INDIVIDUALLY AVAILABLE OR ALL SESSIONS ARE AVAILABLE AS A PACKAGE

A/E/C INDUSTRY SUMMARY REPORTS ALSO AVAILABLE:

- 2020 HR Survey Results – Turnover, Talent Management, Diversity, T&D, Benefits and more
- 2020 Top Executive Compensation Results – Salaries, Bonuses and LTC for directors & officers
- 2020 Compensation Results – A/E/C industry professional, technical and support positions

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