



# HR HORIZONS



Helping Our Members Become More Effective HR Professionals

VOL. 5 No. 1

November 2009

## 2009 HR PEOPLE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Over 260 people from companies across Fairfield County came together on November 15 at the Stamford Plaza Hotel & Conference Center to celebrate HR excellence and applaud 23 individuals who were nominated by their colleagues as representing the "best in HR" in 2009.

Seven senior HR executives reviewed the applications submitted by the nominees and decided on four award recipients. They are:

- **HR Leader of the Year**  
Marie Mann, VP, Human Resources Neopost USA
- **HR Generalist of the Year**  
Mitch Podob, Manager of HR Connolly
- **HR Specialist of the Year**  
Beth Cooper, HR Director, Staffing Pepperidge Farm
- **HR Vendor of the Year**  
Kathleen Lundquist, CEO APT, Inc.



Mitch Podob from Connolly addressing attendees at the event after being named HR Generalist of the Year.

Attendees also heard from Dr. Scott Cawood, workplace strategist and former vice president of the Great Place to Work Institute. Scott more than lived up to his reputation as one of the "top 10" speakers at the SHRM National Conference.

In addition, the event's silent auction raised over \$3,000 for St. Luke's LifeWorks, a nondenominational charity based in Stamford.

Established in 2006 by SOCT SHRM, the HR People of the Year Awards recognize HR practitioners and service providers whose performance and contributions have significantly benefited their organizations, the Human Resources profession and the community.



The Southern Connecticut Chapter extends a special thank you to the sponsors of this year's event:

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## CHAPTER NEWS

The chapter will be holding its **annual holiday party** on Tuesday, December 8, from 5 – 9 pm, at the Sono Brewhouse in Norwalk. Save the date!



The Southern Connecticut Chapter of SHRM has announced its three **INROADS scholarship recipients** for 2009. INROADS seeks to increase business career opportunities for ethnically diverse students.



(Pictured from left: Margaret Judge, SOCT president, Matt Pacheco, Jasmine Grant, Crystal Davis and Dr. Nara Venditti, SOCT diversity chair)



If you're interested in serving on a chapter committee and becoming more involved in shaping future chapter activities, please contact Jennifer Pignataro at (203) 552-6683.

## OFFERS TO SHRM NONMEMBERS

If you're not a SHRM member, you can now take a "test drive" of SHRM's fabulous Web site and experience firsthand one of the great values of membership.

The SHRM Web site has thousands of resources to help solve any of your HR challenges. Customizable forms and policies, industry best practices, legislative news and more will save you time, energy and money!

Register today for **FREE ACCESS** to SHRM's member resources at [www.shrm.org/guestaccess](http://www.shrm.org/guestaccess). This offer

expires **November 30, 2009**, so register and get started today.

SHRM is also offering a special annual rate of \$145 (or \$.39 per day) for first-time members. Use code CHSWD to join online. Just go to [www.shrm.org/join](http://www.shrm.org/join).

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## PERSPECTIVES

### The Greatest Generation (of Networkers)

*[Excerpted from the Wall Street Journal, November 5. To read the entire story, click [here](#).]*

Because so many people in their teens and early 20s are in this constant whirl of socializing — accessible to each other every minute of the day via cellphone, instant messaging and social-networking Web sites — there are a host of new questions that need to be addressed in schools, in the workplace and at home. Chief among them: How much work can “hyper-socializing” students or employees really accomplish if they are holding multiple conversations with friends via text-messaging, or are obsessively checking Facebook?

Some argue they can accomplish a great deal: This generation has a gift for multitasking, and because they’ve integrated technology into their lives, their ability to remain connected to each other will serve them and their employers well. Others contend that these hyper-socializers are serial time-wasters, that the bonds between them are shallow, and that their face-to-face interpersonal skills are poor.

Online social networking while at work hampers business productivity, according to a new study by Nucleus Research. Almost two-thirds of those with Facebook accounts access them at their workplaces, the study found, which translates to a 1.5% loss of total employee productivity across an organization.

It may feel like a strange new world, but Holly Gallagher is among those who say it's time for educators and employers to embrace it. As a human-resources manager, she believes that as the generation now aged 15 to 24 enters the work force, managers must adjust to the new ways they socialize and communicate.

For instance, past generations accepted that corporations were hierarchical. There were supervisors, managers and senior managers, and you communicated your questions to your immediate superior. “Young people today want accessibility,” says Ms. Gallagher, 41. “If they have a problem or suggestion, they’ll email or text senior managers, or even the CEO. They don’t have the old-school notion that there are appropriate communication models. They’ve grown up in a freedom-of-information era.”

She thinks the constant text messaging among teens can serve as good preparation for workplace interactions. “In a lot of corporations, if something goes wrong, it’s because so-and-so didn’t talk to so-and-so,” Ms. Gallagher says. “But with young people, simultaneous conversations are always happening. This reduces the chances of not reaching success because the right people didn’t connect.”

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## WORKPLACE LAW

*[Excerpted from Jackson Lewis Legal Updates.]*

### New EEO Poster

Federal law requires postings in workplaces informing individuals of their rights under federal employment discrimination laws. The EEOC has published a notice revising its “Equal Employment Opportunity is the Law” poster to reflect changes required by the employment provisions (Title II) of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), which become effective on November 21, 2009. The new poster can be found at

<http://www1.eeoc.gov/employers/poster.cfm>.

According to the EEOC, the poster will be available in Spanish, Chinese and Arabic. Employers may want to update handbook policies to incorporate language concerning GINA, consistent with the new posting requirement.

### Proposed H1N1 Legislation

As concern over H1N1 and influenza-related illnesses continues to spread, legislation that would require employers to provide up to five days of paid sick leave per year to workers afflicted with influenza or other, similar contagious illness has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill applies to employers with 15 or more employees where workers comply with the employer’s directive to go home or stay home from work “because the employer believes the employee has symptoms of a contagious illness, or has been in close contact with an individual who has symptoms of a contagious illness.”

Covered employees would be entitled to an amount of paid sick leave calculated based on the employee’s regular rate of pay and scheduled hours of work. Small employers and companies that already provide five or more paid sick days per year would be exempt from the bill’s requirements.

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Vol. V, No. 1, 2009

HORIZONS is published by the Southern Connecticut Chapter of SHRM. Opinions expressed in this newsletter by members and consultants are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the chapter. Comments and ideas are welcome. Please send a note to the editor at [incompany@optonline.net](mailto:incompany@optonline.net).

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