



Monthly Strategies

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Delaware Paid Leave “PFML”

Below are changes to the original Insurance Program. Additional changes are currently under consideration.

- Employers may not require employees to use accrued paid time off (PTO, vacation or sick) before accessing paid-family/medical leave benefits.
- The program is clarified to be the “primary payor” for benefits: meaning the state program takes precedence, and employer or disability-insurance benefits must be coordinated accordingly (i.e., may be offset).
- For employers using a private plan option to satisfy their obligation they no longer have to submit full claim documentation to the state except in specific cases (appeal, audit, complaint, or inquiry) and applications for private-plan approval became available on a rolling basis not only annually.
- Employees filing for benefits must disclose outstanding child-support obligations and benefits are protected from creditor claims (except child support).

Year-end HR Checklist

The end of the year is a critical time for HR to wrap up key tasks, prepare for the next year, and set the tone for a strong start in January. Here's a comprehensive checklist of what HR should do before year-end:

Conduct Performance Reviews

- Finalize performance evaluations and feedback meetings.
- Ensure managers complete reviews for all team members.
- Align reviews with compensation, promotions, and development plans.

Review Compensation & Bonuses

- Confirm year-end bonuses, commissions, and salary adjustments.
- Benchmark roles for competitiveness in the market.
- Communicate changes clearly and confidentially.

Audit Benefits & Open Enrollment

- Close out open enrollment for benefits.

- Confirm benefits selections and ensure employee records are updated.
- Educate employees on any plan changes or new offerings for next year.

Update Employee Records

- Ensure personal info (address, tax forms, emergency contacts) is current.
- Verify I-9s, contracts, and other compliance documents are up to date.
- Digitize or archive files as needed for legal compliance.

Prep for Tax Season

- Review and finalize W-2s, 1095-Cs, and other payroll tax documents.
- Work with payroll providers or finance teams for accuracy.
- Set timelines for distribution (due by January 31st).

Evaluate Training & Development

- Assess training programs completed in the year.
- Identify skill gaps or development needs for 2026.
- Plan next year's professional development initiatives or budgets.

Conduct a Compliance Review

- Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws.
- Update employee handbooks or policies for the new year (e.g., leave policies, remote work, Drug & Alcohol Awareness, harassment prevention).
- Schedule any required compliance trainings.

Plan Workforce Strategy for Next Year

- Review staffing needs and turnover rates.
- Build or update the hiring plan for the new year.
- Set employee engagement strategies.

Recognize & Appreciate Employees

- Send holiday messages, gifts, or bonuses (if applicable).
- Organize end-of-year celebrations or recognition events.
- Highlight achievements and company milestones.

Close Out PTO & Leave Balances

- Remind employees of PTO carryover or use-it-or-lose-it policies.
- Encourage people to use time off, if appropriate.

- Update balances and communicate any policy changes.

Why Continuous Learning Matters

In today's rapidly evolving workplace, professional development is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity. Whether you're an employee, a manager, or a business owner, investing in professional development offers tangible benefits that go far beyond individual growth. It can enhance performance, boost morale, and improve an organization's overall success.

What Is Professional Development?

Professional development refers to the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, skills, and experience related to one's career. This may include formal education, certifications, workshops, seminars, on-the-job training, online courses, or mentorship programs. The goal is to help individuals stay current, become more effective in their roles, and prepare for future responsibilities.

The key benefits of professional development are:

Enhanced Skill Sets - One of the most direct benefits of professional development is the improvement of job-specific skills. Whether it's mastering new technology, learning a new management technique, or refining communication strategies, developing skills leads to better job performance and greater confidence in one's abilities.

Increased Job Satisfaction - Employees who feel they are growing professionally tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. Learning new things and being challenged intellectually helps prevent burnout and boredom. When organizations support learning, employees feel valued and motivated, which translates to increased engagement and loyalty.

Improved Career Advancement Opportunities -

Continuous learning helps individuals stand out when new positions or promotions arise. Those who invest in their own development often gain a competitive edge in the job market and are more likely to move into leadership or specialized roles.

Adaptability to Change - Industries are constantly evolving due to technology, regulations, and market dynamics. Professional development ensures that employees stay relevant and adaptable in the face of change. This flexibility is especially important in fields

such as healthcare, education, IT, and finance, where staying up-to-date is critical.

Better Team Performance - When individuals grow, teams grow. An organization with a culture of professional development tends to have more knowledgeable, innovative, and productive teams. Employees are more likely to collaborate effectively, share knowledge, and contribute to overall business success.

Attracting and Retaining Talent - Companies that invest in employee development often attract higher-quality candidates. In addition, current employees are more likely to stay with an organization that supports their growth, reducing turnover costs and building a stronger organizational culture.

Leadership Development - Professional development is essential for identifying and nurturing future leaders. Training and mentorship help high-potential employees develop the soft skills, strategic thinking, and emotional intelligence necessary for effective leadership.

Organizations looking to support professional development can take various approaches:

- Offer training programs and workshops
- Encourage certifications and continuing education
- Implement mentorship or coaching systems
- Provide access to online learning platforms
- Set up career development plans during performance reviews

Professional development is a win-win for both individuals and organizations. For professionals, it leads to growth, satisfaction, and career advancement. For employers, it builds a skilled, motivated, and future-ready workforce. In an increasingly competitive and fast-paced world, those who commit to lifelong learning are the ones best positioned to thrive.

By prioritizing professional development, we not only invest in individual careers but also in the long-term health and innovation of our organizations.

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