

- You're listening to HR Mixtape, your podcast with the perfect mix of practical advice, thought-provoking interviews and stories that just hit different so that work doesn't have to feel, well, like work. Now your host, Shari Simpson.

- Joining me today on the podcast is Josh Rock. Josh is the Talent Acquisition Manager with NUS Truck and Equipment in Minnesota. Josh is also the lead moderator of Job Hunt Chat the longest weekly job advice chat on Twitter. For the past 11 years, Josh's infectious energy and enthusiasm for career advancement and discovery lead him to speak to scores of colleges and job seeking groups across the United States. Hey Josh, thanks for jumping on with me today.

- Thanks Shari, good to see you again.

- So we are gonna do something a little different today. I have already tackled the Reddit HR questions so we're gonna tackle some Facebook HR questions today and I figured you'd be the perfect person to jump on and do this with me.

- Totally, bring it. Let's talk.

- All right, so again, bear with me 'cause some of these are long, so I wanna make sure that I read them word for word as they are presented. So here's the first one. "I'm an HR director for a nursing firm. It has come to my attention that one of our employees has an awful smell and open wounds soaking through his scrubs. He's in the operating room and we simply can't have this around patients in surgery. The hospital staff has confronted him about it but he insists he's fine and has started saying he's very upset. People thinking something's wrong with him since he is our employee. The hospital's now asking us to do something and honestly I wish they would've said something sooner. I was gonna start with ADA process but since he's telling everyone he's fine I'm going to assume this isn't going to help. Can anyone give suggestions on how we can remove him from the hospital without asking about his medical condition, physical condition or any other discriminatory questions? He's also older, so he's in that protected class as well."

- Wow, you know, being a talent acquisition manager, totally you know, something I don't run into very often but coming from healthcare for 70 years the easiest thing that I can tell you without that being my specialty is go to your policy show them the handbook about cleanliness, presentation. Explain to them the importance of not only protecting themselves from contagions but also their patients. Hang it on that not necessarily their individual situation, hang it on the policies of the organization.

- I absolutely agree. I think sometimes we run into these situations and this one's really specific but I'm sure those of listening have

all run into the employee who just consistently smells bad or has something else going on. Maybe they have really bad breath and you have to have that conversation. You can't avoid it, but you can do it with humanity, right? And just stick to the facts. I think that's the best way to approach it. Love that. All right, here's the next one. "It was recently brought to HR's attention team of one that an employee is making 13, sorry 13K more than his director. The employee that makes 13K more signed an offer letter in 2021. When I asked the finance team for kind of the background on it, they basically said they were having a hard time finding someone. So obviously since it's budget seasons the director sees his employee is making more by human nature. He's asking for an increase in salary however his salary's in line with other directors. So here's the question. Do we keep the employee at the higher rate since that was what happened since inception of his position? Do we lower the employee's salary? Do we increase the director's salary?"

- Oh, that sucks. What it tells me is people weren't in alignment in the offering stage. What they likely should have done is instead of increasing the the lower level person's salary to land the talent, what they should have done is gone with a one time, you know, bonus sign-on. Something to that effect to equates for the difference that they're making up. You never wanna overturn your apple cart I don't care what you're doing. This is something that I run into often leaders want to bring somebody they're so excited to hire candidate X, Y, or Z and they wanna offer the moon. I'm like, no, once you do, you can't come back from it. So instead, what I would do is focus on that those other benefits, the one time sign on and then when you're talking to them don't necessarily talk about the lump, talk about how that hourly rate would flux with that rate of increase. But what you're gonna do is make sure that they understand that their base rate is going to be an alignment with the rest of the people in that role under the comp structure. So now that you can't do that, 'cause you've already opened up Pandora's box, what you're going to do is offer to do a one-time adjustment for the director. You still need to keep your directors in alignment. You can't continue this issue of overturning the rest of your people. Do a one-time adjustment, see if that's something that they would understand. You know, go forward. You're going to have to figure out long term what you're gonna do for that one person and this director along with the other directors. Depending upon what your initial step is going to be for the time being. Start with a one-time adjustment and then really analyze what you're going to change going forward. The person that you brought in too high they're likely not gonna want to continue. If you bring them back down, you're you may lose that talent and that may be something that you have to decide. But for the time being to keep the director if that's who you really want to keep the one time adjustment may be a step that you can take. But yeah, next time really be thoughtful about what you're doing at the offer stage.

- I completely agree and you know you brought up a good point there. Is the director somebody you wanna keep? Maybe they aren't and I mean that's a whole nother question and conversation and how you handle that with grace and and honesty to that director. But yeah, completely agree in the beginning part of any offer stage, get creative. Like sometimes it's more PTO, sometimes it's, you know a tweak and a benefit offering. Sometimes you don't need to to pull that compensation letter, especially if you're gonna create, you know pay compression elsewhere in the org. So you gotta be really careful about that.

- Yeah.

- All right, question number three. Okay, so I need some ideas for a very specific recognition program at work. We are a construction company with our production employees being at different levels depending on their experience or skillset. My boss wants each level to wear a different colored t-shirt and thinks that would really make them feel proud of the level they are at and strive to get to the next level. I personally don't care for the idea as I'm concerned about the logistics, there's also a concern about the overall look in front of clients. What do those colored shirts mean? Also, what if the client found out what the colors mean and don't like the fact that they have a lower level employee working for them instead of a higher level one. So I also feel this would create division instead of unity amongst our production team. Long story short, what would be some better ideas that would express what my boss wants? But isn't t-shirt related?

- I love the idea of recognizing your employees. I do. So here's something that we've done here at NAS. We do anniversary pins and so for all your years of experience or years within the organization we give you a lapel pin with either a diamond for, you know, 10 years an emerald for multiples of five years or a whatever can remember what the third gem is for the individual years. And so what the lapel is then they can wear those on their shirt. It's something that they can, it's small it's not easily identified. They can also, you know, put a magnet on it instead and put it on their toolbox which may actually work well in construction but something for them to strive for. We had people with three diamonds that's 30 years with the organization. That's fantastic. They loved getting those. But me, you know, I'm a measly two year with NUSS so I only got two little, you know gems on my lapel and that's fine, I totally get it. But that may do that and get the same point across without having to have really outstanding shirts that people are gonna notice from afar. Plus, I don't know about you, but a construction site is not an aircraft carrier. We don't need all the different, you know colored shirts navigating the site. Yeah, it's gonna look like, I don't know, somebody threw glitter paint on a work site and have splashes of color everywhere go something simpler, a lapel pin or something or a button or something that they can put on their toolbox or a badge that they can put a

magnet on their toolbox. Something to identify that, give them that pride that they're looking for and their individual unity but also it doesn't stand out to the customers.

- I absolutely love that. I think the standout to the customers is is a really interesting point to think about. You know, something that we do in our org once you've reached the five year marker is you get access to like a secret swag store. We'll call it that. I dunno if it's a secret, but like there's only exclusive items you can get if you've been there five years, 10 years, 15 years, et cetera. And obviously it's all, you know branded by our organization. But it does create a little bit of like positive jealousy. Like, oh, where'd you get that? Like, oh, I've been here five years so I get access to the super secret swag store. So I love the pin idea and especially if it's something that you can convert to a magnet or maybe a patch or something like that. Great idea.

- Yeah Don't do the badge pullers because one, they break they're just, you know, half a cent at, you know Oriental Freight or something like that. I don't know.

- Right.

- Just don't do that.

- All right. Question number four, onboarding question. Do you require your employees to complete onboarding documents? Not just background check but also I-9, direct deposit info handbook receipts et cetera, either electronically or on paper prior to hire? Should this be considered work or unpaid preparation for work? How does your workplace handle it?

- I love this question. You know, for me, I use my HRIS system and onboarding tools to do all of this as much electronically as possible. I hate paper, one, because it puts the job on somebody else. I don't need my office manager to be assisting with this if it's as simple as somebody filling out forms on their own. So here at NUSS what we do is the pre-hire is not paid because it's them trying to get the job. They haven't been offered yet or they've been offered they just haven't been able to start yet. They have to do their drug test policy sign off. They have to do their background check form they have to do their EEO form. So those things are all sent through DocuSign. There's a plug shamelessly, that's who I use but it's easy and I just send it off after their email. They fill it out, they attach their two copies of their driver's license, front and back, comes back. I send all that off. I schedule their drug test with our local provider. That's done. Once they clear they're able to start, day one they come in and they do all of their day one paperwork. The I-9 forms, the direct deposits all that stuff is done electronically in our HRIS, which is fantastic. It makes it easier. They are paid 'cause they're onsite, they're

working for us and then they go in through the risk of their training. So yes, do it electronically. Yes, pay them because they are on site or remote whatever your work situation is. Since we're a diesel mechanic shop they are on site 'cause like, I don't think any of you have hydraulic lifts in your garages. Maybe you do. Good for you. We don't. I don't at least. And so yes, do that on site. Just make it easy. Try to do it through whatever your HRIS is. Try not to do it separate. If you can ease the experience, not only for you but anybody else who's having to work with that paperwork

- You can also make sure you're building time into day one for paperwork. I'm using that term.

- Yeah.

- Loosely, right? Even if you're doing electronically like build time in that for your place.

- Administrative functions.

- Right, right. Exactly, I'm gonna ask a follow up question here because Josh, I know that you do something kind of unique. We've talked about before and I think this is like kind of applicable, but you and I have talked about the recruiting process and making that easier. I'd love maybe if you could just kind of elaborate just a smidge on how you do that for people coming in the door. Because I think it kind of goes back to this question of like paperwork and electronics and getting people in the door.

- You know, there, as we all know in recruiting there's no golden bullet to success. And so one of the things that I do is I try to make it as seamless as I can for the candidates and for the hiring managers. One of the things that we do is we allow candidates to apply very quickly, very simply. They give us their name, their email, their phone number. I'm interested. Great, then I set a call with them and we have a conversation, but what are you looking to do? Tell me more. And it's at that point they send me the resume. Sometimes I get it before, sometimes I don't. It's all about engagement because for me I may be able to turn somebody from whatever they're doing in their career to what we're doing here. I do obviously utilize an ATS that, you know brings in candidates by the droves. I use all of the major mediums, Indeed, LinkedIn all that kind of fun stuff. And they do bring me candidates, but I know in blue collar environments that not everybody is gonna be using electronics where they are gonna be using it. They're all on, you know, Facebook, you know texting happy birthday to their mom and sharing pictures of their children or whatever. That's fine. They're gonna see ads from me and all they gotta do is a simple ad form that says tell me you're interested. Name, email, phone number. That's it. I try to keep it simple. The idea is to bring more people into the process and through engagement

and conversation have them A, self-select out because we don't have something that fits them where they live or where they want to work, or B, where the pay level is or C, where the skills are, through the conversation. I don't tell them no, however I tell them what I have and I let them self-select no.

- Hey, I love that and I wanted you to share because I think it's so important to think about recruiting from like less about a numbers and like more about the human you're talking to. I think sometimes in TA, we can get stuck in this numbers game of, you know, this many racks this many people in the pipeline, all that kinda stuff. And granted all those data analytics pieces are important. I'm not, you know, bashing them by any means. We all need to track that stuff but we can also have a human conversation create great experience at the same time.

- I love the ones that call me or message me and they're like, I'm interested. And I'm like, Hey Josh, from NUSS trucking equipment I got your information on Facebook, we've connected tell me more about what you're looking for. Now this is their opportunity to tell me their story. And it's through that story. I can say, okay, here's where you may be successful here's where the challenges will be for you to come into the organization. Where can we take it from here? And in some of those cases they're like, oh, okay. So in order to come join you I may have to go through a two year associates program and for a local college, great. Then where, okay, once you've got that then you gotta find housing in town. Great, then what. We talked through that really quick process. It's a 20 minute, you know, investment of my time but hell if three years down the road, they're a fantastic mechanic earning us \$200 an hour billable. Hell yeah, I'm happy with it. It's a small investment on my part to a huge investment for our organization and obviously for their experience overall.

- Yeah, for sure. All right, question number five. And our last one "our HR department of a couple of dozen people has had an internal team appreciation event annually. The supervisors pool personal funds to foot the bill for lunch for everyone and a gift valued at around 10 bucks to each of the supporting staff. I went along with this when I was new to the group but I'm a few years in now and I'm questioning why supervisors personal funds are being used. When it was time to make budget requests for the coming year, I included a request to my manager for the company to fund this event. It was meant "cooly" but I was later told that some funds would be available. I thought maybe this would mean a meet you halfway situation and the event would be subsidized. Ooh, I was pleased with some progress. Now it's event plenty time. And as one of the planners I asked how much budget would come from the company versus personal contributions and I was told it will all be personal contributions. Again, first question, am I nuts or am I maybe overanalyzing this is it normal for supervisors to spend their own money on this sort of thing? Second question, how would you

approach the about face on the budget decision? This is a small fries, I guess so I could let it go or should I call out the change and ask why?

- Oh my God, that's a huge one. You know, I personally have never encountered it in in my years of leadership, having to pay out of my own personal pocket for those types of situations. There's usually a budget or I'm able to expense it through my corporate P card, you know something to that effect. So I'm able to itemize that to the organization later on down the road. But paying for out of pocket, I mean I guess what if I'm out with one of my team members and we're out to lunch, I may just pay for it myself but a whole team, a, you know supplied meal and a gift on top of that, I mean you better be paid pretty well for that to compensate for that kind of thing. But if you're, you know, living above mid I would kick back and say, all right guys, enough's enough. We need to figure something else out. That's just me. If you're not comfortable with it, speak up. My guess is that there are probably others in the organization who aren't comfortable with it as well and it's now time to turn the tide. We don't always have to succumb to well this is the way we've always done it change doesn't happen. If we continue to kick that can. So bring it up be vocal and if it is a deal breaker, trust me there are two point something million jobs still out here. You can definitely find something else if you really don't want to hang on that I wouldn't it's not that I'm being chinsky at all but it's just, there's a fundamental part that we're recognizing our people inside of the organization. It is an organizational expense not a Josh Rock expense or Susie or or in your case Shari, you know, it's, I mean, come on would you want to do that or is Paylocity be nice to say, Hey we'll take care of that for you. Hey, take your team to the suede closet.

- Right, right. Yeah, no where I worked though would definitely not be the case. You know, I think this one's interesting because I think it probably, if I would make an assumption obviously we don't have all the details. It probably started off from a really good place that those managers got together one day and were like, Hey we wanna do something super awesome for our employees and then just kind of not knowing the long term ramifications. But this goes back to culture, right? Does the organization value this from a cultural perspective? And if they do, they'll put the money there. If they don't, they won't. And that's, I mean, that's sad for the employees and for those managers, but it's where you have to kinda make that decision is like, you know am I working for an organization where the culture aligns to us providing recognition this way?

- Yeah.

- I mean, I'd rather stop by on occasion and pick up, you know, two dozen donuts from Krispy Kreme on my way to the office, you know, because one I can get 'em, buy one get one free, you know, value

matters, right? But yeah, I mean doing this grandiose gesture outta your own pocket, meh, there's gotta be a better way.

- Absolutely. Well Josh, as always it was a great conversation. I love tackling some of these questions from the universe for us to see what other people are out there dealing with. So if you have a question that you'd like to submit follow the podcast, shoot me an email. We'd love to connect. And Josh, as always, thanks for jumping on with me.

- Thanks Shari. We'll talk to you soon.

- I hope you enjoyed today's episode. You can find show notes and links at the hrmixtape.com come back often and please subscribe, rate and review.