

- Hey, and welcome to "PCTY Talks." I'm your host, Shari Simpson. During our time together, we'll stay close to the news and info you need to succeed as an HR pro. And together, we'll explore topics around HR thought leadership, compliance, and real life HR situations we face every day.

- Joining me today on the podcast is Corinne Tirone. She is somebody who has been with me since the very beginning. She is the director of government relations here at Paylocity and has a really interesting perspective on compliance, both internally on the things that we deal with here, as well as externally and making sure that you, as HR practitioners and business leaders, are kept up to speed. So Corinne, thanks for taking a few minutes to chat with me.

- Oh, I'm happy to be here, Shari. And I gotta tell you, it's an honor and humbling to be the last "PCTY Talks" episode guest. I was thinking back to when we started this and how many amazing conversations you've had since then. So I'm very excited to be the bookend because I feel like you've got a really great pool to draw from.

- And if you're listening and you were just shocked by what Corinne had to share, this indeed, yes, is our last episode of "PCTY Talks," but it is not the end for us. There is something new coming, so make sure that you listen to the commercial at the very end to let you know what is coming next and our next evolution. So it was important, Corinne, that you'd be my bookend because you were here at the very, very beginning. So I appreciate that. You know, when I think over the last five seasons of the podcast, let alone the last couple years for HR, our function has always been important. But during COVID it was elevated to a level that it should have always been at, let's be honest, but in a way where leaders started to see what HR could bring to the table in a different way and really spotlight the important conversations that we need to have and how we can collaborate with other leaders and the things that they wanna accomplish. So we've seen that shift in our roles, but we've also seen a shift in what employees expect out of organizations. You know, we've talked a lot in this post pandemic, new endemic space about what that means as a function of HR and what we're trying to accomplish. And you've seen that as we talk about the future of work and employee experience and employee engagement and the gig economy and all those different things. So as I think about the future for practitioners, I'm curious of your perspective in the space that you sit in, what are the things that we're gonna have to continuously think about or new issues that you see coming up that we need to make sure we're abreast of?

- You know, that's a great question, Shari. And I think that the way that I think about this is kind of, as you said, a continuation of where HR should have always been and some of the concerns that teams like yours have been working through since they started in this field. It's really a marriage of law and practice, right? So you have to be

thinking about the way that the landscape is evolving in terms of the legislation and any regulations that are coming out, as well as how your workforce individually can manage those new requirements and keep the culture that you're trying to build alive. I think that as we kind of look forward, the biggest issues that we're going to be seeing are things like compliance with the new, with a largely remote workforce. This isn't exactly a new issue. This is something that, as you mentioned, this is a huge shift during the COVID times. Early on, many companies had to switch to working largely remotely. But since then, there's been quite an evolution in terms of how many companies are allowing that to continue or are offering some sort of hybrid model. And there are a variety of different policy or compliance struggles that might go along with that or challenges that organizations need to figure out how to manage. Kind of similarly, you know, there's a big push towards flexibility all around, not just in terms of where you're working, but maybe when you're working, how you're working, as well as worker wellbeing. You know, those things are all kind of tied together. The next issue that I think is out there that we all need to be thinking about is how data drives our business and how we make decisions that are grounded in information. We have more data than we've ever had, right? But how we use that, how we leverage that, that's going to be a huge part of the HR practice in coming years. As well as how we think about DEI initiatives and how that builds into our policy and our cultures as an organization.

- I couldn't agree more with your list. And each one of those, I think I wanna dive into a little bit 'cause I think there's just unique nuances that we have to consider. So let's start with remote work. It's interesting to see now, we're at the beginning of 2023, what organizations are embracing remote work and embracing this new way of thinking about their workforce and those that are frankly struggling with it. You know, when I read an interesting article the other day that talked about a leader, and I'm not gonna call out the leader on purpose, but they talked about that remote work doesn't work for businesses unless maybe for women. And it was such a frustrating comment 'cause in one way, I felt like the leader got it. Like, hey, we're balancing so much, we need flexibility, but then totally miss the mark and said that it's only women. You know, it's like, okay. Well, you're halfway there, you know? And so when you think about the things that you're thinking about from a compliance standpoint when it comes to remote work, tax requirements, working in multiple states, working hours, how you deal with comradery and developing culture across those different locations, what are some of the things that, from a compliance perspective, that you're starting to see and/or talk about that people are trying to figure out when it comes to remote work?

- Yeah, that's a really funny comment that you just shared and literally halfway there, right? If you're just looking at women in your workforce, not that that's not important, but that's certainly

not the only thing. I think, as you mentioned, there are a ton of things that practitioners need to think about in terms of remote work and their workforce. And I'll share just kind of anecdotally the first thing that comes to mind is just the struggles that we're all facing in terms of talent retention. I was just interviewing someone the other day and asking them essentially why they're thinking of leaving their organization. And they said, "They're trying to make us all come back to the office and we've been so effective at doing our jobs for so many years. I don't understand why I have to." And I think that if that's critical to your culture that people are in the office, you need to do a really good job of explaining the why. If it's about comradery, if it's about collaborative workspaces, you need to make sure that your people understand that because there are so many organizations at least claiming a greener pasture right now that they don't necessarily know whether that's true or not, and they don't necessarily have something that they can kind of hold onto in terms of why it's important to you. And unless you can provide that, you are probably going to see people leaving if you are trying to have them come back in. Now, otherwise, in terms of compliance, I think things we think about are things like paid sick leave, paid family leave. Even things that are seemingly kind of small, like internet reimbursement, these are things that are required in certain places. You must provide them in certain jurisdictions, but what that might create if you're only providing them in certain jurisdictions is situations in which my coworker who's doing exactly the same job as me on exactly the same team, reporting to exactly the same leader is being treated differently in policy than I am being treated. And again, that can be difficult for workers to understand unless you are explaining to them very clearly in a way that makes sense to them why you're handling it that way. And I think, just clearly, there are business needs that make some of it difficult to have an actually equitable policy across all places. Like maybe you can't meet that most stringent requirement for all of your workers regardless of geographic location because it's difficult for you to do that in terms of the financial impact or whatever it might be. I completely understand that that is a real struggle business has run up against. But the way that you're messaging that, if that is your situation, is so critical to make sure that your workers understand why they're having a different employee experience than the person right next to them.

- It's so important to lean into transparency. That's something we've talked about a lot on the podcast and I'm amazed at organizations that still keep like a thin veil over the information. You know, like you said, if you're in a situation where you have real estate commitments on a building and that's why you're bringing your employees back because otherwise you feel like you're throwing away money, tell your employees that. Be open and honest about the expectation and give your employees also the room to make the choice whether they're gonna stay at your organization or not. So don't go into it blindsided. You know,

if you know you're gonna bring everybody back and you have that expectation, then there's gonna be turnover, right? You're gonna have some people who choose not to participate that way. And so be cognizant of that. And that goes back to internet reimbursement too, right? If you're meeting the minimum requirement based on the jurisdiction and that's the only reason you're offering it, just be honest about that. You know, honesty and transparency in the things that you're kind of handcuffed to do, I feel like people appreciate that more than being fed kind of a line. And so-

- I agree with you. I think that the awareness, like we're all adults. For the most part, people that are working at your organization are smart enough and capable enough to understand if you can give them a reason, but if you don't say anything, often what you'll find is that the story that they make up is different than what the truth is and doesn't necessarily paint the organization in the most flattering light, whatever that might be.

- And I think that goes into the next topic around flexible work and worker wellbeing. Because so much of that flexibility that employees are looking for has to come hand in hand with being transparent on not only the business needs, but your personal expectations that you have for your employees and your availability and all that kind of stuff. So as we think about flexibility, what are the compliance pieces we need to think about in that space now?

- There are a few that are kind of burgeoning right now. I'm gonna kind of just bullet them out and then we can dive into them a little bit more in depth. One is worker wellbeing. So we touched on that a little bit earlier. We'll dive into that a little bit more. The next is financial wellbeing. But just part of wellbeing, but not always exactly the first thing people think of when you use that phrase. And the next that I think is important to mention is privacy. Because I think that we're starting to see some changes in how regulators are thinking about employee monitoring in these flexible and remote kind of environments. And I think that's something employers need to begin thinking about so that they're not kind of caught in an awkward position later if and when additional regulation does roll out in that space. So in terms of worker wellbeing, this I think has become a huge area of focus in the last several months or years actually because as people kind of lived through the experience of the pandemic and came out on the other side, having had some time to kind of reflect on what just happened. We've all kind of come away with slightly different expectations for how we want to care for ourselves. And how we care for ourselves in regards to the way we spend our time. And I think there has been, in some ways, that shift is born out of thoughtfulness, like I just described. In some ways, that shift is born out of having had a lived experience of being able to be much more flexible and finding that you're still able to be extremely productive and get your job done. So both of those realities kind of

happening concurrently led to a lot of people saying like, "Wait a second, like do I actually have to be online from eight to five or is it okay if I'm online from nine to four, and then log in for a little bit after I take my kid to soccer practice or coach my kid's tee-ball game," or whatever it is that you might have in your personal life that might conflict with what we think of as standard traditional work hours. So I think workers are really starting to look at that and really starting to think about flexibility in terms of their work life balance. The next kind of thing that folds into that is wellbeing in terms of mental health. You know, we've seen a huge shift in the way that people are thinking about that and the way that people are experiencing their lives and talking about openly how they're actually feeling and experiencing their job. And this has led to such a massive global conversation that even the World Health Organization weighed in recently with some guidance on how employers should start to think about worker wellbeing. So they're saying things like, think about adjusting your environment. Think about creating ways within the physical space if you have a physical space your workers are in that you can encourage more walking. Like how can you actually physically change the space? Do you think things like treadmill desks would be helpful? Do you think encouraging people to use the stairs would be helpful? And so on. So just kind of, again, thoughtfully looking at the physical environment and trying to figure out how you can create more space for wellness within that. They're also encouraging employers to look at things like effort-reward imbalances. So if this is not a phrase that you've heard before, essentially what that means is, are there tasks that your workers are doing that are high effort, difficult to accomplish for whatever reason, and low reward? Be that in terms of pay satisfaction, whatever. So the thing that immediately kind of comes to mind for me is like manual processes. Like everybody's got a million manual processes. Those, I would say, are probably an effort-reward imbalance. Is there anything you can do about that? Because those are the types of things that make people feel potentially a little bit worse about their job than you mean for them too. They're also suggesting more practical things like manager trainings, talking to managers and people leaders about how to spot signs of maybe depression or anxiety in the people that work for them. How to talk about that, how to open up that conversation. And then practical skills for employees. So how do employees arm themselves for having those potential days that are down days? Like how do you adjust for that? So I think those are all the biggest kind of wellbeing issues that the WHO is pointing employers to think about. And I think it's likely that we'll begin to see other regulators or lawmakers thinking about that as well.

- How do you see financial wellbeing being addressed now?

- I think that financial wellbeing, there are a couple of ways. So one of the themes that we might notice as we talk through this is there are a few things that have happened kind of scattershot across many,

many jurisdictions over the last few years. Things like, there are several states, as you know, that require employers to somehow more actively manage their employees' retirement savings, be that an automatic enrollment in some sort of state secure choice or something like secure choice. And the employee then could, I suppose, opt out in many of those jurisdictions, but the employer is required to kind of nudge them in that direction, so to speak. And the idea here is we know as a country that there are many people that do not have enough savings, even for an emergency, much less to plan for their retirement. So states are beginning to think about that. And as states have begun to think about that, so has the federal government. So we've just seen that Secure 2.0 was passed. At this point, just a month or so ago. And what that means is that many more businesses are going to be expected to create and offer retirement plans for their workers. They will also, those businesses be eligible for credits if they do matching contributions, for example. And again, kind of calling back to the state plans, they're going to be expected to automatically enroll employees in those plans, and that's gonna be coming within just the next few years. So I think that's probably the biggest compliance consideration in that space. Just from a general HR practice consideration, I'm also seeing kind of a myriad of new financial wellness, more elective offerings hit the market so that employers have the opportunity to partner with what I would call, I guess, essentially like a benefits vendor that creates content to help their employees understand their financial wellness. So things like credit or credit monitoring, some sort of educational kind of offering in terms of maybe budget management or savings management, things like that. So I'm sure you're probably seeing stuff like that popping up as well. And I think that's going to be a big market differentiator in some ways in terms of talent too.

- And when you're thinking through all of these things, financial wellbeing, personal, mental, holistic wellbeing, monitoring, privacy, creating that flexibility, it's important to make sure that you think about this from the perspective of not only a salaried employee who has more flexibility that might be able to tap into wellbeing in a different way. You know, for example, if you're a knowledge worker who's remote right now and you have the flexibility, you might decide in the middle of the day, "Hey, for my mental health, I'm gonna go to the gym." And you can take an hour, an hour and a half in the middle of your day and go do that. If you're an hourly employee on a manufacturing line, you don't have the same sort of definition of flexibility and access to the same type of wellbeing activity. So I appreciate that you mentioned financial wellbeing and balance because I think that you can address those things in different ways for different populations, but it goes back to knowing what your population wants, right? And asking those questions. You know, as we continue to think through this next couple years and what's coming, I've seen this shift in HR practitioners from kind of like this old additive like, "Oh, I'm a people person, I'm not really into data or I

don't understand data," or whatever that is, that's changed, right? There's an expectation now that you make a decision to be actively involved in thinking about data when you are making decisions for your organization. So as you've seen that kind of shift, what are some of the things that you're seeing pop up in the data-driven business decision space?

- Yeah, I think that there are a few things. And again, like some of these topics overlap a little bit. So I think the thing that is most interesting to me in the legislative space that would come up here is also something that I think overlaps with the DEI conversation that we'll have shortly and that is AI in hiring decisions. So we're beginning to see some states, some locals either creating or passing legislation that requires employers to be very thoughtful about how they're using automated decision making in their hiring process. So what I mean by that is there are many applicant tracking systems that offer you the ability to, for example, kind of, I'm gonna use the word query. I'm not sure if that's the right word, but kind of query the candidate pool that has applied for a particular job and look for specific kind of keywords. So a specific kind of background, a specific skillset, something like that, that aligns to your job description. And as a person hiring, like that or a TA team for example, that might be a fantastic selling point because if you don't have anything like that, you might be manually combing through 1,200 resumes for the same type of job if you're kind of on a hiring spree in a specific department or something. And that can be really difficult, time consuming. So what they're kind of offering is an automated way to kind of sift through some of that and bring ideally, like the cream to the top. The problem with that is that it can potentially create some kind of disparate impact where you're unintentionally sorting out qualified candidates that you may actually really need to look at more closely. So a lot of the legislation that's been proposed in this space or that I think in New York, there even is a past bill now. It essentially says you need to be auditing that technology to make sure that it's not having, not creating any kind of disparate impact. You need to be doing that on a regular cadence. So annually, for example, making sure that that technology that you're using is not unintentionally creating any discriminatory outcomes when that is not the intention of the process that you're going through. So from my perspective, I think that's the most interesting compliance change in the space of how we're thinking about data for our people analytics.

- And if you're listening and you're like, "Well, how can technology be biased?" You know, that's a question that I think we've been asked before and the technology itself isn't, but it's designed by people, right? And so there's implicit bias that even shows up in coding, right? And so part of that is backend education of developers and having them think about design thinking from a inclusivity and a DEI perspective. You know, it's funny. I don't know if I've shared this on

the podcast before, but I have heard of when originally those hand washing automation stations were designed where you stick your hand into the water and it turns on automatically that people with darker skin color had a hard time getting those things to turn on. And it seems like, why would that be the case? Well, because the person testing it or the designer didn't have that skin tone. And so that's how it kind of manifested. And so I think when we think about technology, especially, I love the recommendation around auditing it and making sure that the cream that is rising to the top is what you expect to see and aligns with your diversity initiatives inside your own organization. You know, speaking of diversity overall, you know, is there something else related to that that you would add?

- Yeah, I think just kind of calling back to the technology, how can technology be biased? You know, I have one example that was brought to my attention recently that's I thought was really interesting and I hadn't thought of. And that is that often, organizations will require some sort of, I wanna call it like an entrance test. You know, like there's some sort of, either in the hiring process for particular roles, perhaps, like if you're gonna be a customer service representative or a salesperson, your organization might require some sort of assessment so that you can qualify for that role. And they're kind of, I think, essentially looking for specific skillsets. But what can happen is that, for example, individuals that have neurodiversity. So perhaps some sort of way of thinking that might be slightly different than someone who designed the program to your point. They're kind of unfairly weeded out because maybe they can't meet the time requirement or something like that. So I think those are the kinds of things that, again, I hear that too. Like how can technology be biased? And I completely understand how you might not think of an issue like that, but then once somebody brings that to your attention, you think, "Oh gosh, I'm sure there are a ton of ways that could happen."

- Yeah, we had somebody on who their organization supports finding those who are on the spectrum jobs. And so we were talking about tips on how to interview people with autism, and it was really interesting because his perspective was with the way that our world is going and more video chats and those types of tools being used to interview people, that some people who have autism, that is very overwhelming and they're gonna show up poorly on camera compared to if you did a phone interview without video. And so it's thinking through all of those things when you're thinking about diversity and inclusion is how do you wanna show up to the people that you're attracting? But these aren't the only DEI issues and initiatives that we have to think about. You know, is there other things that you're seeing come to the surface that are in the compliance space, but are also hitting major DEI initiatives that we're thinking about in our organizations?

- Yeah, absolutely. You know, I think from a compliance perspective,



some of the biggest area of focus right now are what I would generally consider to be issues that primarily impact females. So, and some of these are no surprise. You know, no surprise things like how we're thinking about leave for miscarriages or fertility treatments or care of dependence. Like many of these things have been top of mind conversations for the last couple of years for a few different reasons. So we've got lots of conversation around Roe and how that might impact your benefits and how people are thinking about that in terms of their employment relationships and obligations. We've got lots of conversation around care of dependence In the wake, again, of COVID when people had to kind of manage their home and their family in a very different way than they were used to. And people are becoming very open in talking about fertility treatments, which in many ways, for a very long time, I think was, I don't wanna say a taboo conversation, but not necessarily a conversation you were having with your employer. And people are thinking about all of those things very differently. And employers are expected to accommodate and assist and support their workforces in really different ways than they were before. And I think kind of particularly, we need to think about that in terms of kind of the mass exodus we've seen of women from leadership roles. Why? Why are they leaving? It's because the balance, the flexibility that they need to be effective at their job and also be effective in their home life, which is very likely, they're much bigger priority. Those things are conflicting. And because of that, they're opting out. So how are employers thinking about that and how are lawmakers beginning to think about protecting those women and those rights? Because those issues that those new leave types are meant to address are seasonal. These are just small seasons of your life. Like if you're unfortunate and having, unfortunately having a miscarriage, that's a very small specific window of your life where that is an acute thing that you need to be managing and attending to and dealing with. That may not affect your productivity 10 years from now in your ability to be a future leader. So having that opportunity for those people that are going through some season of their life that's difficult, fertility treatments, care of dependence, whatever that might be, being able to manage their home life and having the leave that they need to take care of themselves and their people while still staying a part of the workforce so that in the future, they can continue to contribute to that organization or their industry or whatever it is in a big way. That's important and that's something that, again, I think wasn't really talked about or thought about in the way that it is being talked about and thought about now 10 years ago.

- And I would challenge us to think that while this definitely impacts women more, that our views around paid parental leave in general, should change. You know, I once worked for an organization that was based in the Netherlands, that's where they were, that's where their home offices were. And my boss was expecting, and she was sharing with somebody back at the larger corporate office that she was gonna take

about six weeks off and then come back. And this gentleman was shocked. You know, he was like, "Six weeks?" You know, we typically will take a year off. And I'm like, "Wow." You know, imagine being able to know that you can support your child and still get paid and have that first year of bonding and not have to choose between having a successful career, right? And being the person that you wanna show up for for your family. So I think a lot of people struggle with that. I think men struggle with that too. Like having to give excuses as to why they have to do something compared to why your wife can't handle that. So I think it's really challenging us in general to think differently about those kinds of things and the equity that we're providing. But I do appreciate you mentioning different types of leaves because there are things that miss, that we miss. You know, when I think about benefits offerings, you might have a whole section that talks about fertility treatments and you might have all these ancillary things that you support with paid parental leave, but have you considered, well, what if you're adopting a child? Have you included that in your documentation and the way you think about things? So there's all those different types of things that we need to think more broadly when it comes to DEI initiatives overall. So I appreciate you bringing those things up.

- Absolutely. And I wanna clarify quickly too that I'm mostly, I'm mentioning those things because that's kind of where lawmakers, regulators are looking right now. Those are the things that I'm seeing actually beginning to take hold, take root. But in terms of just general DEIA initiatives, it's so much bigger than that. I mean, as you kind of just mentioned. And I think we are beginning to see a real culture shift in terms of what people are expecting from their employers and how they want their employers to be thinking about DEIA. Those, if that's part of your culture, part of what you want to accomplish from a corporate perspective, you need to be really thinking about that and making that foundational to everything else you are doing, not just leave. Leave is a small, small, small piece of that. It weaves through everything. You know, like we said, it weaves through what your hiring practices are and how you're thinking about attracting and retaining new talent, all the way through the entire lifecycle of that employee.

- Absolutely. I couldn't agree more. You know, Corinne, this has been such a wild ride, not only with you, but with this podcast and our amazing listeners. So again, stay tuned for the commercial coming up next to let you know as to what you should be subscribing to next so that you don't miss out on some of the great content that we plan to produce. And Corinne, thanks for being my bookend. You've always been such a great partner and I can't wait to see what we do next together.

- Thank you so much for having me, Shari.

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discuss everything you love about "PCTY Talks," but take it to the next level. Head over to Apple Podcast, Spotify, or your favorite podcast player to subscribe now. Tune in starting March 21st for engaging interviews with industry leaders, coffee chats with HR trendsetters, compliance tips, and so much more. You don't wanna miss it.