

HR Quarterly Newsletter

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE



Work from home one year later

THE JOURNEY

It has been one year since the Prime Minister, on the advice from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, mandated the Work-from-Home (WFH) measures for public and private sector workers, in an effort to stem the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Mesdames Lorraine Henry-Grant and Juliet Bonner-Clarke, were interviewed to ascertain how this mandate has been 'working for them' for the past year. Here is what they had to say:

Mrs. Bonner-Clarke enjoys the flexibility of working from home as there are no office distractions. Notwithstanding, due to the nature of her work, she prefers to work in office instead. Additionally, she finds that she is less productive at home and attributes this to the lack of office equipment and/or access to technology platforms to work with. Therefore, her solution is to simply attend work.

She believes that leadership can lend support for remote working by providing the necessary equipment and resources. She expressed that the work-from-home measures have triggered the Ministry's capitalising on facilitating and conducting virtual meetings.

Mrs. Bonner-Clarke opined that she would like the option to continue working from home after the pandemic; however, her hesitation about returning to work lies in her fear of infection. She strongly believes though, that the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries could help to allay her fears of returning to work full-time, by putting in place updated Safety Policies and Procedures.

Additionally, if the Government should introduce a permanent work-from-home programme, she could see herself opting to work remotely on occasion.



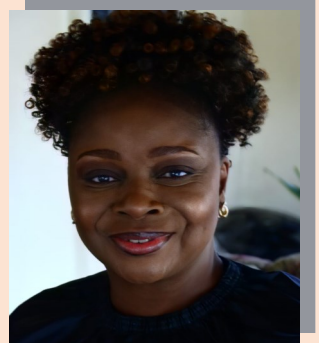
Mrs. Juliet Bonner-Clarke
Senior Human Resource
Officer
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
AND FISHERIES

Mrs. Henry-Grant likes the flexibility of working from home. However, her duties and responsibilities are best carried out at the office, rather than at home. Consequently, she finds that she is less productive and admits that it is difficult to maintain accountability and data security. So, to overcome these challenges, she just shows up to work.

Since the work-from-home measures were instituted, the Court Administration Division was able to seize the opportunity to provide online services to clients, facilitate remote working and conduct virtual meetings.

Although she would not opt to work from home after the pandemic, she has reservations about returning to work full-time. These include fear of infection, fear of further outbreak as well as fear of visiting public places. She would feel less fearful though, if her Department increases its daily cleaning standards, provides updated Safety Policies and Procedures and encourages entity-wide vaccination.

Finally, Mrs. Henry-Grant would consider working from home at least once per week should the Government of Jamaica introduce a permanent work-from-home programme.



Mrs. Lorraine Henry-Grant
Director, Human
Resource Management
COURT ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION

HR COACH VS. HR CONSULTANT



Are you a Coach, a Consultant or both?

HR is the central point within the organisation. It is the place from which all operational and transactional aspects of the organisation's workforce emanate. In the 21st Century, doing things the same way with a sentiment of rigidity, control and authority is no longer the way forward.

The Public Sector has already started to pivot, and the Transformation Implementation Unit (TIU) is leading the multi-faceted Public Sector Transformation Programme on behalf of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ). Transforming the management of HR is essential to achieving greater levels of efficiency within the Public Sector.

The TIU has introduced Human Resource Shared Services (HRSS) as a critical feature in the transformation of HR management in the Public Sector and the service will provide the platform for the automation of processes within GOJ; resulting in a more seamless interface with its customers.

HR's role as Coach is to:

1. Personalise and bolster the development of employees at all levels in the organisation;
2. Improve the match between an employee's actual and expected performance;
3. Increase the probability of an employee's success by providing timely feedback, recognition, clarity; and
4. Support and create a genuinely motivating climate for performance.

Overall, HR's coaching will play a pivotal role in helping people succeed in a new or newly expanded role during reorganisations, mergers and times of rapid change.

HR's role as Consultant is to:

1. Develop methods for compiling and analysing data for reports;
2. Analyse the organisation's current HR programmes and recommend solutions;
3. Conduct audits of HR activities to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures and guidelines; and
4. Help drive organisational change.

Consulting will require that HR transition from the traditional role of controlling and monitoring employee performance, to that of HR Business Partner (HRBP). The HR Business Partner is a Human Resource professional who actively integrates the business strategy with people management practices. The HRBP will be required to:

1. Help align the organisation's 'people strategy' with their 'business strategy';
2. Help employees envision, develop, and execute a HR strategy that supports their growth, performance, and future objectives;
3. Educate, influence, guide, and communicate the company strategy;
4. Collaborate with other Senior Executives on issues and initiatives with the aim being to develop and implement strategies that may be used to facilitate change.

HR will therefore have to take a hybrid approach to these two roles if they are to help employees and the organisation achieve greater efficiency and desired goals that will bring success in this new era of constant change.

“ Change is hard.
Resisting change,
a lot harder.

Eleanor Brown (2014)

Sources:

<https://www.digitalhrtech.com/coaching-culture/>
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/tips-for-effective-coaching-1917836>
<https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/business/blog/becoming-hr-consultant/#:~:text=Put%20simply%2C%20HR%20consultants%20are, and%20recommendations%20to%20management%20teams>
<https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/what-is-an-hr-business-partner/>

YOUR ENVIRONMENT & YOU

Changes in the Environment

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has been impacted in unimaginable ways. Many have lost their loved ones, while others have lost their jobs, homes and their sense of security. Despite the many negatives associated with the disease, at least one area has been impacted positively – **the environment!**

For years, the state of the environment has been a topic of major discussion; raising numerous concerns about the future of our world. Many are exhilarated about the present state of the environment. Due to nationwide lock downs and restricted movements globally, the environment has received somewhat of a cleanse.

There have been much fewer activities which have resulted in:

1. Significantly reduced emission from vehicles and industrial plants
2. Less waste being deposited into the waters
3. Whiter snows
4. Less acidic rains
5. Less land pollution

Although many countries have resumed industrial activities, the break has been beneficial and it is the hope of many that, as much as possible, consideration will be given for breaks in production, to cleanse the environment every now and then.

Taking care of the environment can be fun!

With a lot of extra time on our hands, we may take the opportunity to explore ways to keep us occupied while having fun and taking care of our environment. The effects can be extremely beneficial and fulfilling and help us to start new hobbies. **Here are some ideas:**

01

PLANT - Gardening can help to lighten our mood a bit and help to divert our thoughts from the challenges we may be facing during this pandemic.

02

RECYCLE - Recycling plastics helps prevent plastic products from ending up in the ocean and recycling paper helps to reduce deforestation and save plants.

03

REUSE - Instead of burning old tyres, paint them and use them as garden planters or even as swings. These can be most enjoyable with others involved, especially children.

A beautiful environment begins with you!



COVID-19 Vaccine: A Game Changer?

As expected, we are all anxious and nervous about returning to normal life. Some persons may fear that things that were once viewed as 'normal', may seem awkward and they may find it difficult to readjust, (for example, returning to office work, commuting on public transportation, visiting places of amusement, travelling overseas and embracing families and friends). Others may resist returning to 'normal' as the pandemic may have brought about some positive changes in their lives, and they are afraid of losing those opportunities, (for example, remote working, reduced commuting, increased family time and increased online transactions.)

When the time comes, we will have to decide what actually matters to us, what we missed during the pandemic, and start easing our way back into (a type of) normality. We will have to do our own assessment of what is safe for us, and then start by taking small steps. This also applies to taking the COVID-19 vaccine, pre-normality. Experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine will:

1. Provide protection against the disease and will help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get the disease;
2. Protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19; and
3. Enable you to start doing things that were not permissible during the pandemic.

Getting answers before you get the COVID-19 vaccine is key to preparing yourself for this life-changing experience.

Before taking this potentially life-saving step, **CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER, GET THE FACTS AND MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.** Your future self will thank you for it.

01 CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- Find out if you have any comorbidities or severe allergies
- Seek medical attention if necessary
- Find out if and when it will be safe to take the COVID-19 vaccine
- Find out what you should do before and after you take the COVID-19 vaccine

02 GET THE FACTS

- Learn about the different types of COVID-19 vaccines and how they work
- Learn about the benefits and side-effects of taking the COVID-19 vaccines
- Find out what will happen at your vaccination appointment (medical procedures and screening)
- Find a vaccination centre near you

03 MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION

- Filter, analyse and synthesise the data or information gathered
- Brainstorm and weigh all the possible alternatives
- Choose among the alternatives (if possible)
- Take action



A wise man makes his own decision.
An ignorant man follows public opinion.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/prepare-for-vaccination.html>
<https://www.umassd.edu/fycm/decision-making/process/>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/your-vaccination.html>
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/20/why-some-are-averse-to-return-to-normal-post-covid.html>

PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

10 Things You Need to Know



1. WHAT IS A DISCLOSURE?

Information given by an employee regarding the improper conduct of an employer of the employee or another employee of the employer.

2. WHAT IS A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE?

A disclosure made in specified circumstances to an employer, Minister of Government, Prescribed Person, the Designated Authority, an Attorney-at-Law or the Prime Minister.

3. WHAT IS CONSIDERED AS "IMPROPER CONDUCT"?

Improper conduct includes:

- i. Criminal offence
- ii. Failure to carry out a legal obligation
- iii. Conduct that is likely to result in a miscarriage of justice
- iv. Conduct that is likely to threaten the health or safety of a person
- v. Conduct that is likely to threaten or damage the environment
- vi. Conduct that shows gross mismanagement, impropriety or misconduct in the carrying out of any activity that involves the use of public funds
- vii. Act of reprisal against or victimization of an employee
- viii. Conduct that tends to show unfair discrimination on the basis of gender, race, place of origin, social class, colour, religion or political opinion or
- ix. Willful concealment of any act described in (i) to (viii) above

4. WHO CAN MAKE A DISCLOSURE?

An employee who:

- i. Works or has worked for another person, receives, received or is entitled to receive any remuneration for work done
- ii. Assists or has assisted in the carrying on or conduct of the business of an employer, without any entitlement to receive remuneration or reward
- iii. Is or was engaged or contracted under a contract for services to do work for another person, or any agent of the person

5. WHO SHOULD THE DISCLOSURE BE MADE TO?

- i. An employer or designated officer appointed by the employer
- ii. Either the Minister with portfolio responsibility for the subject matter or the Prime Minister or both
- iii. A prescribed person
- iv. The designated authority
- v. An attorney-at-law with the object of obtaining, or during the process of obtaining legal advice

<p>6. WHO ARE PRESCRIBED PERSONS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Auditor-General ii. Bank of Jamaica iii. Bureau of Standards iv. Children's Advocate v. Commission for the Prevention of Corruption vi. Commissioner of Police vii. Contractor-General viii. Director of Public Prosecutions ix. Electoral Commission of Jamaica x. Fair Trading Commission xi. Financial Services Commission xii. Independent Commission of Investigations xiii. Integrity Commission xiv. Inland Revenue Department xv. National Environment and Planning Agency xvi. Office of Utilities Regulation xvii. Political Ombudsman xviii. Public Defender
<p>7. WHO IS THE DESIGNATED AUTHORITY?</p>	<p>The Integrity Commission</p>
<p>8. WHAT IS AN OCCUPATIONAL DETRIMENT AND WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THIS OCCURS?</p>	<p>Any act or omission that result from an employee making a protective disclosure. These include disciplinary action, dismissal, suspension, demotion, harassment, intimidation or victimization, transfer against his/her will, refusal to approve transfer or promotion and threat.</p> <p>If this occurs, the employee may complain to the employer or to the designated authority. The employer may also seek redress through the Court or by any established grievance or disciplinary procedures under the Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act.</p>
<p>9. WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYER?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Establish written procedures for making disclosures, investigate disclosures and protect persons making disclosures from detrimental actions. ii. Make a copy of the written procedures available to all members of staff.
<p>10. WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE WRITTEN PROCEDURES?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Appointment of designated officer ii. Statement of support for persons making protected disclosures iii. Purpose of the procedures iv. Objects of the Act v. Definition of terms vi. The reporting system vii. Roles and responsibilities viii. Confidentiality ix. Collating and publishing statistics x. Receiving and assessing disclosures xi. Preventing detrimental actions xii. Criminal offences <p>Sources: The Protected Disclosures (Designated Authority) Order, 2021 The Protected Disclosures Act, 2011 Procedures Guidelines The Jamaica Gazette (Supplement) Proclamations, Rules and Regulations, 2021</p>

See you in September

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*The flower
doesn't dream
of the bee,
it blossoms
and
the bee comes*

~ Mark Nepo

REMINDER:

The Atlantic Hurricane season is June 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021. You are encouraged to take the necessary precautions to keep your home, property and Office safe.

For general safety tips, you may contact Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) at <https://www.odpem.org.jm/general-safety-tips/>

THINK SAFE
ACT SAFE
BE SAFE

Congratulations!

To All:

- *Newly Appointed/Promoted Public Servants*
- *Recent and Soon-to-be Graduates*
- *Soon-to-be Tertiary Students*
- *Parents of Soon-to-be Secondary and Tertiary Students*