

# *HR @* *CHRISTMAS* *TIME*



OFFICE OF THE SERVICES COMMISSIONS  
HR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022 | ISSUE NO. 3

# CONNECTING @ CHRISTMAS

The festive season begins when October approaches, bringing with it the anticipation of the holidays and the many joys associated with getting together with co-workers, friends and family. If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything it is that feeling connected is important to our mental health. Research has shown a correlation between loneliness and depression as well as social connectedness and feelings of happiness.

**HR** has a role to play in encouraging a little merriment at this time as it is proven to assist in building team spirit.

We share with you a few reasons and suggestions to connect with your staff at Christmastime:



## Early Planning:

Send out/Circulate the staff Departmental Leave roster early so that plans made will benefit all and this will ensure the office is not left unmanned. Make workable adjustments to schedules and deadlines so staff and management will not feel too pressured to meet them.



## Secret Santa (Pixie)/Office Decoration:

Organise a decoration competition which should provide an opportunity for both management and employees to foster creativity and team rapport while having some fun in between duties. Create a wish list and put it at a central area and encourage employees to participate, giving little treats each week, culminating with a gift at a convenient time before going off on holidays.



## Simple Gestures:

People feel appreciated when they are gifted through simple gestures such as a note or token to say thank-you for the work done and deadlines met throughout the year. Expressions of appreciation may not have to take the form of a holiday gathering, an office party; or even an expensive gift. In fact, it does not have to cost much; small and simple goes a long way.



## Employee Engagement:

Empowering, supporting and trusting employees to get the job done as well as communicating deliberately and regularly will allow employees to work autonomously and not feel stressed or micromanaged. Maya Angelou said, "...people will forget what you said, ...forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel!"

Whatever is planned, join in. This is a good opportunity to cement relationships with colleagues. It will also help to build cohesion and create lasting working relationships in the organisation.

**Happy Holidays!!**

Source:  
<https://cezannehr.com/hr-blog/2020/12/reasons-managers-need-to-lighten-christmas/>

# Breathe It's CHRistmas







“ **It's the most wonderful time of the year**”, from the change in the atmosphere, the lights, the festivities, the food, and the music all point to the most anticipated holiday season; Christmas. Christmas is synonymous with joy and happiness for some, however, for others Christmas is catastrophic as it crushes the air from their lungs. Some may find it tricky to navigate the multitude of emotions that flood them; from anxious moments, regret, feelings of grief and loss, to managing burnout and financial challenges. While

individuals can avoid the events and activities of the season, processing emotional turmoil can be

The heart and soul of the organisation is its human capital. While achieving strategic and organisational goals are key priorities of management, the health and wellbeing of their staff is vital to meeting targets. **HR** has an important role in providing support to employees as they journey through the stressful holiday season so they too can **breathe** easily.

We offer some helpful and practical ways **HR** can show compassion and creativity in assisting employees to navigate the emotional turmoil at Christmas, while also helping them to be emotionally and mentally ready for the year ahead. Encourage employees to:

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Name their emotions   |  | 6. Unplug and practice self-care                          |   |
| 2. Watch for burnout and implement strategies to mitigate them |   | 7. Factor in Work-life Balance                            |  |
| 3. Become resilient  |   | 8. Practice Gratitude                                     |   |
| 4. Prioritise mental and physical health                       |  | 9. Brainstorm plans for the year ahead                    |   |
| 5. Practice mindfulness  |   | 10. Capitalise on available avenues for emotional support |  |

Applying these practical steps will greatly assist employees in processing the unwanted emotions they may encounter during the festive season. The negative emotions will not magically disappear, and the holiday may still be difficult, but with deliberate efforts in addressing their emotions, employees will be better able to **breathe** this Christmas.

Sources:

<https://blog.shrm.org/blog/the-holiday-season-approaches-12-hr-preparation-tips>  
<https://www.chrysos.org.uk/blog/top-ten-tips-for-managing-teams-at-christmas>



# HR: THEN & NOW



One of the most popular and enduring Christmas stories of all time is a novel entitled 'A Christmas Carol' written by Charles Dickens in 1843. A Christmas Carol features an old miser named Ebenezer Scrooge, who sacrifices love and friendship for the love of money. In an attempt to spark a dramatic change in the bitter old man, the ghosts of Christmas, Past, Present and Future haunt Scrooge as he is making his way home on Christmas Eve. As we think of Christmas Past and Present, this article will look at **HR: THEN & NOW**.

**HR** is different today than it was ten (10) to twenty (20) years ago. The days of posting job listings on bulletin boards, searching through thick files of paperwork on every employee and entering service records manually on cards are long gone. HR has gone digital with the increase in technological advancements and coupled with a younger workforce, the role of HR Departments have changed dramatically.

Here are **THREE (3)** areas in which the radical change in **HR** is demonstrated:

## THEN :

### HR as Strategic Business Partner

HR was known as Personnel and was pretty much a separate entity from the rest of the organisation. They were mostly seen as just a cost centre rather than a revenue producer. Personnel was never seen as a major player in the strategic planning process of the organisation. Back then its main function was to handle payroll, benefits, leave management and the resolution of conflict among employees.

## NOW:

Today, organisations are using the HR Business Partner model, where HR plays a fundamental role in strategic planning and the development of organisational goals. HR now partners with Senior Management with a goal of adding tangible value to the organisation, the accomplishing of organisational goals as well as the achievement of the mission and the vision.

### Culture Building

Personnel was mostly in the business of processing paperwork and storing data on spreadsheets, which was labour intensive. They did little to impact or build the culture of the organisation and would mostly be known for putting up the 'Employee of the Month' plaque. At Christmas, Personnel would spearhead the planning of the long anticipated annual Christmas party.

HR exerts a lot of their energy on building an organisational culture and a brand that will attract the best talent. HR has shifted from just putting up 'Employee of the Month' plaques to formulating strategies that keep employees engaged and motivated. HR is committed to ensuring the personal and professional development of employees.

### Managing the Remote Workforce

Working remotely meant that those in managerial positions would rack up frequent flyer miles on business trips to meet with clients or visit satellite offices all over the world. Personnel would have to ensure that travel arrangements were in place for employees.

Working remotely now means working from the comfort of home. Especially since COVID-19, HR has had to find inventive ways to keep employees who work from home engaged and connected to each other and to the organisational culture. HR is also using work from home as a major selling point when engaging in recruitment and selection processes.

# CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE YEAR 2022



Hon. Marsha Smith (right) MP, State Minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, poses with Leodis Douglas (left), Chairman, Board of Directors, FHC, Roxann Linton (2nd left), Chief Executive Officer, FHC, Oniel Grant (second row), President, Jamaica Civil Service Association (JSCA), Lennox Wallace (2nd right), Chief Public Health Inspector (Actg. Parish Manager) and winner of the Managerial category and Oliver Morris (centre), Customer Service Officer and winner of the Mid Managerial category at Terra Nova All-Suite Hotel on Friday, November 18, 2022. Missing is Simone Turton, Health Records Technician and winner in the Technical category.

The Civil Servant of the Year Awards which was held at the Terra Nova All Suites Hotel on Friday, November 18, 2022, celebrated its 18th year of existence with winners from three (3) categories of nominees; **Managerial, Mid-Managerial and Technical Support**. The three (3) outstanding Civil Servants selected were:

- **Simone Turton**, Health Records Technician and Acting Customer Care Officer at the University Hospital of the West Indies – Technical Support
- **Oliver Morris**, Customer Service Officer at the Administrator General's Department – Mid Managerial
- **Lennox Wallace**, Chief Public Health Inspector and Acting Parish Manager in the Ministry of Health and Wellness – Managerial

Each awardee was gifted with a plaque, a citation, and cash prize of \$200,000 along with a \$150,000 allocation for a joint community project, courtesy of First Heritage Co-operative Credit Union Ltd.

Additionally, the inaugural **People's Choice Award** was won by **Sophia Moulton**, Director of Ceremonial Operations and Staff Administration in the Office of the Prime Minister, copping the highest percentage of votes across the Public Service.

Civil Service Week is observed in the third week of November each year and celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> year in 2022 with the theme, **"The Public Sector: Forging Ahead with Determination"**. The celebration is geared toward highlighting the worth and work of outstanding Civil Servants who have given excellent service to Central Government and to the country on a whole.

*Congratulations to our Civil Servants of the Year 2022!*

**"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation,  
hard work and learning from failure."**

**Colin Powell**



## *Merry Christmas & Happy New Year*

to you and yours from the  
**Office of the Services Commissions family.**  
We wish you all the peace  
and joy of the season!

*See you in 2023!*

**Mrs. Rene Phillips (Writer & Editor)**

Director, HR Development and Public Education (Acting)

**Mrs. Jacqueline Bell-Rowe (Writer)**

Human Resource Information & Development Officer

**Miss Tanesha Johnson (Writer)**

Human Resource Information & Development Officer (Acting)

**INFORMATION STANDARDS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION UNIT**

**OFFICE OF THE SERVICES COMMISSIONS**

**(MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE PUBLIC  
SERVICE COMPLEX)**

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