

KAREN A. STAFFORD, MHRM, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, LHEP

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SUMMARY

Trusted business leader with expertise in employee engagement, client acquisition and relationship management, nonprofit leadership, and organization development. Advanced skills in human resource management, leadership development, public relations, problem solving, and creative thinking. My passion for this work comes from my interest in ensuring businesses have the skilled and engaged workforces they need to succeed, and the opportunity to leverage my experience in relationship management, process leadership, creative problem solving, and human resource management, to support individual, team, and organizational success.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University, W. P. Carey School of Business **2016 - Present**

A top ranked public university in both research and innovation.

Faculty Associate

Coursework delivered in support of the Human Resource Management major course of study.

Imagine Learning **2021 - Present**

Imagine Learning, the largest provider of digital curriculum solutions in the U.S., serving 15 million students in more than half the school districts nationwide

Employee Experience Director

2021 – Present

From Day One onboarding to employee engagement and recognition, learning and development, and wellbeing, our team designs and champions best – in – class people strategies in support of our employees achieving the organization’s vision, mission, and strategic goals.

Significant areas of expertise and accomplishment include:

- **Employee Brand Development:** Led the development and launch of our Employee Brand, and key contributor to our external-facing Careers and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpages.
- **Employee Engagement:** Implemented our new employee survey platform and developed our philosophy of annual and themed “pulse” surveys to gauge employee sentiment throughout the year on elements like overall engagement, wellbeing, and inclusion.
- **Employee Recognition:** Led the selection and implementation of our companywide employee recognition platform resulting in an increase in employee sentiment related to recognition, year over year.
- **Learning & Development:** Redesigned our learning and development philosophy to include more hybrid, self-paced, and microlearning opportunities to meet the dynamic nature of the organization’s talent development needs.
- **Wellbeing:** Redesigned and implemented our wellbeing programming to include a balance of educational awareness building regarding work-life integration and our employee health & wellbeing benefits offerings.

Employers Council, Inc. **2004 – 2021**

A \$25M professional services organization providing employment law advice, human resources consulting, training, and workplace guidance to employers since 1939 (formerly Mountain States Employers Council, Inc.)

Corporate Training and Events, Regional Training Manager

1/2021 – 9/2021

As a result of a corporate reorganization to consolidate the executive leadership function, I was asked to take on this newly created role leading the training and development services across our four regional offices in Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. My focus was on coaching and mentoring our team of training managers,

staff, and contract instructors, by providing strategic insight and process leadership to drive regional training revenue, forecasting, scheduling, evaluation, and content redesign initiatives.

Arizona President

8/2019 – 12/2020

Recognized as one of 50 “Most Influential Women in Arizona Business” by AZ Business Magazine 2020, and responsible for a \$2M budget, I cultivated and led a team of experienced employment law attorneys, human resource consultants, trainers, and other specialists focused on serving our Arizona-based member organizations by offering guidance and advice on daily human resources and employment law related matters. Championed brand awareness efforts and influenced companywide initiatives to drive market presence, profitability, and efficiency.

Organizational Development & Learning Consultant/Manager

4/2014 – 8/2019

Coached, counseled, and developed countless leaders and individuals to identify and pursue operational efficiencies and career opportunities. Designed, developed, and delivered human resources, management, and professional skills training and human resources related consulting to member organizations. Certified in mediation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills used to guide parties toward more productive, result-oriented, future-focused workplace relationships.

Other leadership positions held in Membership Development Sales (2/2011 – 4/2014) and HR and Organizational Development Consulting (9/2004 – 2/2011).

Significant areas of expertise and accomplishment while at the Council include:

Client Acquisition, Engagement, and Retention

- Created innovative membership acquisition strategies and partnerships resulting in a track record of success to include holding the record for monthly new memberships across our regional offices.
- Established the membership development function for our Arizona operations to include developing community partnerships, and lead generation systems and processes, resulting in the organization becoming a sought-after resource in the business community.
- Convened statewide member advisory board to reestablish lines of communication and invite feedback on the value of member services, service delivery effectiveness, and strategic planning.
- In response to member needs, pioneered a web-based series of member and community education and engagement modules starting in late March 2020 to support navigating the complexities of emerging legislation and the impact of COVID-19 on the workplace. As a result of its success, this practice was adopted throughout the organization.
- Company spokesperson in over 100 local and national television, radio, social media, and print media segments on topics related to employee success strategies in the workplace, in an effort to broaden our presence and brand awareness in the Arizona business community.

Organizational Management and Staff Leadership

- Trusted consultant and coach on workplace matters to executives and leaders at all levels from a variety of industries and corporate environments.
- Experienced in leading and inspiring mission – focused, results – driven teams.
- Track record of success in designing and implementing process improvements that are subsequently adopted on larger scale. Known for project planning from process ideation to evaluation.
- Championed training initiative with our executive team in an effort to raise diversity and inclusion awareness, and enhance equity in the workplace.

Leadership Development and Human Resources Management

- Designed, presented, and facilitated hundreds of learning and development experiences in multiple modalities including in-person, virtual instructor led, assessment debriefs, and individual coaching sessions.

- Invited presenter at national, state, and local conferences and events speaking on topics ranging from Strategic Human Resources, Human Resource Metrics, and Succession Planning, to Neuroleadership, Performance Management, Change Management, and Ethical Decision Making.
- Increased training revenue by 20% by offering creative programs and resources to clients.
- Expertise in succession planning, workforce development, performance management design and assessment, policy, procedure, and practice development, workplace investigations, and compliance audits.
- Strategic human resources consultant offering guidance and research on workplace matters to human resources professionals, business owners, and leaders from various industries and corporate settings.

Western International University

2009 - 2012

A private university delivering a quality education for working adults.

Assistant Professor

Coursework delivered in support of the Human Resource Management program of study.

Human Resources Consultant

2002 – 2004

Provided employee and management training, executive coaching, and support in all facets of human resources for Hawaii-based and mainland clients, while in graduate school. Provided on-site, interim HR management support to Fortune 100 employer, non-profit, and family-owned entertainment organizations.

Progressive Insurance Company

1990 – 2002

A \$20B Property & Casualty Insurance Company

Regional/Senior Human Resources Manager

1998 – 2002

Collaborated with Regional Sales Manager to manage five geographically dispersed sales call centers and site HR teams across five time zones (+900 employees). Helped set strategy and policy while influencing enterprise-wide directives.

- Instrumental in securing \$250,000 Arizona state grant for costs associated with site start-up.
- Reduced average annualized turnover by 45% in field call center locations by analyzing turnover, sourcing, and interview data to identify and address key opportunity areas.
- Developed aligned performance management process for field locations. Process subsequently adopted and implemented enterprise-wide.

Additional positions held (1990 – 1998) show a progression of increasing responsibility in field HR management supporting business units across our Midwest, Northeast, and Southeastern regions.

EDUCATION and CERTIFICATIONS

Master in Human Resources Management, University of Hawaii at Manōa, Honolulu, Hawaii
Beta Gamma Sigma, International Business Honor Society

Bachelor of Arts, English, College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio

Licensed Human Element Practitioner[®]The Schutz Company

Master Facilitator Certification, “Civil Treatment” Series[®], Employment Learning Innovations

Certified Mediator

Certified Trainer, Myers Briggs Type Indicator[®] CPP, Inc.

Certified Trainer, Radical Collaboration[®]The Schutz Company

Certified Trainer, Targeted Selection[®]Development Dimensions International, Inc.

Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) designation, Human Resource Certification Institute

Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) designation, Society of Human Resource Management

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Peoples Valley Fire Auxiliary

2021 – Present

This 501(c)3 serves to raise funds through events, grants, and outreach to support the Peoples Valley Fire District Board of Directors, the Operations Crew, and the Weaver Mountain community.

Positions held include: Auxiliary Board President and Fire District Finance Committee Member (Present); Auxiliary Vice President (2021 – 2023).

City of Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board

2012 – 2017

Providing businesses access to world-class talent through a comprehensive and seamless system of partners that positions Phoenix as a global leader for economic growth.

Positions held included: Executive Committee Member, Continuous Improvement Task Force Chair and Community Outreach and Education Task Force, Vice Chair.

PRESENTATIONS

- “Being Industrious in the Workplace: Five Strategies that Make Sense” Industrious Women Collective hosted by the Better Business Bureau Serving the Pacific Southwest (2020)
- “What’s Your Brain Drain Strategy: Creating an Effective Knowledge Transfer Plan” AZ SHRM Conference (2020)
- “Building Resilience in Challenging Times” AZ SHRM Conference (2019)
- “This is Your Brain on Change: Applying What We Know about Neuroscience to Enhance the Effectiveness of Change Management Initiatives” AZ SHRM Conference (2018)
- “Insider Perspective: How to Land that Job or Internship” International Marine Animal Trainer’s Association (IMATA), Algarve, Portugal (2018)
- “HR Strategy at the Speed of Light” AZ SHRM Conference – Master’s Series (2017).
- “Bridging Generations: Four Generations–One Conversation, Co-presenter, AZ SHRM Conference (2017)
- “Ready, Set, GROW! A Succession Planning Workshop” AZ SHRM Conference (2016).
- Arizona State University’s Resume Review and Interview Skills Workshop (2016).
- “Interest-based Problem Solving” Arizona State University SHRM Student Chapter (2016).
- “Social Media and the Workplace: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” Prescott Area Human Resources Association (2015).
- “Strategic and Ethical Learnings from BP’s Deepwater Horizon” AZ SHRM Annual Conference (2014) and Northwest Arizona HR Association (2015).
- “HR Metrics and Analytics: Measuring what is Important” AZ SHRM Annual Conference (2014) and SHRM-Greater Tucson (2016).
- “Wild Side of Performance Management” WorldatWork Conference, Seattle, WA (2009) and AZ SHRM Annual Conference 2015.
- “Social Media 2.0: Talent Management in the Social Media Age” West Valley SHRM Chapter (2014) Tucson Professional Recruiter Association (2015).
- “Social Media in the Workplace: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Oh My! Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association (2013).
- “Is Your Career in Need of an Extreme Makeover”? AZ SHRM Annual Conference (2012).
- “Creating a Positive and Sustainable Workplace” Northwest Arizona HR Association (2012).
- “Is Your Organization LinkedIn? Social Media Practices & Policies for Employers” Speaker: MSEC’s Annual HR Conference and Quad “A” Annual Conference (2010).
- “For Better or Worse: Hot Topics in Human Resources” AZ Construction CPA Conference (2010).
- “Hasta La Vista, Baby: A Guide to Downsizing in Challenging Times” Construction and Financial Management Association (2010) and American Institute of CPAs Annual Conference (2010).
- “Immigration Law Impact on Employers” Panelist, Enterprise Network Group (2008).
- “Strategic Partnering 101: Getting a Seat at the Table” AZ SHRM Annual Conference (2006).