

# HR Examiner

*Examining practical HR issues business owners  
and managers encounter every day*

## It's December - Are Your Employees Disappearing?

Arlene Vernon

It's the time of the year when many employees realize that they have leftover vacation or PTO days that they need to use or lose before 12/31. Are you prepared for those employees who want to take the rest of the year off?

Taking December off sounds like a great plan, unless you're the employer who has no employees left to get the work done.

Creating a vacation benefit that works for both the employer and the employee is one of those things that seems like a simple task, but isn't always as straight-forward as it sounds.

How much time should you really give off? What's fair – what's not? Does a generous time off policy retain good employees? Should I base vacation on hire date or calendar year? Do I allow carryover? Do I pay out unused vacation at year end? PTO or vacation/sick?

And the list of questions and decisions goes on.

In 2013, SHRM (Society of HR Management) conducted a random survey on this topic. Here are some of their results. See how your benefits compare:

- 55% offered paid vacation while 45% offered PTO combining vacation and sick days

- New employees with one year of service received an average of 11 vacation days (with a 5-30 day range)
- 62% of companies allowed carryover of vacation days – which means 38% have use it or lose it policies
- 70% of HR professionals believe that taking vacation is extremely or very important for inspiring employee creativity

First of all, I think I'd like to know what company is granting 30 days off to new employees. But more seriously, step back and ask some serious questions about how time off is working for your organization. For example; can you see a performance difference between those employees who are refreshed from taking vacation and those who have not taken a vacation yet this year?

It is important to be planful in designing time off that works for your organization. It's an important benefit and it also can be an expensive benefit, if not designed properly. For example, did you know that in MN you are not required to pay out vacation at termination? It all depends on what your written policy states.

So if I can help you with your vacation dilemma (not where you're going to take vacation – but how to design your plan), let me know.

And if you're one of those people who's already "gone" for the rest of the year – here's wishing you Happy New Year!

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## HR Mastery

Here's your final chance of the year to sign up for the 2014 HR Mastery Groups that I facilitate. Remember, you're not alone when you have your HR Mastery team supporting you.

For one annual fee you receive the following:

- HRx hotline – Free access to me throughout the year for phone consultations related to any HR question or issue you may encounter
- 2-hour monthly meetings, with custom selected topics based on your group's interests
- Email and phone access to your HR Mastery team
- Laughter, support and practical information you can use immediately

If HR is not your area of expertise and you know someone who you think would benefit from this opportunity, please email this newsletter to them.

To learn more about HR Mastery or any of my consulting or training services, please email me at [Arlene@ArleneVernon.com](mailto:Arlene@ArleneVernon.com) or call me at 952-996-0975.

## About Arlene Vernon

Arlene has provided HR consulting and management training services to over 300 organizations since starting HRx, Inc. in 1992.

If you're seeking a hands-on, practical HRxpert to assist your organization with employee relations, policy development, strategic HR activities or fun/doable management training, call on Arlene – Your HRxpert.

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