



# 66 POWERFUL STRATEGIES FOR GREAT HR

By Don Phin, Esq.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

– Margaret Mead

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## QUESTION:

**How great do you want to be? Top 25%, 10%, 1%?**

## INTRODUCTION

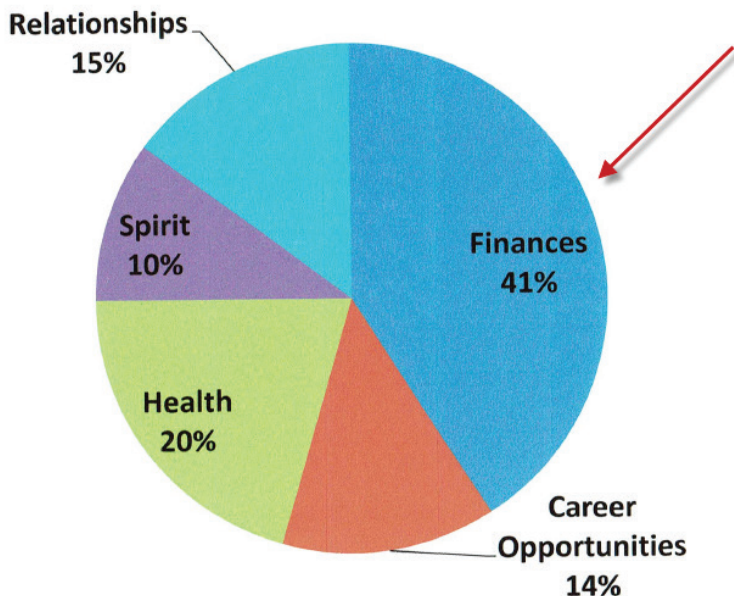
**D**o you have a passion for doing Great HR? Becoming a strategic partner to a company is an exciting challenge and opportunity for everyone in human resources. The suggestions that follow come from more than 30 years' experience in the legal, HR and business environment.

Before we dive in to the 66 strategies let me share what I've observed from working with so many HR executives. To begin with, most HR executives I meet express a sense of overwhelm. That overwhelm produces stress that in turn

affects their health and is taken home where it affects everyone else too! On top of the overwhelm is under-appreciation. Most HR folks work really hard...and it seems nobody notices. The topper is most HR executives feel they are under-paid as well.

That's the HR Zeitgeist: overwhelmed, under-appreciated and under-paid. Sound familiar? Here is the result from a survey I did of hundreds of HR executives on a webinar where I asked what they would like to change in their life

## Which of these five factors would you like to change most?



Then there are those rare HR executives who feel pumped up about their work because they are not on overwhelm,

they are appreciated and they do get paid well. There is a formula they follow which I will share in this ebook.

## My Background

For 17 years I litigated employment lawsuits and learned just about everything that can go wrong in workplace relationships. After I quit litigation I began creating systems to avoid lawsuits. The first book I wrote was *Lawsuit Free!*. Then I began a public speaking career that has placed me in front of more than 400 CEO groups. I've had the opportunity to teach thousands of business owners about Great HR practices and to also learn from them. Learn what they want from HR.

In 2001 the senior HR executive from Vistage (the CEO group I speak for) asked if I would chair a mastermind group



**I'M HR AND I KNOW IT!**



of high end HR executives along the same lines as the CEO groups. I agreed and the CRO Forum was created. I ran that group of 15 strategic HR executives for five years until I turned it over to a new chair. The learning and growth that came from that HR mastermind group was different in kind and very revealing when it comes to understanding HR success.

In 2004 I built the HR That Works program used by thousands of companies that was sold to ThinkHR in 2014. I've written my sixth book and over 28 training programs and continue to push HR as an amazing business opportunity. Today, I continue to do a great deal of training, investigation and consulting. I also do executive coaching.

What follows is sage advice. Of course the strategies and tools suggested can only be implemented one at a time. Check off some easy ones that you can do ASAP and then tackle one of the bigger opportunities per month.



Please share any great stories, insights, challenges and more by emailing me [don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com).

Here's to your Great HR career,

Don Phin, Esq.

Note: this report comes as a bonus to the Great HR Executive Program. If a form or tool link is not **Bolded**, it means that access is limited to program students. You can learn more at [www.greathr.com](http://www.greathr.com).



## QUESTION:

**Are you prepared to make mistakes...and take responsibility for them? Who's potential judgement may be holding you back?**

## ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

1. Just how great do you want to be? Are you crystal clear about what you want from your career? Do you *really* want to become a strategic partner? If so, why? How good do you want to be? Top 25 %, 10 %, 1 %? How would you rate your level of commitment?
2. What is the ultimate benefit you are after? More money? More power? More responsibility? Career growth? Greater acknowledgement? It is important to understand the “Big

Why,” so you can refer back to it during the inevitable challenging times.

3. Focus on *your highest and best use*. What can you do better than anyone else? What are you gifted at? Eliminate wasteful activities, outsource administrative ones, and focus like a laser beam on what you do best. Write down the five things you *can* do best and then circle the two things you *love* doing best. Chances are this is your highest and best use! Try to work in that “sweet spot” more than half the time.
4. Fast Company magazine claims today’s mantra for success is “*change, learning and leadership*.” To what extent are





you conversant and able to add value to your company in these three critical areas?

5. How does your academic and professional background affect your human resource focus? Do you have a degree in HR management? Do you have a financial background, or one in sales? Do you need to broaden your academic background? (Enroll in part time MBA classes and watch the perception of your value to the organization grow dramatically.)
6. *Be an observer.* Of your own environment. What do you notice? What supports great work and what does not? Who could benefit from your support?
7. The greatest trap of the hero is over-commitment. Don't over-commit! When you do, you produce lies. That is a quick way to lose credibility! Delivery is key to strategic success. Focus on *three critical deliverables* at a time. Do not dwell on trivial concerns.



## QUESTION:

To what degree do you make an effort to learn about the business you are in? Do you read industry related magazines and journals? Attend industry conferences? Learn the facts and trends? Speak the language?



Are you considered an industry expert?

8. Maintain your mental and physical balance. If you are over-worked and lack proper *sleep*, *exercise* or *diet*, you will make you a poor candidate for the executive boardroom. Check out the [\*Bullet Proof Executive\*](#) for great health tips.
9. Expect to grow. Like crazy. Sometimes in ways least expected. Your professional growth is limited only by your *imagination*. Dialogue with the President or CEO about your career expectations. Get their support for your career growth in advance. Use “up front” contracts. Memorialize your understandings in a memo.
10. Be prepared to address *other people’s judgment* about the human resource function. For example, some people may feel that “human resources is simply an administrative function” or “you don’t know about business.” Know

what emotional nonsense to expect and how you will respond to it – in advance.

11. Be prepared to accept the *pressures*, *risks* and *rewards* that come with being a strategic partner. Becoming a strategic partner involves many trade-offs. With added responsibility will come added stress, as well as a bigger paycheck. If you are not careful it may also mean less personal/family time, recreation time, lunch hours, extended coffee breaks, etc. Yet another reason to understand your Big Why!
12. The mantra for today's leader is "*the less you control, the more you accomplish.*" If you want to take on new responsibilities you must learn to delegate. Make sure you delegate to people with the skills and character necessary to be trustworthy so you can free up your time to focus on



**HR = HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**



critical functions. Read the *Effective Executive* by Peter Drucker.

13. Be prepared to *make mistakes*...and take responsibility for them. The more risks you take and the faster you learn what doesn't work, the faster you will advance in your career. You reduce any propensity to make mistakes through education and modeling the success of others.
14. Think "out of the box." The "processional" or "lateral" effect of events and decision-making must be explored. In other words, *be creative, experiment, test and find out*. Read *A Whack on the Side of the Head* by Roger Von Oech and *Orbiting the Giant Hairball* by Gordon MacKenzie.
15. Develop a *strategic plan*. Identify your key objectives and the short-term goals that you must meet to stay on course. Put it in writing and update it every 90 days. Share it with your CEO and team.
16. Read at least one business book every month, plenty are suggested in this report. Also, listen to audio books and podcasts, at least one per month. [Click here](#) to see a list of great podcasts for HR executives. Many excellent resources are available for free online or at your public library.



Incident Reporting  
and Case  
Management System



## QUESTION:

**Do you ask for feedback from other executives and your team members?**

## DEALING WITH OTHER EXECUTIVES

17. *Get their attention!* You have to be your own best public relations. One way to get noticed is by sending out an update of HR accomplishments. Employee newsletters are also a great tool for communication, too.
18. Don't get caught off-guard. It's embarrassing! Always *be prepared* when speaking with other executives. You only have to be unprepared once to lose your credibility.

19. Take other executives to lunch at a restaurant you know they'll enjoy. Then, focus on them. Don't tell them everything that you can do, instead dig to *find out their needs and desires*. Listen, listen, listen! Which leads us to the next strategy.
20. Understand something from the world of sales. Don't focus on telling people what you can do. Focus on getting them to ask, "Can you help with \_\_\_\_\_?" Better it is *their idea* than yours. You can always ask "how can I help?"
21. Once you have their interest, get to the point. Executives do not like longwinded explanations – period. When presenting information, stick to one page "*hot sheets*." Too much information results in overload and shut-down. Keep it simple and let them know you have additional information readily available.

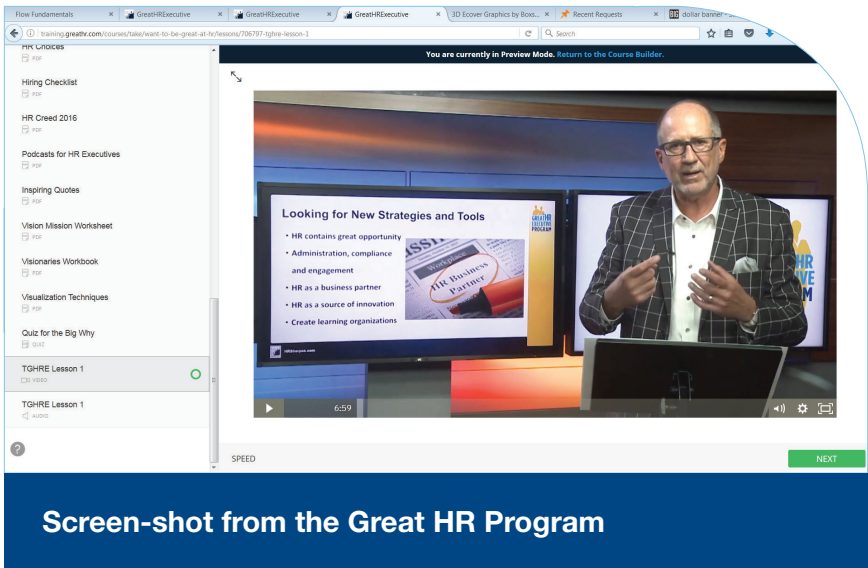


**HR ROCKS!**



22. Do not allow yourself to be *bullied, manipulated* or *sabotaged* by other executives. Speak in “I” terms and make sure the other person does too. If they cross over into your emotional space or take credit for your efforts, let them know you feel such conduct is unacceptable and define possible consequences. Learn how to dodge emotional gamesmanship by reading *Victims, Villains and Heroes: Managing Emotions in the Workplace*. If you are interested, email me and I’ll send you a free PDF of the book.
23. Do not fear losing your job. If you find yourself fighting against a management philosophy that simply “doesn’t get it” then it is time for you to move on. Don’t fight it. Take your résumé for a spin. *There’s always another job. You deserve the opportunity* to do Great HR!
24. *Learn about the business* you are in. Read industry related magazines and journals. Attend and speak at industry conferences. Learn the facts and trends. Speak the language. Be an industry expert.
25. Find out the *vision* of those at the top. Don’t assume their objectives or values, ask them. Dig deeper when the opportunity arises. Then help leadership communicate the vision to the rest of the workforce. See the [CEO/CFO/COO Interview](#).
26. *Model success*. Who are the successful executives at your company? Who are the successful HR executives in your community? Do what they do to generate their success.





## Screen-shot from the Great HR Program

27. *Ask for feedback* on your job performance from other executives and team members. Be open to their insight, suggestions and criticism. You want to create an environment of “radical honesty” when it comes to in assessing your progress. Use the [HR Department Survey](#).
28. Be prepared to *look the part* of a successful executive. You lead with all your actions and can’t afford to look more casual than your peers. Personal grooming and appropriate dress are a must.





## QUESTION:

Do you have a complete understanding of company finances? If you are not well versed in accounting, or cannot analyze a financial statement, consider taking an accounting class online or at your local community college.

## MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

29. You must have a complete understanding of company finances. If you are not well versed in accounting, or cannot analyze a financial statement, consider taking an accounting class online or at your local community college. Consider reading *The Great Game of Business, Expanded and Updated: The Only Sensible Way to Run a Company* by Jack Stack, *The Accounting Game: Basic Accounting Fresh from the Lemonade Stand* by Darrell Mullis and Judith Orloff and *Ownership Thinking: How to*

*End Entitlement and Create a Culture of Accountability, Purpose, and Profit* by Brad Hams.

30. Learn how to measure and benchmark. If you are not sure how to do this, read Jac Fitz-Enz's book, *The ROI of Human Capital: Measuring the Economic Value of Employee Performance*. As the author states, today's strategic HR executive has to show how he or she contributes to the organization's service, quality and productivity (SQP).
31. Keep a *scorecard* to help document your success. Benchmark the costs of turnover, training, recruitment, benefits, compensation and other aspects of the employee relationship. Focus on leading factors more than past results. Strategic partners know how to speak in "bottom-line" terms. See the [True Cost of HR](#) and [HR Scorecard](#).
32. Reduce the incidence of *unwanted turnover* in your organization. We estimate the cost of turnover for a \$50,000 a year employee to average in excess of \$54,000! How many unnecessary turnovers can you help prevent? See the [Sample Turnover Cost Calculator](#).
33. Show how *outsourcing administrative functions* will allow you to focus on your highest and best use while saving the company time and money in the process. Potential vendors should be more than pleased to help you with an ROI calculation.

**SOURCE2™**  
TALENT ACQUISITION

A great RPO to help  
your hiring needs



## QUESTION:

**Have you created a training plan for everyone at your company? Remember, companies that train more earn more!**

## HIRE ONLY THE BEST

34. Your most important job will always be to help the company *hire great people*. This means pre-hire job needs analysis, meaningful interviews, extensive background checks, credit, criminal and driving investigations where appropriate, skills assessment, character assessment and drug testing. Develop a sound hiring process and follow it every time. If you don't already have one, use the **Hiring Checklist** as a head start. I recommend [www.shl.com](http://www.shl.com)

and [www.zeroriskhr.com](http://www.zeroriskhr.com) to help judge applicant skills and character. I also recommend [www.globalhrresearch.com](http://www.globalhrresearch.com) to perform your credit, criminal, immigration, education and other background checks.

35. Take full advantage of *online recruiting*. Online recruiting can cut costs and expand your hiring sources. If you don't already have an online recruiting program on your web site, take a look at [www.GHRR.com](http://www.GHRR.com). If you are challenged sourcing candidates contact my favorite RPO, [www.source2.com](http://www.source2.com).
36. *Involve co-employees* in the hiring process. It is the first step in building team chemistry. Encourage and reward qualified candidate referrals. Have future co-employees involved in the interviewing process. See the [Co-Employee Applicant Appraisal Form](#).



37. Form a strong relationship with a few *temporary employment firms*. Make sure they know your personnel needs. Make sure you know how they hire, train, compensate and manage their employees. If you face a downsizing, they can help find work for displaced employees.



38. Develop an engaging and productive *employee orientation process*. Tap into their fresh insights while you can. Start with an **Entrance Interview**. Cap it off by having the employee complete a [60-Day New Employee Survey](#), where they give insight into the hiring and orientation process, as well as how they are adjusting to their new role with the company. Also see the [Orientation Checklist](#).



My go to resource for  
background checks,  
immigration and  
pre-hire physicals



## QUESTION:

Are you excited about your opportunity to be a great human resources executive?

## INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

39. Learn about how technology can help streamline the human resource function. Become a master of a human resource information system (HRIS). There are dozens of HRIS programs on the market so find one that fits your needs.
40. Get to know the management philosophies of Dr. W. Edwards Deming. He is credited with developing the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM). Take a visit to [www.deming.org](http://www.deming.org) and learn his 14 Principles.



41. Study the *competition*. What human resource initiatives are other companies doing that produce favorable results? How can you *model* or *test* these initiatives at your company? Remember, just because they did it first doesn't mean you can't do it too! Don't get caught with a "not invented here" mentality.
42. Get familiar with *character assessment and development* tools by taking a half dozen or more of them yourself. Most companies (ZeroRisk HR, ClearDirection, Predictive Index, Kolbe, McQuaid, DISC, Kolbe, Gallup, etc.) will allow you to take at least one free examination if they view you as a potential client. You can be in charge of increasing your company's collective E.Q. I recommend Zero Risk HR for the hiring process. [Click here](#) and get an assessment for free!
43. *Survey the workforce*. Constantly. Use open-ended questions and don't make responses optional or anonymous. Post the results. Encourage employees to speak up without fear. Test the effectiveness of your survey on a few of your employees to assure yourself of its many benefits.



**ZERORISK** HR

My favorite personality  
assessment for hiring

[Click here](#) for a free  
assessment.

44. Develop an employee suggestion program that works. See if you can find a copy of ***"I" Power: The Secrets of Great Business in Bad Times*** by Martin Edelston. It's based on a Peter Drucker suggestion. The basic idea is to require and reward monthly, mandatory suggestions.
45. Make sure your *job descriptions* are up-to-date and accurately reflect the "value added aspects of the job." Involve employees in identifying essential job performance functions. There is a job description builder on **ThinkHR Comply** and you can also go to **ONET**.
46. Eliminate traditional performance appraisal thinking. It seldom improves performance. It is your job to help eliminate "*more than/less than*" thinking in the workplace and focus on what is going right and what can get even better. Save poor performance discipline for warning notices and counseling. Take a look at **www.halogensoftware.com**, one of the performance management programs I like.
47. Help employees go through the *career mapping* process. Help them discover where they want to go and define the skills and experience they will need to get there. If you can't expand job opportunities for valuable employees you will lose them. See the Career Ladder builder on **ONET**.
48. *Train the workforce constantly.* Education is the greatest form of leverage. Very simply, companies that train more earn more. Consider use of **ThinkHR's** Learning Management System (LMS). Or, hire me to do some leadership training. You can further develop your training abilities by becoming a member of ATD (**www.atd.org**).



**Think<sup>HR</sup>** My Courses ▾ search courses Welcome back Vicent!

Courses that develop employees and ensure compliance

Compliance Safety Wellness Customer Service

Environmental Compliance Performance Management Workplace Skills Human Resources

**QUESTION:**

**Do you train all supervisors on ever-changing personnel law obligations?**

## LEGAL COMPLIANCE

49. Educate all supervisors on ever-changing personnel law obligations. **ThinkHR Comply** has all the compliance titles.
50. Audit your compliance employment law obligations. See the [ThinkHR Audit](#).
51. Think you know employment law? Check your compliance knowledge by taking the **50 Question Compliance Quiz**.

52. Work with an *experienced employment law attorney* to improve your personnel practices and employee handbook. Use them in advance to help make critical personnel decisions. What a company should be after is wise decision making – not cheap decision making. Personally I like quality, local boutique firms best. See [www.worklaw.com](http://www.worklaw.com).
53. Make sure your company purchases a comprehensive Employment Practices Liability Insurance (EPLI) policy. Work with a knowledgeable broker to help advise them on different coverage options and claims management history. See the [EPLI Coverage Worksheet](#).
54. Consider distributing the [Employee Compliance Survey](#) every six months. Make sure employees know their rights and obligations and that no violations exist. Remember this: the best time to deal with a problem is right now!
55. If you don't already have access to the entire *ThinkHR* program ([www.ThinkHR.com](http://www.ThinkHR.com)) what are you waiting for? This program is designed to prevent claims, protect the bottom line, and grow your career! Contact me at [don@greathr.com](mailto:don@greathr.com) if you are interested in a demo and free trial.



The best employment  
lawyers I know



## QUESTION:

Are you a member of [www.ThinkHR.com](http://www.ThinkHR.com)?

If not, contact me at [don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com) or (619) 852-4580 and ask for a tour with me.

## BELONGING AND MENTORING

56. Meet with other human resource executives who strive to be strategic partners. Join a *mastermind group* or simply take each other to lunch. You will need the support of peers outside your company if you are to become a strategic partner. Support each other's challenges and help each other commit to getting things done. I encourage you to read *The Power of Peers*.

57. Step up the quality of your relationships with professionals from the insurance, legal and accounting professions. Buy them a lunch and ask a whole bunch of questions. Then immediately *do something* with what you have learned. See how you can support them in return.
58. If you haven't already done so, obtain the PHR or SPHR Certification from the Society for Human Resource Management ([www.hrci.org](http://www.hrci.org)), SHRM's CP and SCP certification ([www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)) or IPMA Certification from the International Personnel Management Association ([www.ipma.org](http://www.ipma.org)). You can also get specialized certification related to compensation and benefits from the World At



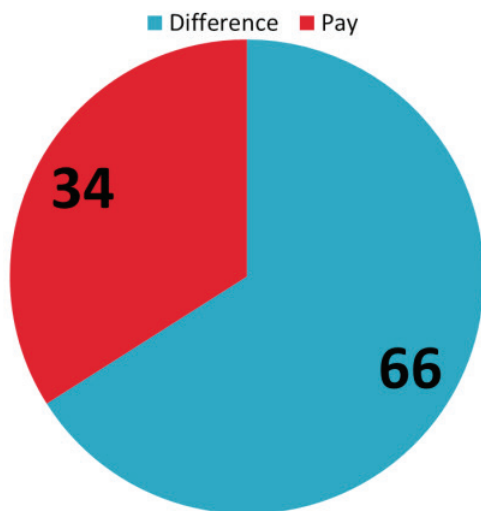
## HR, THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY



Work ([www.worldatwork.org](http://www.worldatwork.org)). The **Great HR Program** offers eleven SHRM and HRCI credits.

59. Be prepared to *give back* to the profession. Be a *mentor*. Take an inexperienced HR professional under your wing. Help them discover their opportunity of being a Great HR executive.
60. *Volunteer* to a non-profit organization that can use an hour or two of HR advice during the week. Sit on a board. *Teach* a class at your local community college.
61. *Get out and speak* to non-h.r. executives about the benefits of HR as a strategic partner. Help them discover the power of building employment relationships. Show them the [HR Cost Calculator](#) and explain the financial opportunity in Great HR practices.





**What motivates you to do Great HR?**

## **GET PAID WHAT YOU ARE WORTH**

62. Truly strategic HR partners are in high demand. Find out what similarly situated professionals are getting paid. Go to local salary surveys, check with your peers, and look at online resources such as [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com), [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) and [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com). Check in with HR recruiters such as [www.donnadavisassociates.com](http://www.donnadavisassociates.com). Ask what they would charge to give you an evaluation of your market value.
63. Negotiate for bonuses based on your ability to directly impact the bottom line. For example, if you are able to reduce unwanted turnover by 50%, what bonus should

you be entitled to? How can you tie your compensation to your success as a strategic partner? See [Why I Deserve a Raise](#).

64. *Shop around your resume.* This does not mean you are not committed to your employer. It means you are investigating your true potential and giving yourself career options. This will allow you to negotiate from a position of strength.

## **PUBLICIZE AND CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS**

65. Don't just let your success stories sit there – *publicize them!* Use intra-company newsletters. Pin a note on the bulletin board. Send an article to an industry or HR publication. Send out an intra-company news release. Go for the Great Place to Work type awards. Strategic partners know the value of tooting their own horn. So should you.

## **AND, AS A FINAL STRATEGY. . .**

66. *Get some coaching!* If interested in my coaching click [here](#) to learn more. Coaching keeps you focused on your goals and accountable for your actions. *Be Bold!* Challenge yourself and leadership. Don't settle for some comfort zone. Remember this: *only the mediocre are ever truly comfortable!*



**Don teaching the Great HR Program live**

## CONCLUSION

Many consider becoming a strategic partner as the greatest challenge for today's human resource executive. I say the challenge is to do Great HR. Do that and then the magic happens!



Here's to your great success!

Don Phin, Esq.

P.S. If you liked this report you will love the **Great HR Program**.

**[www.donphin.com](http://www.donphin.com) • [don@donphin.com](mailto:don@donphin.com) • (619) 852-4580**



Don,

*I am beyond ecstatic about your GreatHR program and am enjoying it immensely! As a one person department, I tend to question myself even more when met with resistance, but your program has helped me to regain self-assurance and learn how to effectively articulate HR as a Business Partner. In fact, I received my performance review today, which went very well, and I took that as an opportunity to establish strategic goals for HR and to continue a partnership with my GM to relaunch my role to the team.*

*Today is a new beginning, and I grateful for your efforts in helping to develop and create a program that affords a HR Executive the opportunity not only from a person development standpoint, but also from a value-added department standpoint. After completing a Master of Science and exploring a PhD, I have not experienced a program that is as extensive as yours in helping to provide tools to support change and HR as essential partner.*

*You've certainly have been through so much career wise, but I'm the biggest fan of you and how you know how to create systems and support for HR Executives. I can't even put into words how you helped my career develop. You're truly a walking angel, and I wish you all of life's blessings always.*

*With gratitude & appreciation,*

*Susan Gorlach, Director of Human Resources &  
Strategic Engagement  
Annandale Golf Club, Pasadena, CA*



- Lesson 1: Discovering WHY You Want to be GREAT at HR
- Lesson 2: Diagnosing Your HR Needs and Defining the Bottom-Line Opportunity
- Lesson 3: Upgrade Your Hiring Practices
- Lesson 4: Performance Management... that Works
- Lesson 5: Upgrade Your Retention Practices
- Lesson 6: Innovation and Best Practices
- Lesson 7: Internal Branding
- Lesson 8: Preparing for the Future of the Workplace
- Lesson 9: Managing Emotions at Work – Victims, Villains and Heroes – the 40/40 Solution
- Lesson 10: Wrapping it Up – Create a Plan and Celebrate Your Success!
- Bonus Lessons: Strategies to Master Compliance Training Program

**Go to [www.greathr.com](http://www.greathr.com)**

## AVERAGE HR



Come to work just for the paycheck



No desire to learn new things



Don't read



Resist change



Don't plan



Blame or justify



Motivated out of fear



Poor health habits



Never contribute new ideas



Love... wasting time



Poor teammates



A drag to be around

## GREAT HR



Love doing great work



Constant learners



Read regularly



Embrace change



Plan for success



Takes responsibility



Motivated by a sense of excellence



Great health habits



Idea machine



Hate wasting time



Team leader



Fun to be around

© Don Phin, Esq.

### Which HR Executive are You?

