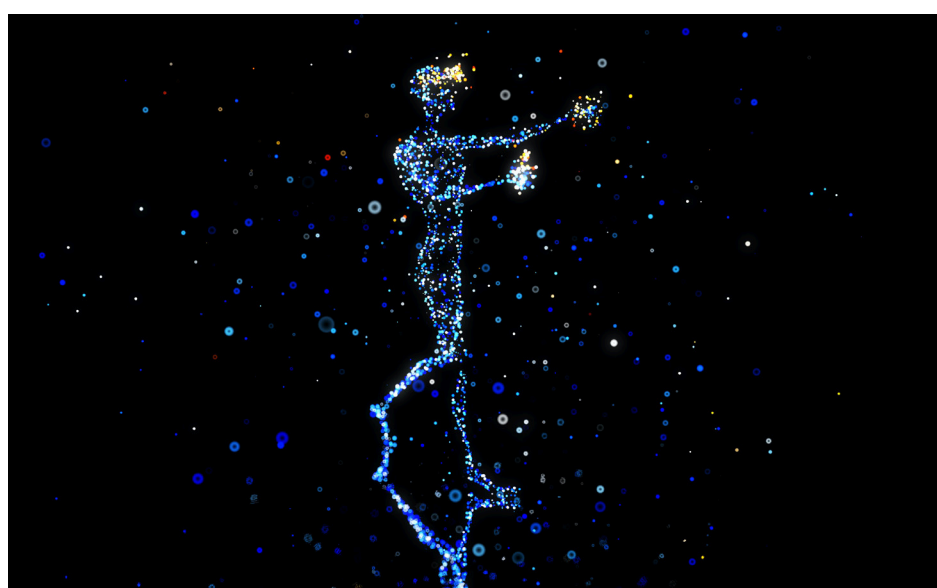


It's Time for the Metaverse (Yes, in the Print Industry)

Is it just me? Or has 2022 exploded with references to the metaverse? Last October, Facebook set the stage for this emergence by announcing that it would change its name to Meta. After a period of relative quiet, as the marketing and social media worlds digested this change, we are now seeing an explosion of coverage of this topic, and for good reason.

To give just a few examples, the first week of January, AdWeek noted that hiring for metaverse-related jobs jumped 400% between May 2021 and October 2021. It also cited a Vantage Market Research forecast that the market size for metaverse-related products and services would grow at nearly 44% over the next seven years. A few days later, one of eMarketer's top stories was the "clear momentum" in China around AR and VR experiences in online shopping as the "necessary ecosystem" has come into place, a trend that many U.S. companies are already starting to exploit. Just a few days before, Social Media Examiner asked (and answered) a question that all



of us should be asking: "What does this mean for marketers and why should we care?"

Even until recently, many people had never heard the word "metaverse"

Today, it seems that I cannot open my email without seeing the word. It's as if Mark Zuckerberg's October

2021 Facebook (now Meta) Connect conference, where he announced Facebook's corporate name change, took something that had been quietly but steadily bubbling in the tech space and exploded it into our mainstream consciousness.

So, what is the metaverse anyway?

The metaverse is a digital world in which people live, work and play much as they do in the physical world.

This sounds futuristic, but it isn't really. "Metaverse" is just a fancy word for many of the things we are already doing right now. For example, when you are in a Zoom meeting, you're technically interacting in the metaverse. (In a more robust experience in the future, however, Zoom meetings might use avatars of ourselves sitting at a table, interacting with one another as if we were actually in the same room.) In a home environment, it's using augmented reality to walk around your house, looking through your phone to watch your floors morph into completely different looks right before your eyes. In the world of gaming, it's your children interacting with one another, miles or continents away, playing the same game, at the same time, as if they were in the room together.

The metaverse is simply any type of

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HUMAN RESOURCES

Four Ways to Make Terminations Less Stressful



Terminations are nerve-wracking. You're doing something that's going to cause another person incredible stress and financial hardship. It's not easy to do, even when it's deserved.

Nothing you can do will make terminations entirely stress free. Good preparation and the right attitude will make a big difference. Here are four general practices we recommend:

Know your compliance obligations ahead of time

Look up applicable laws regarding termination procedures and paperwork, accrued paid leave, severance pay, COBRA and final paychecks before conducting a termination meeting. If you're laying off a number of employees, you may have specific notice obligations under the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) or a similar state law. You don't want to miss any steps or deadlines. If the employee works in a different state,

refer to that state's laws.

You should also understand how antidiscrimination laws work in practice and take steps to reduce the likelihood that the terminated employee will file a discrimination claim. While at-will employment allows either the employer or the employee to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice and with or without cause, it does not permit you to terminate employment based on the employee belonging to a protected class (e.g., race, sex, religion, national origin).

Along similar lines, screen the termination to make sure it's not based on a protected activity. Myriad state and federal laws protect employees from being discharged for certain reasons. And don't forget about the many leave laws that vary from state to state. From sick leave to military leave to school-involvement leave and more, you may be surprised by the types of absences that are protected.

There's even some risk when the termination is for cause. A terminated employee could claim your reasoning is just for show, and they were actually terminated for an illegal reason. That risk grows exponentially when you don't provide the employee with a sensible reason for the termination or when you've been inconsistent in applying your discipline policies.

Consequently, the safest way to terminate employees is to communicate performance issues to them, give them a chance to improve and have documentation that justifies the legitimate business reasons behind the termination.

Approach terminations with a positive mindset

Let's say you have an employee who's continually struggled to meet your performance expectations. Guidance and training haven't proven fruitful. No amount of coaching has or would enable them to do the job better. There's no other job in your organization they could do. So now you have a choice. You can keep them on, tolerating subpar performance and accepting its consequences for your organization, or you can let them go.

In this case, letting them go is probably the better option for both parties. You're not doing this struggling employee any favors by keeping them in a position where they can't be successful.

In the case of layoffs, where the employee is not at fault, figure out a few ways you can help them land on their feet. Provide a severance if that's an option. Remind them that they can apply for unemployment. Help them update their resume. Inform them of any opportunities you know about and facilitate networking connections if you can. In short, make the layoff meeting a productive discussion about their future.

Be prepared for strong emotions like sadness and anger to surface during the termination meeting so that you can respond with confidence. While there's a fine line between allowing space for initial processing and unnecessarily prolonging the meeting, you can acknowledge and validate the employee's feelings without changing the end result. Although escalations into violence are rare, review your company's procedures ahead of time for dealing with such situations.

Don't let terminations be a surprise

Terminations should never be a complete surprise. Clear rules and consistent practices are your friends here. Inform employees what's expected of them and what could result in their dismissal—the employee handbook is a good place to do this. Enforce your rules consistently. You don't need to follow the same process for

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Bill's Short Attention Span Sales Tips

How often should I contact someone?

When following up, how much is too much?

Undoubtedly, these are two of the most frequently-heard questions in my conversations with Vault members. But the subject of follow-up frequency also comes up in my home life. For example...

My stepdaughter did a week-long dog sitting gig and when the family came home, they promised to send her some money via Venmo. The afternoon went by. Nothing. Then a day. And then another day. Frustration grew. She didn't want to nag but, well, she wanted to get paid! Sound familiar?

Have you ever been reminded of something you forgotten? Maybe you promised to send someone a card or owe someone a phone call. Seemingly out of the blue, you remember. But the thing is, it wasn't out of the blue. Something triggered that memory. Most likely, it was a soft reminder.

The suggestion I made to my stepdaughter was this: Find a picture

you took of the dog and send it along to the family with a note like, "I took this picture last week and thought you might like to see it." Receiving the email might be all they need to remember their promise.

You can do the same with customers and prospects who have promised to reconnect with you. Email a link to an article regarding their industry. Share a case study or testimonial. You could even send them a promotional item. The point is to stay top of mind without making the "Verizon" sales call: Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now?

In my experience, you do more harm than good by following up too frequently. Remember, your priorities are your priorities and not theirs. It's hard to stay patient, but you will blow any opportunity you have by pressing too hard.

Nag, but do it softly.

Oh, and by the way, payment for the dog sitting arrived!

Source: Bill Farquharson, *The Sales Vault*, <https://SalesVault.Pro>

GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATIVE

On Our Radar

Passed bills awaiting Governor Newsom's approval or veto:

- **COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave** – AB 152 would extend COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave to December 31, 2022, and establish a grant program to help reimburse businesses for COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave provided in 2022.
- **CFA leave expansion** – AB 1041 would expand the list of individuals for whom an employee can take leave under the California Family Rights Act (CFA) to include a "designated person," defined as any individual related by blood or whose association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship, and allow an employer to limit the employee to one designated person per 12-month period for family care and medical leave.
- **Mandatory bereavement leave** – AB 1949 would require private employers with five or more employees and public sector employers to provide employees who have at least 30 days of service with up to five unpaid days of bereavement leave upon the death of a family member.
- **PFAS** – AB 2247 would require manufacturers to submit data relative to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS).

- **Refusing to work during emergencies** – In the event of a declared state of emergency other than a health pandemic, SB 1044 would prohibit employers from taking or threatening an adverse action against an employee who refuses to report to, or leaves, a workplace within the affected area because the employee has a reasonable belief that the workplace is unsafe.
- **Pay transparency** – SB 1162 would require employers to provide the pay scale for a position to an applicant for employment and include the pay scale in job postings.
- **Background checks** – SB 1262 would reduce the current delay in background checks for employers by permitting filtering searches of publicly accessible electronic court indexes by a defendant's driver's license number, date of birth or both.

Bills which Governor Newsom recently signed

- **Off-the-job use of cannabis** – AB 2188 prohibits employment discrimination based on cannabis that is used off the job and away from the workplace

Bills which Governor Newsom recently vetoed

- **Tax exemption expansion** – AB 1951 would have expanded, for a five-year period, the existing partial sales and use tax exemption for manufacturing and research and development by making it a full exemption.

FEATURE

Continued from front

virtual or augmented reality, on any device, that allows people to enter a virtual world and interact with people, places and things.

How might the metaverse apply to your business?

There are many ways in which the metaverse, in a very practical way, applies to print service providers, both as providers and users of these technologies. Here are some real-life use cases of how the metaverse is being used by printers and agencies right now:

- Offering virtual tours of their plants, allowing clients and prospects to “walk” their production floors and visit their offices as if they were actually in the building.
- Creating 3D interactive models of products to boost clients’ online sales by allowing those products to

be rotated, viewed and examined as if shoppers were holding the product in their hands.

- Attending virtual tours of demo centers to see new printing equipment before purchase. Once the equipment is installed, printers can place holographic images of the vendor’s service techs next to the press to show their operators how to fix issues or do routine maintenance.
- Deploying games in the metaverse to promote product sales for their clients. As potential customers play the game, they collect parts of the end product for which they can place an order once it is complete.

Over time, use cases like these will become more sophisticated, but the point here is that, even at a more simplified level, they are being done now. So when you read about—or hear

about—the metaverse, know that this is a practical reality that you should be considering and investing in, not because it’s tomorrow. Because it’s today.

Source: Heidi Tolliver-Walker, *WhatTheyThink.com*. This originally appeared on *WhatTheyThink*. Copyright © 2022 *WhatTheyThink*. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. *WhatTheyThink* is the global printing industry’s leading independent media organization with both print and digital offerings. Our mission is to provide cogent news and analysis about trends, technologies, operations, and events in all the markets that comprise today’s printing and sign industries including commercial, in-plant, mailing, finishing, sign, display, textile, industrial, finishing, labels, packaging, marketing technology, software and workflow.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Continued from front

every kind of offense—some behaviors may warrant immediate termination, for example. But don’t bend the rules for some employees and not others.

Lastly, don’t hide bad financials from employees. If business is slow and a layoff is possible, employees need to know so they can make informed financial decisions and contingency plans. In an age where companies go viral on the internet for poorly conducting layoffs, it’s in your interest to be transparent and honest.

Stay organized

Develop a checklist ahead of time of things that need to be covered. This list might include specific equipment and keys that need to be returned; passwords and access cards that will need to be disabled; coverage of the employee’s workload until a replacement is hired; notification to coworkers, vendors and customers; COBRA information; a current address for W-2s; and what you’re going to say during the termination meeting.

Checking off boxes may feel impersonal, but the day of a termination is at the very least challenging for all involved, and at the worst chaotic, especially if you’re disorganized. Keeping the process smooth and orderly is both kind and professional.

Source: HR|BIZZ

Get Ahead of the Holidays

It's that time of year again. Time to get ready for the peak shopping – and peak shipping season. Prepping can feel like a heavy lift, but it doesn't have to be. Whether you need to find the perfect balance between shipping speed and cost, packaging advice or more advanced tracking capabilities, there's a UPS® solution to help.

Use your PIASC UPS® Savings Program and get up to 50% off all of your shipments.

For more information, contact Nadine@piasc.org 323.728.9500 Ext. 262

CONTACT US

Address:
5800 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90040

P.O. Box 910936
Los Angeles, CA 90091

Phone: 323.728.9500
www.piasc.org

Key Contacts

- Lou Caron, President
Ext. 274, lou@piasc.org
- Dennis Bernstein, Commercial Insurance
Ext. 222, dennis@piascins.com
- Evie Bañaga, Employee Benefits
Ext. 224, evie@pibt.org
- Kristy Villanueva, Member Services
Ext. 215, kristy@piasc.org
- Rodney Bolton, Human Resources
Ext 218, piasc@hrbizz.com

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UPCOMING WEBINARS

Mail Design Consultant Certification

DATE: October 18, 19 and 20, 2022

TIME: 10:00 am - 11:30 am PT on October 18 and 19; 10:30 am to 12:45 pm PT on October 20

The Mailpiece Design Consultant (MDC) Certification virtual workshop provides certification in understanding and designing mail for automation. It is essential for mailers to get their mail accepted, receive U.S. Postal discounts, speed mail delivery for themselves and their customers and avoid USPS penalties.

The cost for the three-day program is \$135.00 per person. This includes the MSMA MDC online exam fee, the Study Guide/Review Questions and over five hours of Zoom-based instruction presented by Mailers Hub. The daily video presentations will be made available for any attendee requesting it.

The session on October 20 will also include a “Postal Update” presentation by Leo Raymond of Mailers Hub starting at noon PT.

Register at <https://bit.ly/MailDesign>.

CLASSIFIEDS

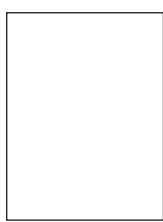
SELLING: 7 boxes Reincarnation 100 Matte Blue White 120# Cover, 300 sheets per box, 26.00 x 40.00, 100% recycled paper; US Paper Counters Bantam-1 with tabber, 2004 model in good condition; Mini Max Oval Strapping machine in good condition. Pictures are available upon request. Call Lane at Wilcox Foil in Portland, Oregon, 503-239-4443.

SELLING: 37-inch Cutter Challenger, Baum Folder, Heidelberg Windmill Press Original Classic. Call Eric at 310-649-5855.

SELLING: Vutek HS100 Digital Press. Email Vaz at vkharhayan@justmanpackaging.com.

SELLING: Presstek 34 DI 4-Color Offset Press. Direct Press 5634 DI. Call Cari at 310-787-7774.

Want to place a classified ad? Contact Kristy Villanueva at 323.728.9500, Ext. 215, Kristy@piasc.org.



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Government & Legislative

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PRINTING United Expo
Wednesday-Friday, October 19-21
Las Vegas, NV
<https://www.printingunited.com/>

OCT 18-20

Mail Design Certification
Tuesday-Thursday, October 18-20
Online Webinar
<https://bit.ly/MailDesign>

NOV 15

Wage + Benefits Webinar
Tuesday, November 15
9:30 am - 11:00 am PT
<https://bit.ly/WageandBenefits>

OCT 22-23

LA Printers Fair
Saturday-Sunday, October 22-23
Carson, CA
www.printmuseum.org/los-angeles-printers-fair

For full list of events, please visit www.piasc.org/events

PIASC Events Calendar