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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mixed Expectations About Working While on Vacation Leaves Employees Confused, Finds HR Certification Institute Survey

*Three-Fourths of Workers Feel They Must Pack Laptops With Flip-Flops,
Even When Companies Encourage Work-Free Time Off*

ALEXANDRIA, Va., August 28, 2017 — Half of non-essential workers believe there are no company expectations for them to work while on vacation. The other half feel obliged or uncertain about expectations to get work done when taking paid time off (PTO). Regardless, three-fourths of workers bite the bullet anyway – and work – when vacationing, based on a [new HR Certification Institute \(HRCI\) poll](#) of HR professionals.

"Most workers bring their laptops with their flip-flops on vacation," said Barry Lawrence, MBA, aPHR, a researcher and spokesperson for HRCI, the premier organization that provides HR credentials for professionals who have demonstrated expertise in the field. "Employees are confounded by a mixed bag of written company policies, unspoken expectations, shared beliefs and poor examples set by CEOs and supervisors."

Based on the views of nearly 300 professionals employed as HR practitioners for organizations, only 16 percent of workers "believe" they are expected to work while on vacation. Yet, once workers have reached their destination:

- 59 percent "occasionally" work when on a vacation.
- 17 percent "always" or "almost always" work when on a vacation.
- 24 percent "rarely" or "never" work when on a vacation.

Only 31 percent of HR professionals say their organizations have written policies that specifically discourage work during time off. Workers fare somewhat better at these companies, working less on vacation vs. employees from companies with no written policy to discourage work:

- 63 percent "occasionally" work when on a vacation vs. 56 percent from no-policy companies.
- 10 percent "always" or "almost always" work when on a vacation vs 21 percent.
- 27percent "rarely" or "never" work when on a vacation vs. 23 percent.

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"Policy is often trumped by more powerful culture influences" said Amy Schabacker Dufrane, Ed.D., SPHR, CAE. "Bosses and executive leaders, especially, set the tone of how the rest of a staff will approach vacation. Emails continue to flood the inbox. And flatter organizations mean that there is no one back at the office who can do your work when there's an emergency while you're out."

Supervisors, say 46 percent of HR respondents, have the biggest influence on employee expectations about working on vacation, followed by the C-suite executives (22 percent), self (20 percent), HR (5 percent), other employees (4 percent) and other factors (3 percent).

When asked about their personal vacation work habits, nearly three-fourths of HR professionals are also likely to work – at least occasionally – when taking PTO. Most often, they say, their vacation work involves reading email (72 percent), responding to an emergency (20 percent) and working on a project (5 percent).

"It's important for all employees – HR and management included – to be reminded that PTO is a benefit, not just a perk," Dufrane said. "Study after study finds there are huge performance and employee wellness benefits associated with giving people time to rejuvenate. HR can turn the 'vacation vacuum' around by developing clearer vacation policies and cultivating champions of work-free rest and relaxation."

About HRCI

HR Certification Institute® (HRCI®) is the premier professional credentialing organization for the human resource management profession, setting the standard for HR excellence and expertise worldwide for more than 40 years. HR practitioners and organizations turn to HRCI to ensure, strengthen and advance the strategic value of HR through credentials such as the Professional in Human Resources (PHR®) and the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR®). All HRCI certifications are fully accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), including six practice-based credentials and the Associate Professional in Human Resources™ (aPHR™) for line managers, students and others who are just starting out in HR. HRCI certifications are proven marks of distinction for various levels of competence, commitment, skill and knowledge in the HR field. Learn more at www.hrci.org.

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