

**Description:** Whether it's HR best practices for critical compliance topics, providing a sounding board for complex employee situations, or just the latest information on an HR issue, you can count on MRA's experienced HR Advisors to lend an ear and provide answers. MRA's HR Hotline Manager, Nicole Morehouse, is here to give you an overview of this widely-used resource!

**Key Takeaways:**

- MRA's HR Hotline Advisors each have 15+ years of HR knowledge.
- 99.9% of questions asked on the hotline are answered the same day.
- The hotline is a member exclusive benefit, so membership is definitely encouraged if you want to use the hotline!

**Transcript:**

**Transcripts are computer generated -- not 100% accurate word-for-word.**

00:00:00:02 - 00:00:25:08

Intro

Hello hello, everybody, and welcome to 30 minute THRIVE, your go-to podcast for anything and everything HR, powered by MRA - The Management Association. Looking to stay on top of the ever-changing world of HR? MRA has got you covered. We'll be the first to tell you what's hot and what's not. I'm your host, Sophie Boler, and we are so glad you're here. Now it's time to THRIVE.

00:00:26:08 - 00:00:48:00

Sophie Boler

Hello everybody, and welcome to this episode of 30 minute THRIVE. We are so glad you're here and joining us today. And today we're really here to introduce you and give you an overview of a great resource we have at MRA, and that is the HR Hotline. So luckily, I'm here with an expert today, Nicole Morehouse, our manager of the HR Hotline.

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Sophie Boler

And Nicole has had over 20 years of experience in just about every area you could think of in HR. So she's really passionate about what she does, and I'm excited to talk to her today. So thank you for being here today, Nicole. I'm excited to learn more about the hotline and hear some insight from you.

Nicole Morehouse

Thank you.

00:01:14:16 - 00:01:22:04

Sophie Boler

Absolutely. So like I mentioned, one of our most widely used resources here at MRA, is our 24/7 HR Hotline. So could you explain what the hotline is to someone who has never heard of this resource or isn't too familiar?

00:01:22:14 - 00:01:50:02

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah. What is the hotline? The hotline is the most phenomenal resource. So you're right. I mean, it is widely used by the members. Picture this: It's 6 p.m. You have an issue. You want to hear some guidance from a knowledgeable person. You can call the hotline and the phone call is going to get picked up by someone that has 15-plus years of experience, like myself, to help you out.

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Sophie Boler

Awesome. So you mentioned the hotline operates 24/7. What does that exactly mean and what happens if someone were to call in at 2 a.m. if they were up all night thinking about something or maybe on Christmas or a holiday?

00:02:04:16 - 00:02:24:01

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah, it truly is 24/7/365. So the hotline doesn't rest on holidays. A member certainly could call any day of the week, any time of the day. It's not often that a member needs something at 2 a.m., but I mean, if you do, right, it's good to know that you have a resource available.

00:02:24:15 - 00:02:35:02

Sophie Boler

Okay. So going along with that question, how responsive are our hotline advisors to calls? I mean, do they pick up right away and answer? Would they put you on hold for a little bit?

00:02:35:21 - 00:02:48:11

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah, hopefully no putting on hold. Your call's answered very quickly, usually within a matter of seconds. So if you're calling in during normal business hours, it's just a matter of seconds, then you're connected to an advisor.

00:02:48:17 - 00:03:01:22

Sophie Boler

Okay. And you also mentioned this is a great tool to use for our members, but can nonmembers also use the hotline? Can they call in? Who really is this resource available to?

00:03:02:08 - 00:03:10:05

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah, the hotline is a member-exclusive benefit. So membership is definitely encouraged if you want to use the hotline.

00:03:10:09 - 00:03:19:04

Sophie Boler

Okay. And could you give us a good explanation of really a day in the life of a hotline advisor? What is your day in the life?

00:03:19:07 - 00:03:39:20

Nicole Morehouse

So I mean, during the day, right, you know, see picture during business hours, we had several advisors working and we get numerous calls that come in or sometimes emails. I remember a particular day where we had an advisor that had 40 calls, if you want to call them calls. So that's a combination of phone calls and emails and requests from the website.

00:03:40:06 - 00:04:00:21

Nicole Morehouse

Those can be from, for numerous different reasons. So it could be something very simple, like asking for a sample policy or a sample form or maybe something super complex. So like newly implemented regulations or a disability accommodation or something like an employee relations scenario.

00:04:01:12 - 00:04:20:06

Sophie Boler

And you just mentioned a couple of reasons why people call into the hotline. I think some people are also pretty hesitant on calling just because they don't want to ask a dumb question or look bad. So could you tell us more about what people should be calling about and how should they be using the hotline as a resource?

00:04:20:11 - 00:04:42:15

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah, that's a great question. There really isn't a dumb question. There's no dumb question to call in for. So even the most experienced HR professionals call us sometimes. Sometimes they just want to talk through a scenario with another professional that's on a level that they are at, and then sometimes it's somebody very new to HR that might be, you know, they don't have a lot of resources internally.

00:04:42:15 - 00:05:07:03

Nicole Morehouse

Maybe they're a solo HR practitioner and then they want some guidance. A lot of times we save HR practitioners a lot of time because they will need certain things or certain information. They have to run off to a meeting. We're there to answer or provide. And then when that person gets back to their desk, they have an email or the information that they were looking for in a particular topic.

00:05:08:03 - 00:05:18:11

Nicole Morehouse

You know, it's all under the umbrella of human resources and compliance. But if you're in HR, you know that anything that touches people really qualifies as HR.

00:05:19:13 - 00:05:28:16

Sophie Boler

And talking about some of those questions that people ask. Do you have any memorable or crazy stories from the hotline that you can share? Just had to ask.

00:05:28:18 – 00:05:55:04

Nicole Morehouse

Yeah, I thought you might ask me that. And that's kind of a hard question because there are lots of memorable moments. I just was catching up with one of our advisors before I came in here and we chatted about a half a dozen of them—and not from our members per se, but from our experience as HR directors. And there are a lot of memorable moments, but we keep that very close to the vest.

Sophie Boler

Right.

00:05:55:04 - 00:05:57:02

Nicole Morehouse

When you call us, you're calling in confidence.

00:05:57:18 - 00:06:15:22

Sophie Boler

I guess that's a good thing. We won't hear it today. So our hotline advisors like you must hear a lot of different questions on a lot of different topics. So where do you and the other hotline advisors really get all the information they need to answer the question correctly and thoroughly?

00:06:16:05 - 00:06:38:20

Nicole Morehouse

The criteria to be an advisor you have to have amassed a tremendous amount of experience, even to be an advisor. So right from the get-go, based on your experience, you probably have a lot of knowledge that's required for answering calls that come in. In addition to that, we know

exactly where to find regulatory information.

00:06:39:10 - 00:07:03:18

Nicole Morehouse

We get regular feeds on the information. So hopefully we know about information before the member does and have that all at the ready to go. So and we also produce content that relates to the types of questions that we get. So if members call in on any particular topic repeatedly, you know, we're going to make sure that we have resources that the member can get quickly, get in their hands from the hotline.

00:07:05:14 - 00:07:15:22

Sophie Boler

So as we begin 2023, I'd really love to go over some stats from 2022. So how many calls did you receive on the hotline last year?

00:07:16:07 - 00:07:22:04

Nicole Morehouse

Over 24,000. So 24,386 calls last year.

00:07:22:04 - 00:07:22:13

Sophie Boler

That is crazy.

00:07:22:13 - 00:07:38:06

Nicole Morehouse

Most of those do come, about half or so come in through the phone, right? But we also get emails and then people contact us through the website. So the phone is the most popular way. It's very interactive. And like I said before, you get answers within seconds.

00:07:38:10 - 00:07:53:03

Sophie Boler

Wow, that's crazy. Well, you're very successful here. And I'm sure out of all those calls, there were a huge variety of call topics on that. So can you narrow it down to maybe the most called upon topic from 2022?

00:07:53:13 - 00:08:20:07

Nicole Morehouse

Leaves of absence. And I experienced that myself. So if I'm on the hotline, you know, leave of absence, some other reasons that someone might call in are accommodating disability scenarios, definitely compensation, interpreting market data, maybe they participated in the survey and they have the survey and they want to use that data. So they might contact us about that.

00:08:21:01 - 00:08:47:18

Nicole Morehouse

Definitely employee relations. So performance management, discipline situations, situations that involve terminations, the step of termination, wage and hour compliance, a lot of our members have expanded in the last couple of years and they're in locations that they've never been before. And so we get a lot of questions on mobile compliance in new physical locations where maybe they don't have experience yet.

00:08:48:07 - 00:08:58:05

Sophie Boler



Sure. Well, we've been talking a lot about the hotline, but I want to know more about your role. So what is your favorite part on working with a hotline, with your team?

00:08:58:06 - 00:09:00:09

Nicole Morehouse

Okay, now you give me an easy question.

00:09:00:12 - 00:09:19:03

Nicole Morehouse

It is the team itself. So I mean, it's a wonderful group of professionals. They're very uniquely qualified. So just when I think I couldn't be impressed more, they impress me. Yeah. I mean, it's just the knowledge that they have and the skills that they have to do what they do is just beyond impressive.

00:09:19:06 - 00:09:26:22

Sophie Boler

Absolutely. The hotline team I feel like, is always like, ready to go, ready to give you an answer. They're also excited about it, too.

00:09:26:22 - 00:09:32:16

Nicole Morehouse

Right. And they really, truly enjoy working for the member. And so they really value that relationship.

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Sophie Boler

Well, just before we wrap up, do you have any lasting comments or thoughts to share with our listeners before we go?

00:09:41:16 - 00:10:08:15

Nicole Morehouse

Thank you for showcasing the hotline today. That's greatly appreciated. And then if you haven't used the hotline before or if you're not a member and you want to use the hotline, I strongly encourage you to go through that process—become a member, or if you're a member already, contact the hotline to get a couple of calls underway so that you can see the benefit that you have available to you.

00:10:08:15 - 00:10:31:07

Sophie Boler

And so when you start getting more comfortable calling and calling and you can't stop!

Nicole Morehouse

Right, exactly.

Sophie Boler

Well, thank you so much for joining us today, Nicole, and thank you to our listeners for joining us today. We learned a lot about the hotline today, and I hope you can use that. So if you liked our chat today and want to get more involved with MRA and want to consider membership, I highly encourage you to do so.

00:10:31:20 - 00:10:52:14

Sophie Boler

We have all the resources in the show notes below for you needed. And then we've also included Nicole's email and her LinkedIn profile. So if you want to get in touch with her or learn more about the hotline, she's here for you. Otherwise. Thank you so much for tuning in today. And Nicole, thanks for all of your hard work and for joining us today.

00:10:52:14 - 00:10:54:15

Sophie Boler

We will see you all next week.

00:10:55:19 - 00:11:18:01

Outro

And that wraps up our content for this episode. Be sure to reference the show notes, where you can sign up to connect for more podcast updates. Check out other MRA episodes on your favorite podcast platform. And as always, make sure to follow MRA's 30 minute THRIVE so you don't miss out. Thanks for tuning in and we'll see you next Wednesday to carry on the HR conversation."