Asking more of workers during off hours may backfire

By Clive Thompson, Mother Jones

My airplane home from Boston is delayed for takeoff, so the woman next to me pulls out her phones to get some work done. Like many of us, she has two—an iPhone for her personal life and a BlackBerry paid for by her employer. “It’s a dog leash,” she jokes. “They yank on it and I respond. If somebody from work emails me on Friday at 10 p.m., they’re pissed if I don’t write back in five minutes.” When I ask whether she ever just turns it off, she shakes her head in annoyance, as though I’d uttered something profane. “My team leader would kill me,” she says.

Cultural pundits these days often bemoan how people are “addicted” to their smart phones. We’re narcissistic drones, we’re told, unable to look away from the glowing screen, desperate to remain in touch. And it’s certainly true that many of us should probably cool it with social media; nobody needs to check Twitter that often. But it’s also becoming clear that workplace demands propel a lot of that nervous phone-glancing. In fact, you could view off-hours email as one of the growing labor issues of our time.

In a recent survey of workers, 50 percent said they checked email while in bed, and 38 percent “routinely” checked it at the dinner table.

Consider some recent data: A 2012 survey by the Center for Creative Leadership found that 60 percent of smartphone-using professionals kept in touch with work for a full 13.5 hours per day, and then spent another 5 hours juggling work email each weekend. That’s 72 hours a week of job-related contact. Another survey of 1,000 workers by Good Technology, a mobile-

software firm, found that 68 percent checked work email before 8 a.m., 50 percent checked it while in bed, and 38 percent "routinely" did so at the dinner table. Fully 44 percent of working adults surveyed by the American Psychological Association reported that they check work email daily while on vacation—about 1 in 10 checked it hourly. It only gets worse as you move up the ladder. According to the Pew Research Center, people who make more than $75,000 per year are more likely to fret that their phone makes it impossible for them to stop thinking about work.

Over time, the creep of off-hours messages from our bosses and colleagues has led us to tolerate these intrusions as an inevitable part of the job, which is why it's so startling when an employer is actually straightforward with his lunatic demands, as with the notorious email a Quinn Emanuel law partner sent to his underlings back in 2009: "Unless you have very good reason not to (for example when you are asleep, in court or in a tunnel), you should be checking your emails every hour."

Constant access may work out great for employers, since it continues to ratchet up the pressure for turning off-the-clock, away-from-the-desk hours into just another part of the workday. But any corresponding economic gains likely aren't being passed on to workers: During the great internet-age boom in productivity, which is up 23 percent since 2000, the inflation-adjusted wages and benefits for college graduates climbed just 4 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Read the whole story

Boat inspection stations opening at Lake Tahoe

Roadside stations for inspections and decontamination of motorized boats and watercraft are opening in Lake Tahoe.

Locations, hours of operation and opening dates are:

Now open –

8:30am-5:30pm, seven days a week

Meyers: at the junction of highways 50 and 89

Spooner Summit: at the junction of highways 50 and 28

Alpine Meadows: Highway 89, off Alpine Meadows Road north of Tahoe City

Opening May 22 –

8:30am-5:30pm, Thursday-Sunday

Northstar: Highway 267, at Northstar Drive south of Truckee

All motorized boats and watercraft require inspection for aquatic invasive species prior to launching into Lake Tahoe. Invasive species, such as Quagga mussels, New Zealand mudsnails or hydrilla, are known to multiply quickly and colonize underwater surfaces, including docks and piers, water supply and filtration systems, buoys, moored boats and even the beautiful rocky shoreline.

For more info, call 888.824.6267.

Caesars quarterly losses continue to grow

By Michelle Rindels, AP

LAS VEGAS — Caesars Entertainment on Wednesday reported a wider first-quarter loss as gambling revenue fell and the company's casinos outside of Las Vegas faced stiffer competition and bad weather.

The Las Vegas-based company, which runs the Caesars, Harrah's, and Horseshoe brands, as well as Harveys at Lake Tahoe, has struggled since the recession, and has not posted a profit since 2009. It's hobbled by its lack of a presence in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau, which has been the center of the gambling world for years.

The Las Vegas-based company lost $386.4 million, or $2.82 cents per share in the period ending March 31. A year earlier it lost $217.6 million, or $1.74 cent per share.

Revenue fell 2 percent to $2.1 billion.

Rivals Wynn Resorts Ltd., MGM Resorts and Las Vegas Sands all posted big quarterly gains, helped by their lucrative Macau resorts.

Caesars announced late Tuesday that it was restructuring its $23 billion in long-term debt to eliminate more than $1 billion in obligations that were coming due in 2015. Its shares jumped more than 14 percent Wednesday.

In Las Vegas, Caesars is in the final stages of transforming Bill's Gamblin' Hall & Saloon into a boutique hotel dubbed The Cromwell. It saw visitor numbers grow this spring after opening its $550 million LINQ development, an entertainment district featuring the world's tallest Ferris wheel.

That attraction, named the High Roller, is welcoming thousands of visitors each day and has attracted steady special-event and banquet business, according to Caesars Chief Financial Officer Donald Colvin.

“As additional assets come on line later this year and into 2015, we are excited about Caesars’ prospects in Las Vegas,” Caesars President and CEO Gary Loveman said in a statement. “We are also looking forward to developing an integrated resort in South Korea with our partners there, a promising market given its proximity to China.”

Still, the company’s casinos in the East and Gulf Coast returned lackluster first-quarter results. In addition to the rough winter, Caesars executives said customers are coming to gamble at regional casinos less frequently, and it’s been difficult to increase their visits.

The company’s earnings report was released after the close of trading on Wall Street. Its shares slipped 18 cents to $21 in after-hours trading.

Farmers’ markets open in Lake Tahoe



Farmers' markets have a variety of fresh produce. Photos/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Farmers' market season arrived in Lake Tahoe this week, though the bulk of the markets don't open until June.

"The thing we found out about farmers' markets is there are many options, but you still have the opportunity to meet the farmer," Steve Rozier told *Lake Tahoe News*. He runs a market in Stateline, Incline Village and Gardnerville – all of which started this week. "It's the best bang for your buck."

Peaches and apricots came in early this year for his farmers. Also available this time of year are a few oranges, leafy greens, strawberries, broccoli, beets, carrots and artichokes.

Instead of being at Kahle Community Center, the Stateline market is in the front parking lot of Lakeside Inn and Casino, which is where it ended last season. In June it will move over to Lakeside's property next to Shoreline Adventure Center off

Kahle Drive.

Rozier’s Gardnerville market is more of a farm to fork event in partnership with Lentine’s Italian Restaurant.

An avocado farmer from San Diego and cheese purveyor from Petaluma will be making the rounds on a part-time basis at Rozier’s markets.

He describes the Stateline market as more of grab and go, while in Incline people have a beer and listen to live music.

When the South Lake Tahoe market opens on election day it will be starting its 20th year.

Expect cherries, greens and angelcots to be in abundance the first day. Angelcots are similar to an apricot, but more refined.

“The water issue doesn’t seem to be affecting things much,” Jim Coalwell, who runs the El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market in South Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Later on we might see a difference.”

He said the wet spring has been good for farmers.



Artists, music and bounce house will be at the Ski Run market.

Not all the vendors are locked in, but Coalwell is not expecting many changes because his market sells out of booth

space quickly.

The Ski Run Boulevard market in South Tahoe starts June 6. The big new vendor is homemade ice cream. A meat and egg vendor is also possible.

Blue Angel Café will return with its beer garden.

Here is a list of some of the farmers' markets in the area:

Tuesday

• South Lake Tahoe: El Dorado County Certified Farmers Market Association

American Legion parking lot, Highway 50

June 3-Oct. 7, 8am-1pm

• Truckee: Truckee River Regional Park

10500 Brockway Road off Highway 267

June 10-Oct. 14, 8am-1pm

Wednesday

• Gardnerville: Lampe Park Farmers Market

1328 Waterloo Lane

May 21-Sept. 24, 9am-pm

• Stateline: Farmers Market at Lakeside Inn and Casino

168 Highway 50

Now-Sept. 24, 4-7pm

No market July 2

Thursday

• Incline Village: Farmers Market at Tunnel Creek

1115 Tunnel Creek Road

Now-Sept. 25, 4-7pm,

No market July 3

• Tahoe City: Commons Beach

Commons Beach Road and North Lake Boulevard

May 22-June 19; Aug 28-Sept. 25, 8am-1pm

• Tahoe City: Tahoe Lake Elementary School

375 Grove St.

June 26-Aug. 21, 8am-1pm

• Truckee: Truckee Thursdays

Historic Downtown Truckee at Donner Pass Road near the train station

June 12-Aug. 21, 5-9pm

Friday

• South Lake Tahoe: Ski Run Boulevard

Ski Run at Birch Street

June 6-Sept. 26, 3-8pm

• Crystal Bay: Farmers Market at Tahoe Biltmore

5 Highway 28

June 6-Sept. 26, 9am-1pm

No market July 4

• Gardnerville: Farm to Fork Festival

Lentine’s Italian Restaurant, 1488 Highway 395

Now-Sept. 26, 4-7pm

No market July 4

• Incline Village Farmers’ Market

770 Mays Blvd., Ste. 2

June 13-Aug. 30, 10am-2pm

Saturday

• Incline Village Farmers’ Market

770 Mays Blvd., Ste. 2

June 13-Aug. 30, 10am-2pm.

Letters: Douglas teachers want fair treatment

To the community,

The teachers in Douglas County have not received an increase in salary since a mediated agreement was reached in February 2008. The end result of that mediated process was 4 percent for 2007, and 4 percent for 2008, not compounded. That agreement was reached after the DSA [Distributive School Account] for DCSD was increased from $4,911 to $5,324 per student, an increase of 9.6 percent.

The mediator was able to move the parties once it was shown the DSA increased substantially and revealed through board

documents that the administrative groups were approved raises well above 8 percent for the same time period.

Since then, the DCPEA (Douglas County Professional Education Association) bargaining unit's base salary has fallen from $35,712 to $34,957. That is a decrease of 2.1 percent. During the extreme recession in Nevada, DCPEA worked with the district to restructure the health plan and reduce the monthly contribution per employee by 13 percent. A total of ($1,062 per year per employee) rather than take additional cuts to the base salary.

The district was allocated a DSA increase of 10.76 percent YOY 2012-2013. This brings the DSA allocation to $5,885 per student, 10.5 percent higher than is was in 2008.

It is our opinion that the district has the means to fund a reasonable raise.

The final offer made by the district would have increased the base salary to $35,831. That would be an increase of less than $10 per month over the salary negotiated in 2008, six years ago. In our opinion this is not a reasonable offer.

Why arbitration?

In Nevada, binding arbitration is the final step available to parties when they cannot resolve their differences. The DCPEA negotiation team requested to begin negotiations in January 2013. The district refused to meet on any issue until the legislature finished business in June. Since the legislative session closed, our team has met face-to-face with the district for multiple hours over a dozen times. In the full year since DCPEA asked to open negotiations not a single tentative agreement on any issue had been signed by the district.

The final face-to-face negotiation session in January 2014 ended in DCPEA declaring impasse when the district made their

final offer of 2.5 percent and once again no TA's were signed on non-financial issues. However, neither the declaration of impasse, nor the arbitration scheduled for June 16-20 prevent the district from requesting further negotiation.

Sincerely,

Brian Rippet, Douglas County Professional Education Association president

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Upgrades being made to Emerald Bay business corridor



What was a restaurant will soon be a building for bikes and standup paddleboards. Photo/LTN

Businesses on Emerald Bay Road are making changes.

The long vacant building that used to house a Chinese restaurant has been demolished. In its place and using the same footprint will be a building that will house South Shore

Bikes and SUP Tahoe.

“Originally they planned on remodeling, but found that the building required so much upgrade that it was more cost effective to rebuild,” Hilary Roverud, director of Development Services for South Lake Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Those businesses have to leave the old AAA building that is a half block north of the Y in South Lake Tahoe because it is going to be torn down and a Bev Mo will be erected.

Keith Simpson last year sold Murphy’s Irish Pub to go to work for the Food Network as host of the show “Buy This Restaurant”. Sonney’s BBQ Shack has taken over that location.

Burgers A-Go-Go is now Tahoe Burgers & More.

Lazy S Lodge is on the market.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Coffee industry not great for environment

By Joe Satran, Huffington Post

Every day, coffee fans in cities from San Diego to Stockholm get a dose of self-satisfaction along with their morning caffeine jolt when they order fancy coffee that tastes great and that they assume is helping the environment.

But the recent uptick in coffee connoisseurship hasn’t yet translated into a more environmentally friendly coffee industry. Quite the opposite. According to a study published

in the latest issue of BioScience, the world's coffee farms are now more harmful to the environment than ever.

Specifically, the study's authors, led by Shalene Jha of the University of Texas, found that a far larger share of the world's coffee than ever before is now being grown in direct sunlight, rather than under the shade of a canopy of trees. These full-sun coffee farms are scarcely any different from the large plots of monoculture corn and soybeans that have been vilified by environmentalists over the past several decades.

By contrast, large trees provide a habitat for native wildlife, support soil health, fight erosion and confer side benefits, like fruit and firewood, to farmers. "Our scientists say a certified coffee farm is the next best thing to rainforest," Chris Wille, the head of sustainable agriculture at Rainforest Alliance, said of shaded farms.

Read the whole story

Plastic bags caused sewage backup; fecal numbers high

By Kathryn Reed

Plastic bags are what caused the backup at the Fresh Ketch restaurant and subsequent sewage spill into Lake Tahoe.

A plumber from Summit Plumbing in his work order said he found a 4-inch sewer line backed up and overflowing on May 3. He also removed plastic bags from the line.

On the Tahoe Keys Marina & Yacht Club Facebook page Chad

Holdren, who works at the marina, claims two former tenants deliberately sabotaged the restaurant by flushing the bags down the toilet.

However, as of the afternoon of May 7, the marina had not contacted the police department to report a crime.

“There is no police activity at this time,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Andrew Lubrano, one of the people who the marina accused, told *Lake Tahoe News*, “I would never go out of my way to sabotage someone else. I have no reason to. I don’t believe anyone sabotaged them.”

He plans to meet with Lahontan officials next week as well as his attorney.

Lubrano is the one who on May 4 called the emergency number for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board to let them know he saw the sewage on the back walkway of the South Lake Tahoe restaurant and that it was flowing into Lake Tahoe.

Lahontan tested for bacteria on Monday and found fecal coliform bacteria levels well above normal.

Tests taken May 6 show numbers are going down except at the location closest to the discharge. It is 288 colony forming units per 100 milliliters.

Lahontan’s standards are 20 cfu per 100 ml and not more than 10 percent of all samples collected in a 30-day period to exceed 40 cfu/100 ml.

“It could be a goose that went by before the sample was collected or it could be something else of that nature or it could be from the spill. It’s hard to say,” Eric Taxer, water resource control engineer with Lahontan, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We will continue to collect samples through the week to see if it’s an anomaly or goes back down.”

The results have been forwarded to the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department.

TRPA Regional Plan court decision appealed

By Kathryn Reed

Earthjustice, which represents the Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore, waited until May 7 – the last day possible – to file an appeal regarding the U.S. District Court's decision upholding the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update.

"The agency's strange strategy to protect Lake Tahoe and its surrounding landscape from the damage caused by excessive urbanization over past decades is to promote even more development," Earthjustice attorney Wendy Park said in a statement. "We will continue our fight to protect the lake from the misguided actions of the agency charged with protecting and restoring its environment."



The TRPA's Regional Plan is headed back to court. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Regional Plan was approved by the bi-state regulatory agency in December 2012, five years after the previous one was supposed to be null and void. Countless meetings were conducted, comments given and bickering between the two states over the document that almost resulted in Nevada's pulling out of the bi-state Compact.

Two months after the Governing Board approved the plan the lawsuit was filed. U.S. District Court Judge John Mendez on April 7 said the agency could keep the document in place. Last June he had handed TRPA a partial victory by saying the Regional Plan update does not violate California law by allowing local jurisdictions to have more authority. That was one of the items in the lawsuit.

It will now be up to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to make a decision.

"TRPA is confident the Regional Plan will accelerate Lake Tahoe's restoration and support sustainable communities," TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta told *Lake Tahoe News*. "While the appeal makes its way through the legal process, we will continue to put the substantial environmental benefits of the plan into place."

The environmental groups believe the environmental impact statement for the RPU failed to analyze how the document will have negative impacts on soil conservation, water quality and air quality. Their contention is the plan promotes more growth, including in areas not already developed.

"TRPA has abandoned its core mission to restore and protect Lake Tahoe's environment," Laurel Ames of the Sierra Club said in a statement. "It's a fallacy that the environmental damage caused to Lake Tahoe by the over-urbanization approved by TRPA can be solved by further intensifying urbanization, and this demonstrates just how far the agency has strayed."

USFS seeks comments about bear-proof containers

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is accepting comments on the environmental assessment for a proposal that would require proper storage of food and refuse at developed recreation sites in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Comments will be accepted through May.

The EA is available online.

For more information, contact Megan Mullowney at 530.543.2651 or mcmullowney@fs.fed.us.