



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Telecommuting Ban, Twitter, & TerminalGate

CHALLENGER LISTS THE TOP WORKPLACE STORIES OF 2013

CHICAGO, December 23, 2013 – As the year comes to a close, global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. presents some of the most outrageous, unbelievable, and compelling workplace stories of the year. Challenger, which released the compilation Monday, remembers Yahoo's major decision, government impasses and how the climate has impacted jobs.

TOP 10 UNBELIEVABLE WORKPLACE STORIES OF 2013

10) Yahoo drops telecommuting, February –Yahoo! Inc. announced an end to its telecommuting program, which according to a leaked memo stemmed from the belief that “speed and quality are sacrificed when people work from home.” The decision came down from the internet giant’s new CEO Marissa Mayer, who has been determined to shake things up at the struggling company. "To become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side-by-side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices. Some of the best decisions and insights come from hallway and cafeteria discussions, meeting new people, and impromptu team meetings. Speed and quality are often sacrificed when we work from home. We need to be one Yahoo!, and that starts with physically being together."

9) Companies move retirees off insurance plans, September - Within two days of each other, Time Warner and IBM announced that they will move retirees from company-provided health insurance plans into privately-run insurance exchanges and/or the taxpayer-funded public exchanges established under the 2010 Affordable Care Act. Last year, GE made a similar announcement. Altogether, about 44 percent of employers plan to stop administering health

plans for their former workers over the next two years, according to a survey by Towers Watson.

8) One of the worst flu seasons on record, January – Twenty-nine of 41 states that reported flu cases indicated that the outbreak was at “severe” levels. According to a report in the New York Daily News, the number of cases in New York had surpassed 15,000 in the first month of the flu season, compared to just 4,400 reported cases during the previous year’s entire flu season. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that, on average, seasonal flu outbreaks cost the nation’s employers \$10.4 billion in direct costs of hospitalizations and outpatient visits. That does not include the indirect costs related to lost productivity and absenteeism.

7) Climate change impacts jobs, January & September– In January, Cargill Beef shuttered its Texas plants as a prolonged drought thinned cattle herds to the lowest levels in 60 years. The closure forced the plant’s 2,000 workers to relocate to one of the company’s other plants or find employment elsewhere. In September, unprecedented flooding along the Front Range of the Rockies in Colorado damaged thousands of homes and businesses, disrupted tourism, and washed out hundreds of miles of roads, thus disrupting the transportation of goods across the state.

6) Twitter and the workplace, February & October - Andrew Mason, founder and CEO of Groupon, tweeted a letter to his employees that he was fired as the head of the company. Groupon had been under scrutiny due to falling stock prices and meager results, and the day before released a quarterly statement outlining its poor performance. Mason had publicly discussed the possibility of his removal, and his letter indicated that he was not surprised about the development. He was replaced on a permanent basis by chairman Eric Lefkofsky in August. Meanwhile, in October, a Whitehouse official was fired after he was discovered tweeting under a fake account, disclosing insider information on the Obama administration and insulting foreign policy officials.

5) Employer rewards tattooed employees, May - Some employers frown upon tattoos and others begrudgingly accept them, knowing that sometimes the best talent comes adorned with body art. However, one employer appears to have not only embraced tattoos, but is actually encouraging employees to decorate their bodies...with a tattoo of the company logo. What do employees get for this extreme demonstration of loyalty? A 15 percent bump in pay, according to a report by the CBS affiliate in Albany, New York. Rapid Realty, based in Brooklyn, New York, even pays for the tattoos, which can cost up to \$300.

4) Affordable Care Act employer mandate postponed for one year, July – The Obama administration delayed a major provision in the Affordable Care Act until 2015 after hearing from several employers concerned about implementing it. Employers with over 50 employees would have been required to offer health insurance to all their full-time employees by Jan. 1, 2014; however, the complexities of the Act left employers scrambling to comply.

3) Miami Dolphins Bullying, October/November – While not a traditional workplace, reports surfaced of extreme bullying from 30 year-old Miami Dolphin’s guard Richie Incognito against second-year lineman Jonathan Martin. The harassment caused Martin to leave the team, and Incognito to be suspended. [According to a 2012 survey](#) from the Workplace Bullying Institute, 68 percent of workplaces do not have a policy regarding workplace bullying.

2) Bloomberg media improperly use financial terminal usage data, May - Bloomberg reporters used financial data monitoring terminals sold by a separate division of the company to track customer activity, specifically at Goldman Sachs. While these products were not meant to be used in this way, reports from [Forbes](#) and the [New York Times](#) suggest that reporters were trained on these terminals to uncover customer browsing. In one instance, after a user of the product failed to log in to the terminal consistently, a reporter contacted the company to see if that person had left.

1) Government 21-Day Shutdown, September/October – Due to the inability of Congress to agree on the budget, an estimated 800,000 of 2 million government employees were deemed “non-essential” and furloughed. National parks, monuments, and memorials were closed, legal proceedings interrupted, and food uninspected for almost three weeks. While those workers did not receive paychecks during the furlough, they were eventually paid what they would have earned during that time period. Standard & Poor estimated the shutdown cost \$24 billion in lost services, travel spending, park fees, and spending at small businesses, among other things.