

[It's Thanksgiving! Let's Not Go Shopping!](#)

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Thanks to hotelchatter.com

Was it really necessary to start Black Friday a few hours earlier into Thanksgiving? According to an article by the New York Times posted Sunday, [opening stores on Thanksgiving diluted Black Friday sales](#).

“The early promotions and early openings on Thursday drew some of the sales that would normally land on Friday into Thursday,” Bill Martin, founder of ShopperTrak, told the New York Times. “What we’re going to start looking at is the ‘Black Weekend,’ a four-day weekend.”

Will this cause the retailers who opened their doors on Thanksgiving to re-think their strategy? I hope so, but I doubt it.

Ironically, the store that brings the country the Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade [was not open on Thanksgiving](#). To the retailer’s CEO, Terry J. Lundgren, Thanksgiving is about family and of course, the retailer’s Thanksgiving parade. He placed a higher value on allowing more employees to have the day off to be with their families instead of trying to bag extra sales. If anything, the retailer could be more tempted to be open to the thousands who attend the parade.

Good for him. And good for Macy’s.

His patience seemed to have paid off. When Macy’s opened its flagship Manhattan store at Midnight, **deal hunters quickly filled in record numbers**.

Could it be that his stance turned out to be the best marketing approach after all? Could it be that this act of goodwill became a brilliant public relations strategy?

That is not the only thing Macy’s is doing right while other merchants are struggling. Despite a pullback yesterday, its stock continues to [outperform the S&P 500 Retailing Industry Group](#).

The merchant that has given us the tradition of the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade is also one that is helping to preserve the holiday. The CEO was upholding an important part of Thanksgiving that money cannot buy: spending time with loved ones. Such time is harder to find amid longer workweeks necessary to stay employed and purchase Christmas presents.

***To protest the retailers who opened their stores on Thanksgiving,
I am pledging not to purchase anything from these stores this Christmas.***

My suspicion is that Macy's will do just fine this year sans being open on Thanksgiving. Citing figures from the National Retail Federation, the Times reported that average Thanksgiving weekend spending for retail in general rose from \$423 from \$398 last year. With the average family income on decline and double-digit unemployment in many areas of the country, the only explanation is consumers bought on credit. And that is just what this country needs, more personal debt along with growing Federal debt.

I am sad that a holiday [President Lincoln set aside during the Civil War for Americans to count their blessings](http://wilstar.com/holidays/thankstr.htm) is becoming shopping day. (see <http://wilstar.com/holidays/thankstr.htm>) Given the recent election, it is clear our nation is deeply divided once again.

Given this, it seems to me that Americans need a day to come together and count our blessings more than another shopping day. But alas, I have been called old-fashioned before.

To protest the retailers who opened their stores on Thanksgiving, I am pledging not to purchase anything from these stores this Christmas. Please consider doing the same.

[A Thank You](#)

Thank you to Terri Michalewicz of LCM Associates of Atlanta for making my article on [Social Media](#) recommended reading during her presentation at the Southeastern Actuaries conference!

[Workers Need to Know the Truth About Workers' Compensation \(Part 2\)](#)



*Thanks to
solomonsseal.wordpress.com for the
photo.*

In last week's blog, I explained that the path to a better workers' compensation system begins with getting past the political arguments. I am convinced that better informing workers about how the system should work will greatly improve both public policy discussions and the claims process.

Injured workers can be tempted to stay home from work as long as possible. I suspect they do not realize the long-term implications of unnecessarily being off work too long.

Before I make the case for return-to-work for injured workers, I want to state very clearly that I am in no way suggesting that injured employees work hurt. This is inhumane and can lead to possible re-injury, which can make a claim much more complicated than necessary. Injured workers need to know that returning to work as soon as medically feasible is in their best interest in the long term.

Studies have shown that the longer an employee is away from work, the less likely they are to return. One concluded that after 12 weeks, injured workers have only a 50 percent chance of returning to work and by one year, potential for gainful employment drops to less than 2 percent.

There is just something about work that gives people meaning. When I was an outreach worker to senior citizens in my teens, I saw retirees die unnecessarily early because they did not find meaningful activity after retirement. I remembered asking an African-American woman in her 90s who was born before 1900 how she lived so long despite all she had been through. She said she always made sure she had work to do.

***Let your employer know you want to come back to work
as soon as it is OK with your doctor.***

Absence costs workers in several ways. Consider the disruptions in family life and schedules and restrictions from pleasurable activities, such as hobbies or sports. Finding another job in the current economic market may also prove to be difficult.

Workers can be adversely affected psychologically when they are not working and do not feel like productive members of society. For 20 years my father loaded trucks for a living. When he sustained soft tissue back injuries and did not return to work, he didn't feel like a man because he could not provide for his family. Prior to this he never missed a day of work, but ended up on social security disability. He died about 12 years after filing for workers' compensation.

What can workers do?

- 1) Don't listen to anyone who tells you to take advantage of workers' compensation and enjoy the time off from work. While it appears to be a break in the short-term, it really isn't worth it.
- 2) Let your employer know you want to come back to work as soon as it is OK with your doctor.
- 3) Help your employer find ways you can work.
- 4) Are you eligible for telework? If so, make it known that your willing to work remotely.
- 5) Contact your company's Employee Assistance Program to find out other ways you and your family can get support.

And if your employer does not help you return to work, focus on looking for work elsewhere. You want to work for people who care.

My hope is that this blog will inspire injured workers to take an active part in the process. I also hope it encourages employers and system professionals to help educate injured workers. What else should injured workers know? Please share in the comments section.

Be the first to know. Follow my blog by pressing the "Follow" button at the bottom right hand side of this page.

[Content Marketing and Business Insights](#)

Just had to re-post this one!

[Workers Need to Know the Real Truth About Workers' Compensation \(Part 1\)](#)

As a journalist and writer, I have objectively covered virtually every aspect of workers' compensation from all perspectives for more than 20 years. Everyone wants to see a better system.



Special thanks to
http://missingmythyroid.blogspot.com/2009_05_01_archive.html

But we can't, however, seem to get past the tired, old post-industrial revolution debates. Public policy conversations feel more like massive labor-management contract negotiations than forward-thinking conversations about how workers' compensation can better serve injured workers and their employers.

Meanwhile, too many injured workers are being adversely effected because they do not know how the system is supposed to work.

A concerted effort to educate injured workers on what workers' compensation experts know is the best way to get past the political rhetoric and see immediate improvements. The workforce needs to know the truth about workers' compensation. Specifically, injured workers need to know the following:

The sooner they let their employers know about a work-related incident, the quicker they can get workers' compensation benefits. Workers, employers and insurers do not benefit from delayed claim filing. Informing employers about a work-related incident is also the best way an employer can address a safety hazard to prevent other co-workers from getting hurt. So if you get hurt at work, don't hesitate. File a claim.

Getting the best immediate care is more important for healing than seeing your general

practitioner who is not likely to be familiar with occupational medicine.

Injured workers should never pay a medical bill or accept shoddy physician care. Workers' compensation provides first dollar coverage, except in Washington state, which requires a co-pay. If your doctor is not helping you get better, ask the insurance company for a nurse case manager who knows who the good docs are.

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Giving employers and their insurers a chance to respond to a claim filing is often a better bet than hiring attorneys. Workers' compensation was originally designed as a self-administrating program intended to discourage litigation. One study showed that 46 percent of injured workers who hired attorneys said they did so because they felt their claims had been denied when actually, they were not yet in the process. To learn more about the Workers' Compensation Research Institute's (WCRI) study on why injured workers hire attorneys, please click [here](#). (Full disclosure WCRI, an independent research organization, is a client of Lipold Communications, LLC).

Therefore, if you have not heard from the insurer or your employer within a week of reporting the accident, **contact your employer to make sure the claim was properly reported.** Attorneys get about 10 to 25 percent of paid wage replacement benefits. As with any professional, get good references for lawyers who will advocate for *you*, not their wallets. Want to know your claim status? Call the insurer's claim representative.

I hope this blog will encourage a concerted effort to better educate the workforce. Employers can learn more about workers' compensation communications plans by clicking [here](#).

Next week I will offer more tips. In the meantime, what else do injured workers need to know?

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[21 Lessons Learned from My First Year of Blogging \(Part 3\)](#)

This is the last installment of the 21 Lessons Learned from My First Year of Blogging. To read part 1, please click [here](#). To read Part 2, please click [here](#).

Here's the rest of what I learned.

1) **Lighten up and have fun.** The blog I posted in June about what Benjamin Franklin would tweet still generates hits. Another blog on social media by the numbers broadened my audience,

especially on Twitter.

2) **Spare your readers the marketing hype.** The idea of blogging is to contribute to a greater community. Market your expertise and you will generate leads.

3) **It's all about content.** It should be no surprise that the blogs that generate tips and advice are more successful. Stick to what you know well and your expertise will come through.

4) **Don't give up.** It took several months before I was seeing Google hits on a regular basis. At the beginning, I would get traffic when the blog was posted but then it would taper off to nothing. Now, my blog generates hits every day. This came from being consistent with blogging (which attracts Google and providing enough content to attract new readers who did not discover you the first time you covered a topic.

Blogging should be a labor of love. Remember that there are no social media experts. We are all learning as we go and new innovations in social media are dizzying. If your company does not blog, you are missing out on opportunities to build your business and network.

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by Annmarie Geddes Baribeau