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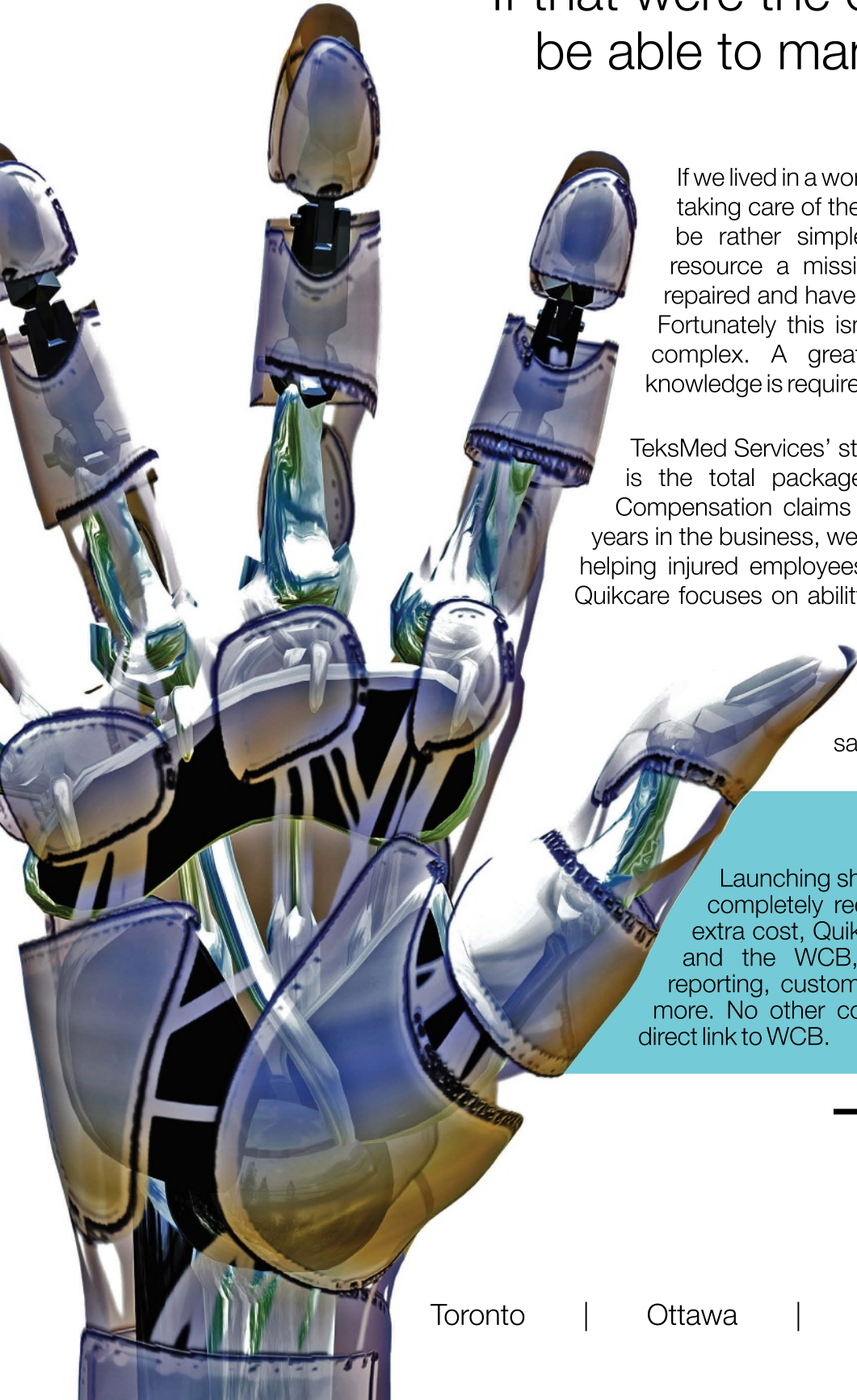
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By Lesley Young

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KPMG International has created an HR beachhead in Toronto from which to pitch a strategy for a worldwide battle for the globe's best talent.

By Jennifer J. Salopek

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CHANGES AT HR PROFESSIONAL

HR Professional readers will note a big human resources transition this issue: editor Meredith Birchall-Spencer, who guided the magazine over the past four years, has moved on to other opportunities. Meredith made many substantial improvements to the magazine, including a major redesign and editorial retooling, and her legacy will remain in these pages for some time to come.

We'll be introducing Meredith's replacement in the next issue.

Meanwhile, in this issue, there's plenty to keep you up to date.

Writer Lesley Young tackles the issue of HR strategy among so-called "low-wage employers" and finds some great examples of Canadian firms reaping huge rewards by going beyond basic HR best practices for their low-wage staff. Simple things like rewarding employees' bright ideas, celebrating and recognizing exceptional employee contributions and—perhaps most importantly—providing opportunities to advance in the organization are lowering turnover rates and boosting the bottom line by motivating staff to perform to high standards. See **High-performance HR for Low-Wage Workers** on page 22.

In HR 101, on page 46, author Georgia Curtis explores how good HR strategy (and the professionals to develop and execute it) can transform small and medium-sized businesses—a sector that's long been underserved by human resources.

And on page 27, we feature our annual HR Suppliers Guide to all the HR goods and services you need to do your job.

Happy reading and we hope you enjoy the issue.

Correction

In the March/April *HR Professional* HR Education guide, incorrect pricing information was provided for Centennial College. The correct information is included here.

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MALCOLM MACKILLOP

Malcolm MacKillop is a partner at Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP, where he provides employers with strategic employment-related advice. He discusses the need for clear termination clauses in employee contracts, on page 19.



TIM JACKSON

Tim Jackson, Ph.D., is a consultant with Jackson Leadership Systems Inc. He wrote “Focusing Engagement on Driving Performance” – which discusses measurement of employee engagement and its importance in driving corporate performance – on page 45.



BERNIE KEIM

Bernie Keim is vice-president, member services and regulatory affairs at CGA Ontario. He penned “Annual Reports – Corporate Link to Outside World,” for this issue’s finance column, on page 42.



ALYSON NYIRI

Alyson Nyiri, CHRP, is a freelance writer, researcher and consultant specializing in human resources and career development issues. She lends her expertise and gives readers the real story in Off the Shelf, on page 52.



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LEADERSHIP MATTERS

BY DAPHNE FITZGERALD, CHRP/SHRP

CELEBRATING CHRPs

In this issue of *HR Professional* you'll find the Human Resources Professionals Association's two-page salute to its most recent (2010) crop of Certified Human Resources Professionals (CHRPs).

I had an opportunity to talk with a few of these newly minted CHRPs and a CHRP candidate to discuss what the designation means to them personally and professionally. These members live in different parts of the province, work in different sectors and came to HR from different paths, but all share a great pride in earning the designation.

For Tamara Dahl, the CHRP meant an immediate move into a more senior position with her employer Redpath—a North Bay mining contracting and engineering firm. Tamara came to HR after a career in accounting. She returned to school, completed her courses, found an entry-level HR job and, in due course, completed her CHRP—which quickly opened doors professionally and personally. “Earning the accreditation has given me a greater sense of self-worth and has provided recognition at work,” she says. “It's really meant a lot.”

While researching HR careers after university, Megan Jamieson saw that a CHRP was a requirement for many of the jobs she was interested in and a must-have for a successful career. She says the CHRP gave her a definite advantage in helping her win her current role on the small HR team in the municipal offices of Haldimand County in Cayuga, Ontario. “The CHRP helped me stand out from the pack when I was job hunting,” she says. She also values the professional camaraderie of meeting with fellow CHRPs: “Being a member of a profession means I can meet other professionals outside of work but within the local HR community.”

For Kyle Parris, a CHRP candidate who recently passed the National Knowledge Exam, his final steps to certification means working in his chosen field at the College of Early Childhood Educators in Toronto to fulfil his experience requirement—all while earning the praise and admiration of his family back home in Trinidad and Tobago. He was always encouraged by his family to consider a profession and after settling on studying HR he moved to Canada and started working towards

his designation. Now, as the College's full-time HR professional, Kyle is committed to building a work culture where people can do their best.

For Tamara, Megan and Kyle and all the 1140 new Ontario CHRPs that earned the designation in 2010, the CHRP will undoubtedly provide an enormous boost to their HR career potential. The CHRP is the gold standard for HR competence and it certifies that each one of them has attained the academic credentials, the currency and completeness of HR knowledge, made the life-long commitment to professional development, and has demonstrated the judgment required for a professional practice based on excellence.

That's good news for the CHRPs; and it's really good news for the organizations that employ them. As Canadian organizations navigate a period of massive economic, demographic and technological change, they rely more and more on the human capital management know-how that CHRPs bring to the table.

Each new CHRP is a boon to everyone: employers, employees and Canadian business in general. Congratulations to all 2010 CHRPs!

On another note, I'd like to introduce myself as HRPA's new board chair. I recently took over the role from Antoinette Blunt at HRPA's AGM in May. I have a long history in Human Resources, including many years in various senior HR and business leadership roles at Zurich Financial Services in Canada and the U.S. I've served on a number of large not-for-profit boards over the years but none has been more exciting than the last six years serving on the HRPA board. I'm passionate about HR's role in contributing to organizational success and I look forward to serving the Association as board chair over the next couple of years. **HR**



Daphne Fitzgerald, CHRP/SHRP, is chair of HRPA's board of directors.



HRPA

Having met all the requirements as set out by the HRP Board of Directors, and under the authority of the *Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990*, the following* individuals were granted the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation from January 1 to December 31, 2010

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Nancy Mabon	Kimberly Mulcock	Oyeyemi Rattigan	Maureen Smith	Michelle Verhey-Korpan
Katherine Macaluso	Veronica Mulligan	Dawne Redel	Lisa Smith	Marianne Vervoort
Heather MacDonald	Kerry Munday	Denise Redgers	Lisa Smith	Vanessa Vetro
Mary Macfie	Jamie Murphy	Chris Redpath	Jane Snyder	Nancy Virgilio
Maria Maciel	Janet Murray	Natalie Renkosinski	Ernesto Solari Fierro	Kris Vogl
Edith MacKay	Omar Mustafa	Tammy Reynolds	Tamar Soltys	Brian Vollick
Sandra MacLeod	Kavita Nandlal	Marisa Rezzara	Garima Sood	Julia Vrabec
Andrea Madaras	Richard Nash	Mélanie Richard	Christine Southwood	Jenna Wagner
Sameet Maghera	Yvonne Nasri	Denise Rickets	Kate Sparling	Barbara Walker
Paula Maguire	Preeya Nathwani	Kelsi Rix	Linda Spartaco	Tina Walker
Daniela Mahac	Monica Navasques	Diane Robbins	Brenda Spaziani	Jack Wallace
Lisa Maharaj	Saba Nazir	Elizabeth Roberts	Meagan Spence	Deborah Wandly
Arash Mahmoudi	Victoria Needham	Jason Robinson	Susan Spicer	Melissa Wang
Rosy Makkar-Sethi	Alyssa Nelson	Christine Robinson	Mary-Anne Stam	Carrie Warren
Silvana Manarin	Genna Neuman	Dusan Rodic	Amy-Marie Stancati	Iman Wassef
Cristina Manase	Julie Newman	Rochelle Rodrigues	Amanda Standidge	Tanya Watchorn
Daniel Mandel	Lyna Newman	Lorraine Rohm	James Errin Starzynski	Anissa Watson
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Lori Mann	Yvonne Ng	Cherise Rooney	Jim Stewart	Kelly Wayne
Karen Mann	Cecilia Ng	Grace Roque	Lori Stone	Rebecca Weber
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Maria Gezamin Manuel	Debbie Nobrega-Marasovic	Sarah Roth	Wayne Stratton	Lindsay Weiler
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Elise Marentette	Joanna Noga	Tori Russo	Yvette Sturge	Elizabeth Wheatcroft
Marina Markelova	Claire Nolan	MaryLou Rutherford	Kelly Subica	Christina Wickenden
Suzanna Maros	Andrea Nyhuis	Kathryn Ryan	Evonne Sullivan	Lisa Wilcox
David Marriott	Sarah Nyman	Kelly Ryan	Marie Sullivan	Suzanne Willett
Elizabeth Marsden	Stephanie Nystedt	Mohammed Saeed	Michelle Sultan	Marie Williams
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Sandra Martins	Wendy Oliver	Marwa Salama	Emma Surich	Jeffrey Williams
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Claudia Mascia	Denise Orrico	Simona Beatrice Sandu	Sivasubramanian Swaminathan	Alison Willis
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Nicola McCorquodale	Sue Palmer	Harsha Saxena	Ann Tavares	Joanna Yaf-Shan Woo
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Heather McInnis	Valerie Parker	Stephanie Schumach	Olubukola (Bukola) Thomas	Li Yun Xu
Janice McIntyre	Heather Page	Sarah Schuster	Karen Thomas	Monica Yardley
Tracey McKenna	Sandra Pasquini	Bobbi - Jo Schwantz	Pavlina Thompson	Robina Yasini
Christopher McLean	Lauren Pasut	Chris Schwartz	Darlene Thomson	Trevor Yerlitz
Cameron McLennan	Tina Patel	Danny Scopazzi	Glen Thordarson	Doris Yip
Siobhan McMahon	Debbie Pawelczyk	Danielle Scott	Lee Anna Thornbury	Christine Young
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Bernadette Mesina	Rebecca Phillips	Preetie Sharma	Kimberly Travers	
Sue Michaud	Xin Pi	Carrie Sharpin	Cheryl Treliving	
Eileen Michels	Heather Pirrie	Stacey Sheehy	Josee Tremblay	
Jillian Mielke	Valeriya Polyakova	Erica Sherkey	Daniel Trias	
Charmaine Mifsud	Grace Pong	Sandra Shipley	Jack Triolo	
Karen Mihaljev	Kim Poplestone	Kiljon Shukullari	My-Binh Trung	
	Julie Powell			

TIME FOR HR, PR TO JOIN RANKS?

HR DEPARTMENTS COMMUNICATE POLICY TO STAFF AND RECRUIT NEW TALENT. PR EXECUTIVES MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA, PROMOTE THEIR BRAND TO RECRUITS AND ENGAGE EMPLOYEES THROUGH INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS.

IN 2009, SHELL APPOINTED A GLOBAL MARKETING, RECRUITMENT AND HR COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER WHO REPORTS TO THE RECRUITMENT, HR AND COMMUNICATIONS VICE-PRESIDENTS. AND LV= APPOINTED DAVID SMITH AS DIRECTOR OF HR AND COMMUNICATIONS — OVERSEEING PR AND HR.

SMITH SAID, "IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT FOR AN HR DIRECTOR TO HAVE A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PR DEPARTMENT, AS HE OR SHE CAN PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT IN HELPING TO COMMUNICATE YOUR EMPLOYMENT PROPOSITION, HENCE SHAPING THE BRAND OF THE ORGANIZATION."

— Source: PRWeek.com

HR Summit Awards

The Human Resources Professionals Association honoured the recipients of the third annual HR Summit Awards at a special gala in Toronto on Feb. 1.

The awards recognize Canadian HR professionals and teams who have made outstanding contributions to the profession and business community through implementation of innovative programs, practices and thought leadership.

2010 winners:

Carswell HR Rising Star Award: Melissa Gare, HR business partner at Lanxess.

Toronto Star HR Professional of the Year Award: Ruth Brothers, a senior HR executive who has worked at Teva Canada, CAE and General Electric.

Right Management HR Academic of the Year Award: Andrew Templer, professor of management at the University of Windsor.

Rogers Communications Innovation in Total Rewards Award: Reid Lewis, vice-president of human resources at ConAgra Foods Canada.

TD Insurance Meloche Monnex Corporate Governance and Strategic Leadership Award: Chris Bart, founder, principal and lead professor of The Directors College at McMaster University.



CARSWELL HR RISING STAR AWARD WINNER MELISSA GARE WITH CANADIAN HR REPORTER PUBLISHER JOHN HOBEL (RIGHT) AND HR SUMMIT AWARDS MC MIKE LIPKIN.

Workopolis Innovation in Employment Branding Award: Trillium Health Centre's campaign — People Promise.

HR Challenge Award: Heidi Flynn, senior HR business partner at Accucaps Industries

Overall Talent Management Award: Michelle Manglal-Lan, HR consultant at Siemens Canada.

Corporate Social Responsibility Award: The Home Depot Canada

Grand & Toy Employer Champion of IEP Award: St. Michael's Hospital's program — Building Employer Capacity for Effective Integration and Retention of Internationally Educated Professionals.

Chopper Heads!

Nearly every New York office has an aging Nerf basketball hoop hanging in a closet, but that game now has some competition: remote-control helicopters, a toy originally made for 8-year-olds (and up). Now staff are de-stressing, brainstorming or goofing off while flying their Air Hogs, one brand of these helicopters, around their cubicles or in their conference rooms.

"I love flying my Air Hog — it has a great mix of speed and control," said Dave Wieseneck, a 24-year-old accountant at OLX Inc. in Manhattan, who received his Havoc Heli, the classic Air Hog model, as a Christmas present from his girlfriend. "I use it when I have downtime or am waiting for someone to respond to an e-mail."

Joe, a 45-year-old IT consultant, was introduced to Air Hogs by his project manager.

"He bought one for the team as a morale booster, and now pretty much everyone on the team and even some clients have acquired one or more since the holidays," he said. The self-proclaimed "overgrown child" and his colleagues fly their helicopters around the conference room. (Despite his enthusiasm, Joe declined to give his last name out of fear that potential clients would think him silly.)

But he said there is a drawback: These office toys can quickly become office hazards. "Having to explain to the maintenance guy why there was a miniature rocket fouling up the heater and smelling like burnt plastic was embarrassing." — Source: NYPost.com



Ogled Women

DO NOT PERFORM AS WELL

Bosses might want to keep an eye on the flirtatious glances of their employees, as a new study reveals women who are leered at perform less well in the office.

Scientists discovered that being the subject of a man's admiring gaze is distracting and unsettling for women because it either puts them off or makes them feel flattered. But the research found that despite this negative effect, women still interact more with men who look at them this way.

The study found that women taking a math test experienced a drop in performance if the male researcher asking the questions occasionally stared at their chest. Psychologists believe the lower scores could be due to women becoming anxious about sexist stereotypes.



Meanwhile their increased interaction with lecherous men may be due to trying to boost their sense of belonging in a male environment.

Dr. Sarah Gervais, who led the study at the University of Nebraska, said the lower math scores were likely caused by a phenomenon called "stereotype threat."

"It creates this vicious cycle for women in which they're under-performing in math or at work," Dr. Gervais said, "but they're continuing to want to interact with the person who's making them underperform in the first place."

"When it comes to something subtle like this, it's very difficult to combat. It's almost expected that men are going to do this to women and that really it's not that harmful. Even though it is just a look, it has meaningful consequences for women." — Source: DailyMail.co.uk

"PROBLEM"

MANAGERS PLAGUE CANADIAN WORKPLACES

The majority of Canadian HR professionals (73 per cent) believe managers who bully, speak inappropriately to staff, play favourites or are disrespectful are a significant problem in today's workplace with negative implications on employee engagement, turnover and workplace morale, according to a recent survey by the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA). However, evidence shows most organizations will tolerate at least some managerial misbehaviour as long as they're getting results.

According to the survey, the most problematic behaviours exhibited by bad managers include:

- Inappropriate comments (74 per cent)
- Favouritism (70 per cent)
- Unwillingness to follow due process (63 per cent)
- Treating employees with disrespect (62 per cent)
- Bullying or intimidation (57 per cent)

One-third of respondents (35 per cent) said their organization will tolerate just about anything from a results-achieving "problem" manager. The survey also pointed to a correlation between the degree to which an organization tolerates misbehaviour and the size of the problem that problem managers pose in an organization, suggesting those organizations which turn a blind eye, or even reward, managerial misbehaviour will have more such misconduct.

"The key is not to point out the negative consequences of problem behaviours, but rather to convince the problem managers that results will be better if they change their ways," said Claude Balthazard, HRPA's Director of HR Excellence.



REPORT SAYS MINING SECTOR MUST FILL 100,000 NEW JOBS BY 2020

CANADA'S MINING INDUSTRY HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL (MIHR) HAS DEDUCED THAT IF A PERIOD OF RELATIVE STABILITY IN THE MINING SECTOR CONTINUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE, ROUGHLY 100,000 NEW JOBS WILL NEED TO BE FILLED. EVEN IF THE SECTOR SLUMPS, MIHR BELIEVES 60,000 JOBS WILL NEED FILLING.

THE POSITIONS RUN FROM HEAVY MACHINERY OPERATORS TO UNDERGROUND AND SURFACE MINERS AND SKILLED TRADES AND PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS SUCH AS GEOSCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS.

THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR TO THE BOOM IS AN AGING WORKFORCE. MORE THAN 60,000 PEOPLE IN THE SECTOR ARE EXPECTED TO RETIRE BY 2020. MIHR ESTIMATES HOURLY WAGES THAT CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE MINING INDUSTRY RANGE FROM \$32.21 TO \$49.25. — Source: Mining Industry Human Resources Council



TIPS FOR INTERNATIONALS LOOKING TO CANADA

CLAUDE BALTHAZARD, DIRECTOR, HR EXCELLENCE, HRPA "BREAK DOWN BARRIERS: HR IS PRETTY MUCH THE SAME EVERYWHERE. BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE CANADIAN HR EXPERIENCE ISN'T A BIG DEAL. HR MANAGERS FROM ANYWHERE (IN CANADA) ARE MORE ALIKE THAN MANY HR MANAGERS FROM ANYWHERE ELSE."

KEITH HERNANDEZ, PRESIDENT/OWNER OF KAH CONSULTANTS "RESUME: TREAT YOUR RESUME AS A SELF-PROMOTIONAL TOOL AND MARKET YOURSELF TO EACH INTERVIEW. LIST YOUR JOB ACCOMPLISHMENTS, NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES. PRACTICE TAILORING YOUR RESUME TO EACH JOB."

TOM KAUFMANN, PRESIDENT OF TK ENTERPRISES "SELL YOURSELF: IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU DON'T LIKE SELLING, YOU'RE ALWAYS SELLING. REHEARSE, LOOK IN THE MIRROR, ASK YOURSELF: WOULD YOU DO BUSINESS WITH THAT PERSON? IF NOT, GO CHANGE."

Background Checks

HIT BOTTLENECK



Recruiters are struggling to deal with a surge in criminal record checks under new RCMP rules for "vulnerable sectors" and private screening firms say the backlog is creating some difficult human resource challenges.

Vulnerable sectors include construction, medical, law enforcement, volunteers, lawyers, retail jobs involving cash, the financial sector and many more.

"It is a massive issue," said Ainsley Mulder, director of business development for Express Pardons. "It certainly has escalated since mass layoffs have occurred. There is an onslaught of (job) applications."

Hiring managers often use criminal record checks as a screening tool to immediately

rule out anybody who comes back with a positive result for a record. The problem is that oftentimes, the 24-hour check flags people with absolutely no record — just the same name and date or place of birth as a criminal.

That type of check has two possible results: "clear" or "may or may not have a record."

Under new rules introduced last July, a person is also matched by birthdate and gender — but not by name — against a list of 14,000 pardoned sex offenders.

Thousands of people are being incorrectly flagged, while the number of longer and more in-depth fingerprint checks has skyrocketed.

It does, however, create some pressing HR challenges for recruiters. Long wait times — it can take three to five months for some fingerprint criminal record checks, says Mulder — makes many volunteers simply move on, while good employees are also being overlooked. —Source: *The Calgary Herald*

LAUNCH: HRPA OFFERS ONLINE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

HRPA is launching its Online Academic Program — online versions of the association's long-running Evening Academic Program (EAP) courses required for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation.

The course start dates will follow a similar schedule as HRPA's three semester EAP schedule (September to December), winter (January to April) and spring (May to August). Courses are typically 12- 14 weeks long. Price: \$375 per course.

Initially, three courses will be available starting in spring 2011 semester, including:

Human Resources Management with Professor Monica Belcourt, York University

Introduction to Organizational Behaviour with Professor Alan Saks, University of Toronto and Professor Randy Hoffman, York University

Training and Development with Professor Alan Saks, University of Toronto

The rest of the OAP courses (HR Planning, Health & Safety, Accounting & Financial Management, Compensation, Labour Relations, and Recruitment & Selection) will be available later this year.

For more information, please check out www.hrpa.ca/oap.



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TERMINATION CLAUSES IN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

In times of recession, a termination clause is an integral part of an employment contract. A clause limits the amount of severance an employee is entitled to when employment is terminated without cause.

In the absence of a termination clause, an employee is entitled to “common law” reasonable notice of termination, which is typically far greater than minimums provided in the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (the “ESA”) and varies on circumstances. A clause therefore provides the employer with greater certainty regarding the costs of downsizing. But that certainty is only provided when the clause is enforceable.

Clarke v. Insight Components (Canada) Inc., a decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal, offers guidance on ensuring enforceable clauses.

In *Clarke*, the plaintiff joined the defendant in 1995 and signed a contract which did not contain a termination clause. In 2000, a new policy stated all employees at the plaintiff’s level should have a clause in their contracts. In April 2001, the plaintiff was promoted to managing director for Canada and his compensation was increased.

Two weeks after beginning his new role, the plaintiff signed a memorandum of understanding outlining terms, including his improved salary and the new termination clause, which stated: *Termination of Employment – Your employment may be terminated for cause at any time in which event you shall be entitled to only the amount of your salary and vacation pay earned up to the effective date of termination. Your employment may be terminated without cause for any reason upon the provision of reasonable notice equal to the requirements of the applicable employment or labour standards legislation. By signing below, you agree that upon the receipt of your entitlements in accordance with this legislation, no further amounts will be due and payable to you whether under statute or common law.*

A well-known legal rule is that changes to the terms of an employment contract require some form of extra payment – what we lawyers call “consideration” – often more money. The trial judge in *Clarke* found the plaintiff was provided

with consideration because he received compensation when the termination clause was added.

The judge concluded the clause was enforceable. When the plaintiff was dismissed without cause, he was not entitled to reasonable notice at common law and was only entitled to notice pay and severance pay under the ESA, as provided for in the clause.

The plaintiff appealed, but the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the decision.

There is no better time for employers to note the guidance provided by the Court of Appeal in *Clarke*. As the economy improves and firms look to hire, forward-looking employers will plan to limit the cost of future downsizing.

Here are some practical tips:

1. Make sure the clause language is crystal clear. Since courts recognize employers have more bargaining power than employees, contracts are typically interpreted in favour of employees, which means judges will likely throw out clauses if they find any ambiguity.

2. Make sure the employee is made aware of the clause and provide an opportunity to obtain legal advice. Courts recognize employees don’t necessarily read contracts before signing them. Termination clauses are typically not enforced by judges where the employee was not aware of the clause or was not given an opportunity to seek legal advice. Eliminate any uncertainty by explaining the clause to the employee and giving time to consult a lawyer before he or she signs the contract. In addition, make sure the employee signs before his or her start date.

3. Make sure the employee receives consideration. Providing a new employee with employment is typically sufficient consideration for a termination clause. For current employees without a clause in their contract, courts have not allowed employers to rely on clauses unilaterally added to a contract. Make sure the employee is provided with sufficient consideration in the form of either a promotion or raise in exchange for introducing the clause. **HR**

Malcolm MacKillop and Hendrik Nieuwland practice employment law with Shields O’Donnell MacKillop LLP of Toronto.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Many organizations carry out employee satisfaction surveys yearly or more frequently. But how do they ensure this will add real value and not be perceived as a “box-ticking” exercise? Many employees are suspicious of motives in surveys and some believe nothing will change.

Research from Gartner Group has shown up to 95 per cent of organizations collect feedback regularly, but only 10 per cent act upon it. Only 5 per cent communicate decisions and improvements back to respondents.

Why conduct surveys in the first place? The goal of many organizations is to maximize return for shareholders. This is achieved through greater market share, improved customer satisfaction and raising productivity/lowering costs. Satisfaction surveys can play a part. To be of benefit, the objectives must be clearly established.

Many areas can be impacted upon by employee surveys, including management structure, leadership, organization, working practices, conditions of employment, career structure, customer relations, products, services, competitors, suppliers and internal and external communications.

Feedback Forum

Surveys are also good for staff motivation as they demonstrate employers are listening. Taking action on findings demonstrates employees are valued and can pay dividends in improved morale and commitment.

It is vital a feedback mechanism is put in place. It is better not to carry out a survey than to neglect feedback. Nothing is more morale-destroying than asking employees to complete a survey when nothing more is heard. Not only will this result in dissatisfaction but it will be more difficult to gain future employee cooperation.

Analysis of results should be drawn up and disseminated as soon as possible. If there is a lag between conducting the research and producing results, employees can lose interest. If, on the other hand, results and conclusions are produced quickly, employees will feel views are valued and worthwhile. Collecting data electronically

has become common and can speed this process, ensuring prompt results and instant feedback, with results presented in an orderly manner.

Follow It Up

Sometimes analysis renders it necessary to drill deeper into answers to find out what issues or problems are underlying. This demonstrates you are taking into account what they say. To make this process easier, use an electronic survey that incorporates a follow-up functionality, allowing more information to be gathered while ensuring anonymity. This helps go beyond by gaining more meaningful insight, perhaps issuing further questions or creating a dialogue with a section or an individual within your audience.

It is vital to communicate quickly with employees who have recorded high levels of dissatisfaction, isolating issues and grievances for investigation and resolution. You can act quickly to change problems, create higher engagement and increase retention.

Using analyzed data, alert staff of findings relevant to their role or department. Method and content will vary within organizations but should include open and honest breakdown of company strengths and areas for improvement.

Once results are distributed, a detailed action plan must be created to decide which areas are most important and how best to improve them. In larger organizations it may be effective to ask line managers to action improvement processes.

If your survey has been well-designed, properly implemented and acted upon quickly, you and your staff should experience some, if not all, of these benefits:

- Increased employee loyalty
- Higher staff retention
- Training needs assessment
- Higher attendance levels
- Improved communication
- Higher levels of customer satisfaction
- Identification of cost-saving opportunities
- Identification of degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

John McTrusty is president of QuestBack Canada Inc.

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HIGH-PERFORMANCE HR FOR LOW-WAGE WORKERS

How to manage a service sector workforce

BY LESLEY YOUNG

In any given HR conversation, you may or may not be oblivious to the elephant in the room. It is actually the largest group of workers in Canada – composing 35 to 40 per cent of all jobs – and the segment has grown faster than any other in our economy since 1990.

If you guessed low-wage service workers, you are right. And if you don't believe they are ignored or stigmatized, consider this:

Two of the leading low-wage service worker employers contacted for this article refused to share their HR expertise and best practices because they “didn't want to be associated with or considered a low-wage employer.”

The workforce itself is well-researched and documented: Low-wage service workers are typically less educated, they earn less and have fewer benefits, they are more likely to be part-time or temporary and a higher proportion are female and/or immigrant. The trouble is very little is understood about the effect of human resource management practices on them,

according to Dr. Sara Mann, associate professor, strategic human resource management & organizational behaviour at the University of Guelph in Ontario.

“Generally speaking, employers don't see the point in investing in low-wage positions,” Mann said. However, she says long overdue research shows, without question, that good low-wage service worker HR practices both reduce turnover and boost bottom-line success of organizations. This is supported by practices of some leading Canadian companies who are bucking the trend and investing in development and recognition that motivates workers to perform to a high standard.

Certainly not every company has something to gain by investing in low-wage workers, societal gains excepted, said Dr. Anil Verma, professor, Rotman School of Management & director, Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management. This is the case for those companies with value propositions that do not hinge on quality or good customer

services. But for the rest, he said, “There is value to be had by repositioning low skill job skills into a stronger, more strategic role in the overall company.” He calls it “taking the high road.”

MINIMUM LOW-WAGE HR BEST PRACTICE

There's just no way around it: The single most influential HR practice for low-wage service workers is pay, according to Mann's research at the University of Guelph.

“These workers are just not looking for intrinsic motivators. I know this goes against HR's instincts, which is to add value to jobs,” she said. “But ultimately, money is most important to these people because they are just trying to make ends meet.” The point, clarifies Mann, is not to raise pay to eliminate the low-wage sector, but merely to find some small monetary incentives for these employees.

The other key retention factor is putting in place some system for promotion or advancement. “We are finding that low-wage workers



“There is value to be had by repositioning low skill job skills into a stronger, more strategic role in the overall company.”

who have a higher level of social capital are much more likely to leave the low-wage paradigm,” said Mann.

Social capital includes friends and relatives in higher-paying positions who may guide and influence their desire to move on to higher-paying work, she said. “The implication for HR is that those social networks don’t need to be outside the workplace. You can create an environment where low-wage workers are connected not only to higher-paid staff, through mentorships for example, but have the chance to be promoted.”

This kind of consideration just isn’t widely practiced, adds Mann, who points out one of the most disturbing findings, up to 60 per cent of low-wage service workers are not getting any kind of performance appraisal. “These workers don’t even have any goals to work toward,” she said. “They have absolutely no feedback.”

According to Mann, there are four minimum low-wage HR best practices to consider:

- **Pay a premium over the competition.** “It doesn’t have to be huge, but it needs to be significant enough that workers understand they are getting more.”
- **Measure performance and give them feedback.** “This is a pretty basic way to communicate value and encourage productivity.”
- **Treat people fairly.** “People are constantly comparing their work to others. If you treat people differently based on their tasks, they are going to look for something more fair.”
- **Give low-wage workers variety.** “Rather than looking for full-time work or more value, low-wage workers are interested in different tasks,” said Mann. “They like variety.”

LEADING LOW-WAGE HR BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION

Organizations that commit above and beyond the basic HR best practices for low-wage workers have reaped major rewards. The proof is in the case studies. Staff is more

productive and satisfied, and the effect on the bottom line – whether that bottom line is happier office supply shoppers, hotel guests or well-tended long-term care patients – is profound.

Here’s a look at some innovative low-wage HR strategies in place in three different sectors: retail, non-profit health care and hospitality.

STAPLES BUSINESS DEPOT

Low-wage positions, including sales and cashiers, still compose the vast majority of retail jobs in Canada, according to a 2009 HR report by the Retail Council of Canada. Nevertheless, for Alan Ward, Staples Canada’s vice-president of human resource, management of its service workforce goes back to the adage: people are a brand’s differentiator.

“It’s true that our hourly pay associates are integral to the execution of our business strategy and success,” he said. The company feels so strongly about supporting its workforce, from the top down, that one of its 2011 business



plan objectives is to “develop its associates.”

Here are just a few of Staples HR tactics that give service associates, who include shop-floor sales folks, cashiers and back-end warehouse staff, a sense of on-the-job opportunity.

Team Success Plan: Staples recognizes the need to have monetary incentive beyond hourly wages. So through the Team Success Plan, shop-floor sales workers have the chance to reap financial benefits based on sales and customer service metrics.

Bright Ideas: Ward says much of Staples’ business and sales innovation comes directly from its associates. In turn, by being asked for business ideas, and rewarded for ones that work through Staples’ Bright Ideas program, associates create their own job value and enjoy a sense of contribution.

Connecting social values: As part of the corporate push to social responsibility, Staples engages its associates on a number of meaningful fronts, including sponsorship of the Special Olympics and

various sustainability initiatives. “This ties back to personal values on the recruiting side,” said Ward. “Research shows that where people choose to work is not just based on the job but what the organization stands for.”

Recognize and leverage diversity: Staples recognizes cultural influences can shape employee performance, said Ward. One culture may not value the same things as North America, such as punctuality. Staples attempts to understand those influences and adapt as needed. “Understanding cultural nuances,” he said, “allows us to work with employees to grow and build careers with us.”

KENSINGTON HEALTH CENTRE

The big challenge for low-wage personal service workers (PSW) in long-term care facilities like Toronto’s Kensington is not turnover or low pay, explains Bill O’Neill, executive director. “The biggest challenge is to get people to think of their job as a career versus a task. Employees are deal-

ing with people here, bathing and dressing residents who often don’t want to be touched. This kind of work can be extremely physically difficult, but also demoralizing,” he said. Recruiting people with skills like problem-solving and teamwork is critical. Kensington also gives prospects a lengthy orientation period. Once hired, low-wage service workers at Kensington Health Centre rarely leave.

Here are a few reasons why:

Wow Program: Throughout the building, residents, families and staff can submit examples of “wow” employee contributions, which are rewarded semi-annually with prizes and recognition. O’Neill said this kind of recognition is self-perpetuating. The center has one of the province’s highest standards of care.

Skill advancement: Kensington just introduced computerized documenting for all its PSWs, who, until recently, spent hours writing down patient activities using pen and paper. “This improves their computer skills and also builds a



sense of professionalism on the job,” said O’Neill.

Opportunity for advancement: Over the past two years, Kensington developed two special programs, one in restorative care and one in continence care, and posted the positions internally. Successful applicants became champions of these types of care facility-wide and received an increase in pay. Unique approaches like this create unexpected opportunities for advancement. Kensington also supports PSWs if they pursue nursing careers, and tries to hire them afterward.

FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS

The hospitality industry is a significant low-wage service employer. From its founding, Fairmont has built up a culture of caring for its workforce.

“We believe our employees are fundamental to everything we do,” said Anna Chartres, regional director, human resources, Central Canada. “We invest in our col-

leagues from the beginning, and we encourage and develop them because they are what make us successful.”

The ability to move up the ladder is central to the culture at Fairmont. Chartres said her boss—a general manager and regional VP—started in laundry at the Royal York hotel.

Just a few examples of how values become practice:

Royal York Talent Factory: In this program, colleagues are chosen and given one-year mentorship by senior executives. They are groomed in other areas of the hotel and targeted to eventually become supervisors.

Investing in personal skills: Fairmont works with the Ontario Literacy Coalition to develop and provide innovative workplace literacy and essential skills training to many low-wage workers.

Piloting an industry training centre: Several hotel chains including Fairmont are working on a bricks-and-mortar training centre to increase and improve the skills of various hospitality roles

from cooks to banquet servers. The idea, said Chartres, is to have a steady flow of applicants to hire from. Then as it grows, the training centre will become a place where staff can go to pick up extra skills if they want to switch roles or pick up casual work in another area of the hotel. A lot of loopholes have yet to be worked out, she said. “But this would be a one of a kind in Canada and it’s very exciting.”

Power to Act: This brand-new program gives all Fairmont employees complete authority to make any decision they think will make a difference in a hotel guest’s experience. For example, a housekeeper might order chicken soup for a guest who mentions they have a cold. “Just last week a valet went out and shoveled a path down the street for a guest whose daughter was in a wheelchair,” Chartres said. Each month, these efforts are recognized. The point, said Chartres, is to empower the workforce and bolster their sense of on-the-job freedom. **HR**

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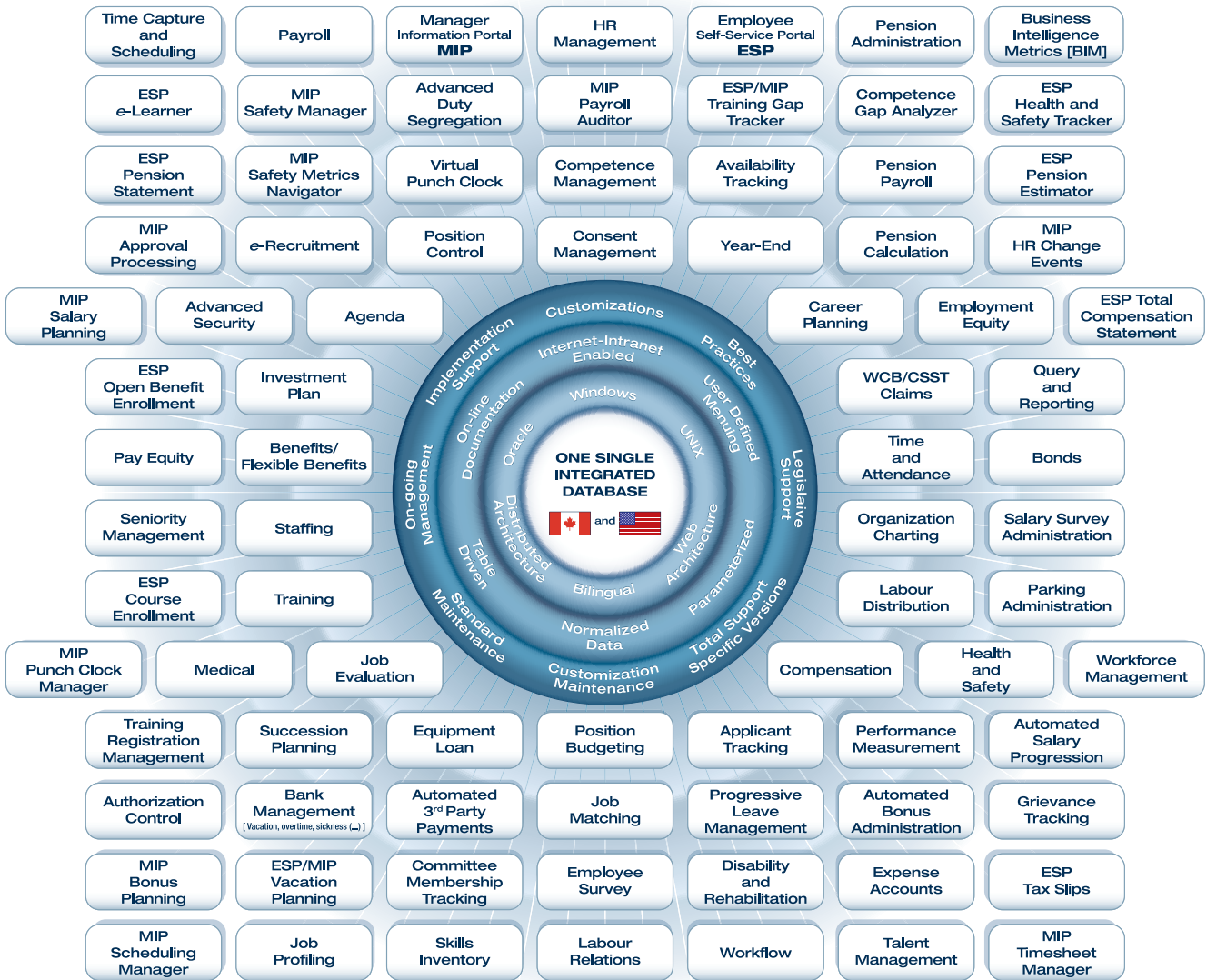
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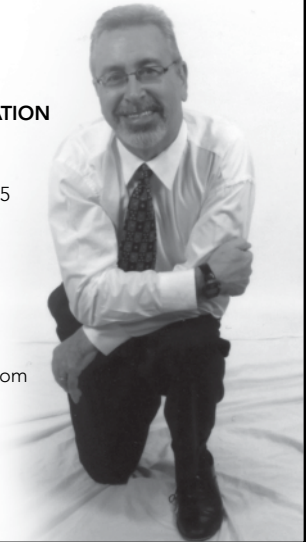
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GLOBAL ALIGNMENT AND LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

As more Canadian organizations expand into international markets, how to manage a global workforce and ensure best business and people practices across different cultures becomes an increasing challenge to Canadian business leaders and human resources professionals. Some challenging situations and their solutions are covered here through three case studies.

#1 What is our benefit policy?

Sarah assumed a newly created role of director for global HR policies and programs. One of the requests she received in her information gathering from international locations is “we need clear benefit policies in Taiwan.”

The situation: When an employee experiences a family death, local custom is to give the employee a small amount of cash in a red envelope. The local finance manager wants a clear policy so he can disburse the exact amount of cash for different levels of employees and for different deceased family members.

Sarah was surprised by this kind of request. In Canada, when an employee has a family death or is hospitalized, the department administrative assistant sends flowers. The administrative assistants use discretion to decide the amount to spend. They check with their manager when in doubt and speak to each other to keep consistency. Sarah thought to herself, “Don’t they have any management discretion?”

This response can have several consequences:

- It can be interpreted as corporate HR not knowing how to provide direction.
- Local management will start to apply discretion on things not consistent with organizational business or people strategy.

When corporate offices started to question these decisions or practices, local people felt confused. In their mind, you said, “We don’t want to dictate how the local operations run and we want to consider the local needs,” now you are saying, “This must be done this way because we are a global company and we must follow our global process.” To them, corporate people seem to talk from both sides of their mouth.

The gap is clearly a result of the different sense of hierarchy. Dutch scientist Geert Hofstede did extensive research to understand the cultural factors influencing people’s behaviour in the workplace and summarized them into five cultural dimensions. Hierarchy is one of them. Canada is among the least hierarchical societies in the world, while China and Taiwan are among the most hierarchical.

In egalitarian societies like Canada, many decisions are made at lower levels of the organization because the egalitarian culture encourages employees to take initiative and make decisions. In hierarchical societies, the same decisions are made at higher levels because if the employee is criticized once he/she will go ask the manager all the time. The manager or the person in an authoritative position always has an answer.

The solution is to build awareness so all people involved realize they are not on the same page as to who should make what decision. This will remove or reduce chances of people taking it personally or blaming each other, and encourage more open communication.

The second step is to create a process to determine which decisions are made:

- (a) Locally;
- (b) Locally and then run by corporate;
- (c) Jointly;
- (d) By corporate with local input;
- (e) By corporate and executive locally.

This is an ongoing process, which requires continuous recalibration. It can be frustrating as the pendulum may go too far on either side. People in the corporate office may feel local people are doing wild things and they only find out after the fact. People in the local office may stop asking corporate for guidance or ask corporate to make all decisions for them. The key is to bring people back to the awareness of cultural differences and commitment to the process so all involved continuously work on strategic alignment with corporate strategy and building flexibility to address local needs.

STRATEGY

#2 What does diversity and inclusion mean?

Rosita is the country HR manager for Mexico. The Mexico operation is the combination of a local Mexican company acquired by a Canadian company and the Canadian company's existing operation in Mexico. Six months after the

acquisition, there are still many challenges integrating the business practices of the two companies. In particular, there are three groups of employees: employees from the acquiring company, employees from the acquired company, and employees hired after the acquisition.

The challenge is to bring the three groups together to work effectively.

Corporate HR is rolling out a global initiative on diversity and inclusion. Rosita was asked to provide information on gender equality. She doesn't see gender equality as important to her location. It is certainly low on her priority list given all the other balls in the air.

The situation: Corporate initiative needs to adapt to the local reality. From time to time, local HR feels what corporate HR wants is completely out of touch with their reality. However, because of the hierarchical culture, they will not say anything. Some may work longer hours to meet the needs of the local business and the corporate office. Some may simply not respond, making corporate HR wonder what's going on.

The key is to build a process for corporate HR to understand business priorities in the international locations and for local HR to speak up on needs and concerns. Global programs and initiatives developed in collaboration will have more buy-in and smoother implementation because they are aligned with a global strategy addressing local needs. Diversity and inclusion can mean gender equality in the United States, hiring and integrating recent immigrants in Canada and team building after a merger in Mexico. Regular team meetings/conference calls will help flush out these various priorities in different locations.

#3 How important is compliance?

Lily joined a company expanding into global markets as the manager of global mobility. Three weeks into her job, she realized a number of software



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developers from India working in the Toronto office did not have Canadian work permits. Two senior managers in India setting up the operation didn't have the appropriate work visas either.

When she discussed this with the local HR manager, Kumar, he didn't seem interested. Kumar's response was that we have always operated this way without problems, so don't worry. But Lily is worried because the company is exposed to significant risk of non-compliance. As a publicly traded company, she wants to have processes in place to ensure compliance in all jurisdictions.

This situation: Direction from corporate must be followed because it comes from the organization's fundamental values. Anything to do with health and safety, legal compliance and ethical operation of the business must adhere to guidelines.

How do we align these fundamental values across cultures? The first step is communication. There should be a clear and consistent message from all channels emphasizing the importance of fundamental values and operation principles. The second step is to build these values into the performance management system. When leaders lead by example and hold themselves accountable for living these values, employees use these values to guide their performance.

In each of these situations, business leaders and human resources professionals are constantly balancing global strategic alignment with flexibility for local needs. The first case represents situations when local discretion should be applied. The second case represents situations when global initiatives and programs must incorporate local needs and build flexibility in the process. The third case represents situations when corporate guidelines must be followed in all locations.

In order to achieve balance between global alignment and local flexibility, business leaders and HR professionals must become aware of cultural differences and build a process to bridge gaps. It is an ongoing process where all stakeholders will make continuous efforts to calibrate who makes what decisions. The team reaches synergy when its members truly think globally and act locally. **HR**

Caroline Yang is human resources and compensation consultant for MultiCultural Business Solutions.



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ANNUAL REPORTS – A CORPORATE LINK TO OUTSIDE WORLD

More than any other document, the corporate annual report is designed to provide the outside world – including existing and potential investors, professional investment analysts, regulators and other interested parties – with valuable information upon which they may need to base key decisions.

“The end-users of financial statements are primarily the investors and the creditors of the company, so to a certain extent, the annual report is a selling and marketing tool,” said Michelle Causton, MBA, FCGA, a professor of accounting at Canadore College in North Bay, Ont.

Financial data is contained in various statements, including the balance sheet, income statement, statement of cash flows and note disclosures to the financial statements, which provide or elaborate on measurements related to performance. “Companies usually summarize some key ratios and provide analysis to accompany that within their annual report so the user doesn’t have to do their own number crunching,” said Causton.

The statement of cash flows reports on operational, investment and financing changes affecting cash only, illustrating whether there have been net positive or negative cash flows, which can sometimes be crucial to a firm’s survival. This reporting is very different than that of the income statement, whose accounts are prepared on an accrual basis, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

“But financial statements are actually only a very small part of the annual report. A lot of this report talks about the company. It emphasizes successes, talks about strategy by giving a high level overview of what’s happening and provides other general comments,” Causton said.

A key supplement to the financial statements is the management’s discussion and analysis section, which provides a series of notes that elaborate on financial results and ongoing developments that could impact future results, including events that occurred subsequent to the date on the statements.

There is an art to reading notes to the financial statements.

“Rather than trying to read the package from beginning to end – for example, balance sheet, income statement, cash flow statements, then notes to the financial statements – when you’re analyzing something on the balance sheet or income statement and it references a note, that’s when you should go look at the note. Otherwise, if you read them sequentially, you will get lost in the detail and miss what may be important to you,” said Causton.

The financial statements in the annual reports of publicly listed companies are audited in order to provide assurance to readers from an objective third party – the auditors – that the financial and other related information being provided has credibility.

Four major types of audit opinions can be issued: an *unqualified opinion*, a *qualified opinion*, a *disclaimer of opinion* or an *adverse opinion*.

A public company wants to be issued an unqualified opinion by the auditor to say that its financial statements have been prepared fairly, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), and that they are free from material misstatement. This will clearly have the most positive impact on stakeholders in terms of their ability to remain confident about the company.

However, the auditor has other options, including issuing a qualified opinion if they felt that a limited portion of the financial statements was not prepared in accordance with GAAP, or the audit scope was insufficient to confidently issue an unqualified opinion. The auditor could also issue a disclaimer of opinion for various reasons, such as if they believed that a lack of independence, a conflict of interest or other factor prevented a proper audit.

Or the auditor could simply come out and issue an adverse opinion, which states that the auditor does not believe the financial statements present fairly, in accordance with GAAP, or they think that the statements are materially misstated.

A qualified opinion, disclaimer of opinion or adverse opinion all create varying degrees of negative repercussions for the audited firm. A disclaimer or adverse report may make it difficult, if not impossible, for the company to acquire or maintain public support. **HR**

Bernie Keim is vice-president of member services and regulatory affairs, CGA Ontario.



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FOCUSING ENGAGEMENT ON DRIVING PERFORMANCE

Although engagement surveys deliver comprehensive information about a variety of employee attitudes, perhaps the most important attitude of all is absent from these instruments: how engaged employees are in reaching and exceeding performance goals.

Measuring the engagement of employees in pushing the envelope of corporate performance might be the most important kind of engagement organizations can foster, especially in this hyper-competitive post-recession world. In the current business environment, organizations need employees who yearn to succeed no matter the constraints placed on them by economy, budgets or organizational adaptations and changes. Companies need workforces committed to achieving personal, team and organization-level strategic goals.

What do engagement surveys actually measure? If you take a close look, you will find the answer is a gumbo of various job attitudes. For example, they ask about the job satisfaction, commitment and mental/emotional well-being of employees. They ask how involved people feel in their work, how much support they receive and how empowered they are to make decisions. Satisfaction with various aspects of the job makes up the lion's share of many engagement survey questions – for example, satisfaction with senior leadership, communication, rewards and recognition, work processes, culture and the firm's strategy/mission.

Traditional measures of engagement may no longer even make sense given recent changes to the workforce, as more transactional relationships are developing between employers and employees. Organizations are looking to cut costs and increase flexibility by hiring more temporary or contract workers. In a recent survey by *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, 67 per cent of 479 senior executives agreed with the statement “we must maintain a leaner organization, hiring on contract or outsourcing work rather than hiring full-time staff over the next 10 years.” Does it make sense to ask contingent employees if they “have a best friend at work,” or whether “someone at work cares about [them] as a person” as one engagement survey does? It might be more appropriate to

assess the engagement of this type of workforce by asking them “how committed are you to executing strategic initiative XYZ?”

The increasing number of virtual workers also has implications for measurement of engagement. Full-time employees are more likely than ever to work at home part of the time, or in mobile offices under conditions of great autonomy. Some of this trend reflects employees' desire for greater flexibility in working arrangements, to meet the demands of modern single-parent or dual-income families. As a result, organizations seem to care less about whether employees are in the office than with ensuring productivity. Measuring engagement in a focused, performance-centric way may resonate with modern organizations more than generic engagement surveys that ask about the social/emotional climate of more traditional workplaces.

How can organizations develop useful measures of performance-focused engagement? First, make the decision to create and nurture a high-performance culture, and then support key HR leaders in the creation of engagement metrics. If your organization is not the kind that yearns to be best in its field, perhaps this approach to measuring engagement is not for you. Second, develop survey items by considering specific kinds of performance your workforce should be engaged in. What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) that assess how well your organization is functioning? What objectives should employees focus most on, based on your strategic plan? If these can be identified, you can create engagement items that are tailored to these KPIs. Third, pilot test and evaluate your new engagement survey under the guidance of a technical expert, such as an industrial/organizational psychologist.

Traditional engagement surveys have a role in measuring a broad range of employee attitudes and guiding decisions about interventions to improve the work culture. But if you seek a high-performance culture and you want an index of how much motivation, drive and passion your workforce has to push toward and reach its goals, consider measuring how engaged your workforce is in driving performance. **HR**

Tim Jackson, Ph.D., is a consultant with Jackson Leadership Systems Inc.

SIZE MATTERS: HR FOR SMALLER BUSINESS

A recent Industry Canada study ⁽¹⁾ reports there are more than a million small businesses in Canada — a huge number, particularly given that self-employed entrepreneurs are excluded. A *National Post* headline in early 2010 heralded Canada as a “Shopkeeper Nation” ⁽²⁾ and highlighted the growing numbers of small businesses across the country. Small business has become recognized as a critical contributor to the Canadian economy, particularly over the last few recession-battered years when growth and hiring at larger companies were virtually frozen.

This growing sector certainly warrants attention from HR professionals as a national phenomenon, but also as an opportunity. Small business is generally underserved by the human resources community. Smaller companies are typically leaner with few or no internal HR resources and the value that can be provided by HR expertise is often not well understood. A CEO leading an organization with 50-plus employees and more than \$10 million in revenues said to me recently, “I’m an entrepreneur, HR is a mystery to me.”

Every organization is obligated to comply with employment legislation and ensure its practices support employee engagement and contribution. Most small business leaders, however, have become masters with band-aids and duct tape in many areas by necessity, and human resources is no exception. Owner/operator leaders of small businesses may also not know what they don’t know. If only the hidden risks could be mitigated, and if only the power of their people could be fully unleashed.

When faced with a business event such as an acquisition, or in the struggle to manage in high growth, the requirement for HR expertise can become acute. The human resources community, through its associations and various professionals, can drive real and measurable results in the smaller business sector.

First things first: What is a smaller business? There is no commonly held definition for this. The answer may be a revenue number if you are a bank lending money, or could be dependent on industry sector if you are an economist. According to Industry Canada, a “small business” has

fewer than 100 employees. The organizations being considered here fit Industry Canada’s parameters for “SME” (Small and Medium Enterprises) which include businesses of up to 500 employees ⁽³⁾.

As HR professionals, we can help these businesses realize greater value. You may be entering the workforce as a new HR professional and considering a smaller company, or you may be considering a job change. Maybe you are already providing your expertise and capability for greater small-business success and have additional insights regarding the business environment, brand and/or cultural aspirations that can be found in a smaller organization. Regardless of your situation, it is important to be aware of differences inherent in business issues faced by smaller organizations, in order to better tailor your HR approaches for maximum impact.

What keeps leaders of smaller businesses up at night is captured in a variety of studies by banks and investors, suppliers and economic researchers with fairly common results:

Cash and Cash Flow (not enough of it!). A TD Canada Trust Small Business Survey ⁽⁴⁾ published in October 2010 finds this to be the No. 1 issue faced by business owners. The familiar scenario of HR budget pressures in a large company may translate in a smaller business to no budget at all. A former boss once credited me with the ability to “weave gold from straw.” A compliment indeed, however, at its core this feedback still meant I had no budget. In essence, human resources work in a small organization is founded on sheer creativity. Use your solid and broad HR technical skills, build a big network that keeps you on top of best practices and then make it up. Creativity breeds success.

Time (not enough of it!). A 2010 Business Development Bank of Canada survey ⁽⁵⁾ of small business leaders found the top two barriers to growth for small businesses are money and time. When my sisters and I were growing up, my mother sometimes told us that we would have to get by with “a lick and a promise.” Like many working women in the 1970s, she understood work/life balance pressures before there were headlines about it. Like most kids with working moms, then and now, we survived and are maybe



ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL EDDENDEN

better for it. Most of us now understand we live in a world with too much work and not enough time. Prioritize or else. HR work in smaller organizations is no different from any other working environment in this regard. What is likely different in the smaller organization is the size of the HR team. Like the small business owner/operator, the small business HR professional is also a jack of all HR trades. The best HR folks out there in the small business community are tirelessly staying on top of emerging trends and practices in all areas as a ticket of admission to the work they do. Needless to say this is only the beginning before the sleeves get rolled up for effective project management and delivery.

People (finding and keeping the good ones!).

According to the CEOs of *Profit magazine's* Hot 50[®], Canada's leading emerging growth companies, "retaining good staff" and "recruiting good staff" are the most important keys to success. Almost all organizations struggle with attraction and retention especially when it comes to top performers. Smaller companies in particular may not have the established brand factor in order to keep the best and brightest banging on their doors. Further, in a flatter organization, there may be fewer perceived career opportunities for high fliers, meaning retention has an added pressure. There are solutions available to these issues that may not be realistic in Canada's biggest companies. Talent

management practices in an organization of 100 employees can more easily have a personal and direct link to the CEO, and have greater potential of being "high touch" in a way difficult to achieve in a large company. In the small business sector, companies are less likely to have regular processes for performance and talent management. Unfortunately, this is just where these processes may be able to achieve their greatest success. Much lower cost software-based talent and performance management solutions are just now becoming available, and the potential of these tools to drive individual engagement and subsequent business results is enormous.

Regarding retention, there can be greater latitude in a smaller organization to design tools and programs with specific individuals in mind. Compensation programs are at their best when pulling the levers most meaningful to employees, while incenting and rewarding the achievement of business goals. The need for large-scale program design in big companies, however, may administratively disallow an individual, employee-based approach. An example of successful retention program tailoring is a bonus payout equivalent to the annual allowable maximum lump sum mortgage payment provided to a director at a start-up organization. This leader appreciated that the company offered something geared to his individual situation, and annually

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HR 101

felt the real financial benefit of staying with his employer. This particular retention bonus design also had the additional benefit of contributing to the employee's longer-term wealth via increased home equity. Further, the bonus was directly linked to the employee's home life, helping to secure a bond of loyalty.

The challenges facing the smaller business sector are not unique. Businesses want more revenue, there is never enough time, and it is hard to find good help these days. What is different,

however, are the approaches that can be used by HR professionals to enable business success. The sector demands of HR professionals heightened creativity, soup-to-nuts technical expertise and solid delivery capability. Refreshingly, smaller organizations offer the latitude and flexibility to allow for individual-based employee programs. Given the number of smaller businesses in Canada and the growth rate of the sector, it would seem that there is and will be a lot of great HR work to be done. **HR**

Notes

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RECRUITING GLOBALLY FOR TOP TALENT

KPMG assembles new global HR team in Canada

Demographics are getting ready to pack a wallop for employers worldwide. According to various sources, less than 1 million people will be added to the American workforce between 2012 and 2026. From 2016 on, as the effects of the one-child policy are felt, the Chinese workforce will contract. Yet according to an Accenture survey, more than half of global companies expect to return to pre-recession staffing levels by 2012.

Assuming continued growth, where will corporations find skilled workers? To successfully address these challenges requires foresight and detailed strategic planning. Anticipating a steep upward curve in headcount over the next five years, global consulting firm KPMG has created a beachhead in Toronto from which to pitch a strategy for a worldwide battle for talent.

KPMG International delivers audit, advisory, tax and internal services through member firms in 146 countries. Collectively it employs more



than 140,000 people, including 8,000 partners. The company's history spans three centuries, but formed its current incarnation through mergers in 1987. The firm is launching a new strategy this year that will require the hiring of more than 250,000 new people in the next five years. Human resources professionals will play a critical role.

In an attempt to enhance synergies while maximizing resources, global resourcing, learning and development and marketing and communications functions and professionals were moved into the new Global Resource Centre in Toronto in 2008. In late 2010, the GRC began building its team of best-in-class HR professionals to strengthen member firms' ability to recruit, develop and engage professionals and partners worldwide. *HR Professional* spoke recently with Alim Dhanji, global head of HR and finance for the tax function, and Jane Hutcheson, global head of L&D, about the company's plans going forward.

HRP: How does the human resources function at KPMG add value to the business?

AD: We recognize people are our greatest asset. Our business model requires high-performing people to deliver client value and grow our business. There is clear recognition of the important role recruiters will play in helping to execute against our global business ambition. We are building a senior team of star HR professionals

HOW TO BECOME A GLOBAL HR PROFESSIONAL

Evguenia Potachenskaia was born and raised in Moscow and immigrated to Canada in 1996. For 11 years, she worked in organizational development at TD Bank, until joining KPMG as senior manager of global leadership development in December.

"Learning and development will play a critical role in our aggressive growth plan," she said. "People in our pipeline want to know that they can reach their full potential."

What made Potachenskaia want to join the team at KPMG?

"I wanted to work with a global audience in a collaborative environment and in an influential role," she said. "The interviewing process allowed me to get to know my potential peers, and made me want to work here."

Alim Dhanji, global head of HR and finance for KPMG's tax function, supplies a list of the attributes HR professionals should cultivate if they want to move into a global role:

- Proactivity • Inclusivity • Adaptability • Entrepreneurial mindset
- Intellectual curiosity with a capacity to learn • Diplomacy
- Intercultural empathy • Relationship focus.

Dhanji notes these attributes are in addition to the requisite skills and abilities: technical skills, business acumen, strategic thinking and so forth.

INTERVIEW

to focus on recruitment, mobility and diversity, as well as learning and development, marketing and communications.

HRP: Why did you decide to assemble your global team in Toronto?

AD: KPMG's fourth-largest member firm is here to co-house us. Also, Toronto is an international city at a midpoint of world time zones. There are 13 major colleges and universities and many multinational corporations nearby, the culture is diverse and international travel is easily accessible.

HRP: What are the challenges you face as you prepare to launch your aggressive growth strategy?

AD: Because the growth of labour markets in many developed countries is slowing, we anticipate a skills shortage will ensue, especially for highly skilled professionals. It is difficult to find leadership-level resources while managing cost, and to ensure quality while feeling pressured by cost and speed.

HRP: What strategy will the new global HR team pursue?

AD: We will work to differentiate our employment brand while enabling a global career path for our employees. For millennials especially, there's a real interest in an ability to act globally. Finding the best recruiters in the market to compose the new team is key to making our vision a reality.

HRP: How had KPMG been handling recruiting in the past?

AD: We have strong recruitment teams within countries focusing primarily on national career markets and within regions and cities. Now we have a high-impact, globally aligned strategy to enable sourcing across borders to find the best talent anywhere in the world. That means enhancing various elements of the process, adopting new systems and we may off-shore globally optimized activities such as lead generation. The positions here at the Toronto GRC are all new and will collaborate closely with our member firms around the world to execute the strategy.

HRP: What do you seek in members of the new global HR team?

AD: Candidates must have a global mindset, even at the local level. They must have experience, diversity and cultural awareness that attests to that mindset. We are looking for people who are at the top of their game — industry recognized, passionate, thought leaders with a global lens.

HRP: How do you source candidates for the roles?

AD: We are looking primarily in Canada and North America. We are building a strategic, senior-level team, so we do not need a large number. We seek referrals through current employees, which account for 30 to 60 per cent of new hires, and through professional associations.

JH: We are trying to source them locally but are also open to internal transfers, globally.

HRP: How do you assess their qualifications?

AD: We believe in behavioural interviewing. We have compiled information on the competencies we seek, and we assess those through simulations, case studies and panel interviews.

JH: We often ask colleagues and critical stakeholders to participate in the interviewing process.

HRP: How will they be onboarded and developed?

JH: We invest significantly in onboarding in order to increase retention. We take a formal approach to the traditional probationary period, during which we talk a lot about expectations on both sides, and we try to provide a lot of information on our new global strategy and corporate values, quickly, both in face-to-face sessions and online.

HRP: Once the global HR team is assembled in Toronto, what strategy will its member firms employ to reach KPMG's goal of 250,000 new hires in five years?

AD: We anticipate interviewing over 1.5 million candidates to reach that number. There are local supply constraints, and we have a small sector of focus — truly a niche market. There is competition for top talent among the big four consulting firms as well as academia, government and foreign-owned corporations. Our entry-level pipeline is already robust. KPMG is one of the most popular employers on campus, second only to Google.

Our approach will be three-pronged: to build our pipeline internally, through learning and development opportunities and career progression; to borrow, as we redeploy people to other countries; and to buy, as we go to market. Thus, it is key that we continue to strengthen our brand as an employer of choice — in all markets and sectors. We will work with countries to deploy a local model with global support and intervention. **HR**

Jennifer J. Salopek is a freelance writer in McLean, Va. Reach her at jjsalopek@cox.net.

YOU DON'T KNOW IF YOU DON'T ASK

When you work in HR, you know a lot about what is going on in every part of the organization. Not only is the work interesting, but it helps set action plans, policies and strategic direction.

But what about what HR doesn't know? Are there issues employees face that negatively affect performance in ways that hurt the bottom line? Are there challenges HR could easily help solve if it only knew about them?

The only way to know for sure is to ask.

One "you don't know if you don't ask" area in which HR can play a role is in how well new hires acclimatize to the company. New-hire onboarding and socialization impacts both employee retention and productivity well beyond the first year of employment.

Here are some common themes that emerge when employers ask new hires to evaluate their early experience, along with some actual feedback.

The position is not as expected. New employees have expectations based on the recruitment process, the employer's reputation or brand and information provided during interviews.

"Bait and switch...My current job was not discussed during the interview"

"Went to school to become an electrical engineer. When I got here, I seem to have been turned into a software engineer."

Co-workers are not welcoming. One critical component to the new hire's experience is interaction with co-workers. If co-workers or managers are perceived as cold or unhelpful, employees may have difficulty feeling comfortable.

"My immediate co-workers have been responsive. However, those outside my immediate group practice a CAN'T DO attitude. Around every corner is an obstacle that must be overcome just to perform the work functions."

"It seems like everyone around here is scared of our manager."

Training is not sufficient. In one case, a hospital pharmacy was losing new hires at an alarming rate. The reason? New employees with

inadequate training were worried they might make a mistake and, literally, kill a patient.

"The process of getting the tools was very hard. I felt I had to go to 20 different people and get approval in 10 different ways."

"First-day orientation was great when we discussed benefits and where to access information. I felt that conveying the company's policy for computer usage was not clear. I had one person tell me one thing and then someone else tell me the opposite."

Survey Tools

While supervisors may be working closely with new hires, these kinds of frustrations may remain hidden without a formal strategy for gathering constructive feedback. Employees are often reluctant to openly share concerns for fear of sounding like a complainer or being blamed for the problem.

A "don't ask, don't tell" policy will leave issues to fester and contribute to early attrition, with all its inherent recruitment and training costs. A better approach is to use new-hire and onboarding surveys to measure new employee satisfaction and identify sources of discontent.

Survey questions can probe various aspects of the early work experience, including the recruitment process, new-hire orientation, training, socialization and time to productivity. Surveys can be conducted at 30-45 days from hire date for earliest impressions or 75-90 days out for a broader look at experiences.

With today's new-hire survey technology, HR personnel can not only automate survey scheduling, distribution and compilation, but also easily slice and dice results by demographics such as department, division and job type.

This makes it possible to pinpoint where issues are occurring and identify corrective action required. Smaller companies or those with a small number of new hires can enter results into a spreadsheet or homegrown database.

As always, what you don't know can hurt you. And you don't know if you don't ask. It's a small effort that can reap big rewards over the long run. **HR**

Beth N. Carvin is CEO and president of Nobscot Corporation (www.nobscot.com). Reach her at bncarvin@nobscot.com.

WHAT'S WORTH READING

Leading Culture Change: What Every CEO Needs to Know

Stanford UP, 2010

By Christopher Dawson

Leading Culture Change: What

Every CEO Needs to Know is designed as a practical handbook for CEOs on leading change. Dawson, an organizational consultant to C-suite executives for more than 25 years, presents his tested methods of leading companies through

culture change.

According to Dawson, building a consistent, strong organizational culture is the key contribution a leader can make. Organizational culture must be understood as the prime mover and the accelerator, or barrier, in order for any value-producing (or destroying) activities to take place. Dawson argues that it is the medium through which any leadership initiative will be executed. And as such, organizational culture — understanding, defining and leading it — should not be delegated to the human resources function as though it were a detail they did not need to bother with. Leaders must attend to each stage.

For culture change to be successful, Dawson outlines five steps: (1) define the level of urgency and reason for the change; (2) define the “new” and “legacy” cultures; (3) build a culture change roadmap; (4) translate the vision culture into behavioural competencies and measurable events; and (5) model executive authenticity. In

subsequent chapters, Dawson fleshes out the implementation process, using a four-step model (setup, launch, wave, progress) and case studies to illustrate the stages of change and the CEO's role.

For human resources professionals looking for a book geared toward the C-suite, Dawson's book is a good pick. It is written as a kind of executive summary for CEOs, from which they can gain a working knowledge of organizational culture change to make them effective culture change sponsors and leaders. Dawson's goal is to give CEOs a more finely-honed ability to judge how, when and where they must be involved in the culture change process — at every step. For practitioners of organizational development this book offers a rigorous model with which to view, implement and measure culture change.

Conversations for Change: 12 Ways to Say It Right When It Matters Most

McGraw-Hill, 2011

By Shawn Kent Hayashi

Conversations for Change presents a method of engaging and mastering conversation skills using the DISC model of communication (Dominant, Influential, Steady and Compliant). This model provides a way of identifying how a person

prefers to receive information and is based on the assumption we are hardwired in a way we like to receive communication.

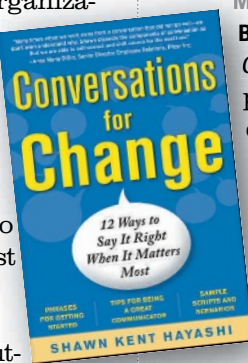
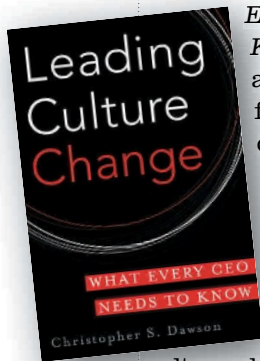
While the DISC model is not new, Kent Hayashi provides an engaging process for understanding why communication can go awry and how individuals can

come to accept their own preferred style as well as others in order to function more effectively at work. Hayashi identifies three foundations for good communication: understanding our own emotions, identifying workplace motivators and recognizing and adapting to communication-style preferences.

Being self-aware is critical to identifying which emotion we are feeling (love, joy, hope, envy, sadness, anger, fear) and what others are feeling. To communicate well we need to identify the top values in our workplace and in ourselves (theoretical, traditional, utilitarian, social, aesthetic and individualistic) and tailor our preferred communication style (Dominant, Influential, Steady and Compliant).

As an experienced executive coach, Hayashi outlines 12 types of conversations that are important for growth and success for leaders, managers and teams. They are conversations for: connection, creating new possibilities, structure, commitment, action, accountability, conflict resolution, breakdown, withdrawal and disengagement, change, appreciation and moving on. Each chapter describes the types of conversations, identifies when to use it, provides examples of it done right and offers phrases and questions to use to start each type of conversation. An assessment is provided in the book to help identify existing strengths with the types of conversations as well as areas requiring deeper work.

Using practical and real-world examples, *Conversations for Change* is an excellent resource for human resources professionals looking for refreshing ways of improving individual and team performance. **HR**



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LEADERSHIP IN THE AGE OF EMPLOYEE 2.0

Technologies such as e-mail, PDAs, the web and teleconferencing have enabled leaders to organize more effectively, facilitate collaboration and improve communications. They can also be adopted seamlessly since their use does not disrupt patterns of effective leadership.

However, a soon-to-emerge information technology, Employee 2.0, will fundamentally shift workplace paradigm and present leaders a new set of challenges.

Employee 2.0 is an individual who has internally integrated information technologies to enhance mental, perceptual and physiological capabilities.

The phenomenal rate of technological progress makes it possible. A computer now fits in a pocket, so super-small computers that fit inside the body are only a matter of time. Advances in nanotechnology, bioengineering, materials development, super-computing and robotics are responsible for breakthroughs.

For example:

- The ReNaChip developed in Tel Aviv is a computer implanted in the brains of Parkinson's patients to monitor and respond to brain activity to control motor function;
- A nanospray injection (computerized cells) developed by researchers at the University of Calgary releases insulin as needed and has cured diabetes in test subjects;
- Retinal and cochlear implants allow individuals to see and hear beyond visible light and sound spectra;
- Thought-controlled bionic limbs are in final-stage human trials in the U.S.

These technologies are already being explored for ways to give anyone capabilities beyond those considered "normal." Christine Greenhow, an associate professor at the University of Maryland who completed post-doctoral work in learning technologies at Yale and Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development, says the future is now.

Imagine an Employee 2.0 analyst having an implanted computer with wireless access to the web, enabling them to instantly access search engines and databases. Nanotechnologies stimulating learning and memory would give an IQ



ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL EDDENDEN

in the 400s and enhance critical thinking skills. As a result, they would tackle problems in a few hours that would take days for a team of analysts. They would also be incredibly effective planners and coordinators.

However, Employee 2.0 will also be highly disruptive trying to fit into a traditional workplace, which will present challenges for leaders, says Shawn Jacobs, managing partner at the executive search consulting firm Jacobs Scott in Victoria.

Leaders will have to address fallout from that technological divide. Unenhanced employees may regard Employee 2.0 with muted enthusiasm as they find career options increasingly limited. Under this new paradigm, traditional patterns used to adjust human behaviour toward developing teams and driving performance will cease to apply.

"How people will react to the emergence of Employee 2.0 in the workplace may be the subject of extensive debate, but the enhanced skills and financial benefits will make Employee 2.0 a most sought-after skill set for as far ahead as we care to look," said Jacobs.

Organizations operating effectively in this environment will require re-imagining of leadership. Now is the time, with technology in early stages of development, for it to happen. It will allow better understanding of disruptions they can expect, assessment of implications and preparation of strategies to meet leadership requirements and effectively transition into the era of Employee 2.0. **HR**

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