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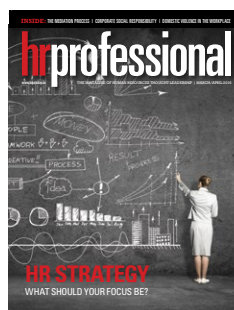
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## IN THIS ISSUE

The March/April cover feature of HR Professional focuses on HR strategy. It's easy for HR professionals to get caught up in projects, deadlines and meetings, but taking a step back to carefully assess and plan a strategic course of action sets a clearer path to success. In an environment where the HR profession is ballooning in scope, what should HR's strategy include? Turn to the cover feature, starting on page 18.

# contributors



## MICHAEL P. FITZGIBBON

Michael P. Fitzgibbon is a founding partner of Watershed LLP, Management Labour & Employment Lawyers. From his call to the Ontario Bar in 1993 until founding Watershed in 2010, he practiced management side labour and employment law as an equity partner at one of Canada's largest national law firms. He has taught the labour and employment law course at the University of Toronto, Woodsworth College for the past 18 years, has co-authored two books, contributed chapters to many others and has written and presented extensively on a wide range of labour and employment law topics. Read Fitzgibbon's article about the mediation process, starting on page 15.



## SHAWN MURPHY

Shawn Murphy is an independent consultant with 20 years' experience working with organizations to create workplace optimism. He is the co-founder and CEO of Switch & Shift, an advocacy and consultancy focused on the human side of business, and host of the popular *Work That Matters* podcast. He's the author of *The Optimistic Workplace: Creating an Environment that Energizes Everyone*. Read his article about how to build an optimistic workplace culture and the benefits that stem from positivity, starting on page 29.



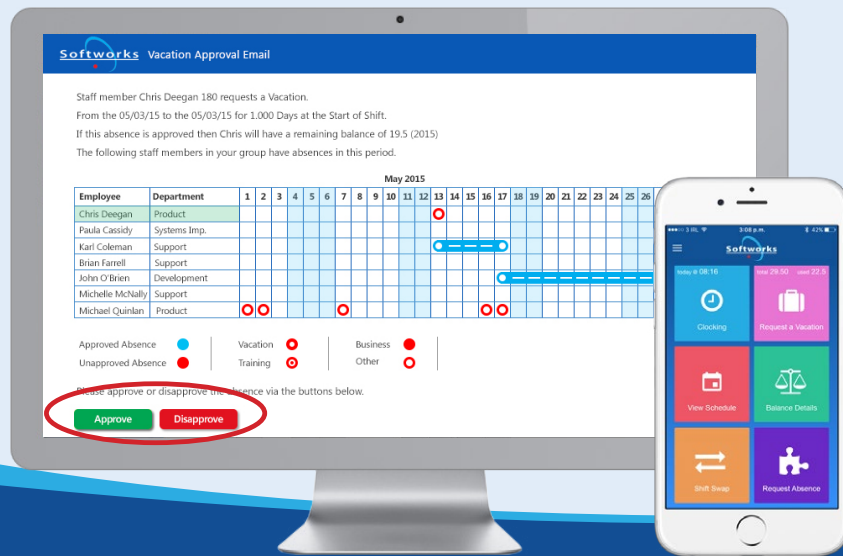
## NOI QUAO

Noi Quao is manager of traumatic event support services at Morneau Shepell. He provides on-site response to client organizations that experience any kind of traumatic event. During his time with Morneau Shepell, Quao has consulted/coordinated support responses for client organizations impacted by high-profile incidents, including the train accidents in Gogama, Ont. and Lac-Mégantic, Que.; the shootings at Parliament Hill and in Moncton, N.B.; H1N1; terror attacks in Mumbai and Paris; aircraft incidents in Turkey, Brazil and Canada; and the floods in Alberta. He is a certified advanced member of the National Community Crisis Response Team and a member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. Read his article about traumatic event support in the workplace, starting on page 39.



## SEVAUN PALVETZIAN

Sevaun Palvetzian has been CEO at CivicAction since January 2014. Before CivicAction, she held several senior executive roles within the Ontario government, including leading the Ontario Place Revitalization project and launching the Youth and New Professional Secretariat. Prior to her work in government, Palvetzian held positions at the University of Toronto, the World Bank Group and Presidential Classroom. Palvetzian serves as a member of the Premier's Community Hubs Advisory Group and sits on the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy Advisory Committee. She is on the Board of Directors for both Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council and NPower Canada. Read her article that outlines the ways in which employers can help combat youth unemployment, starting on page 48.



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letter from the editor

# A STRATEGIC MINDSET

**A**s I write this, I'm just returning to the office after a week spent at HRPAs Annual Conference and Trade Show. I think I've said this every year, but what a truly amazing event! This year, the speaker lineup was outstanding. From the keynotes to the session presenters, there was something of interest and information for everyone. All of the HR professionals and trade show exhibitors I spoke to during the event had nothing but positive things to say. If you missed it, be sure to put #HRPA2017 on your agenda for next year, Feb. 1 to 3.

I'm excited about this issue of *HR Professional*; the cover story talks about how HR professionals can plan their strategy to maximize their impact on their organization. It's easy to get caught up in projects and meetings, but taking a step back to assess and plan goes a long way. Melissa Campeau's article begins on page 18.

Our other feature article discusses HR's role in corporate social responsibility (CSR). Paul Klein, founder and CEO of Impakt, is a member of the 2015-17 *HR Professional* editorial advisory board, and this topic was a brainchild of his when we started planning for 2016. I'm glad to be able to share some of his (and others') insights with you. As the "keepers of culture," HR has a big part to play in generating employee buy-in for CSR initiatives, and leveraging those initiatives as part of a greater recruitment and retaining strategy. To read the article, turn to page 29. This issue's Last Word column also touches on CSR.

I hope that you enjoy the March/April issue of *HR Professional*, and I can't wait to hear what you think. Please keep reaching out to share your thoughts and ideas for the magazine with me.

Happy reading,



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# Certifying HR's Employment Law Knowledge



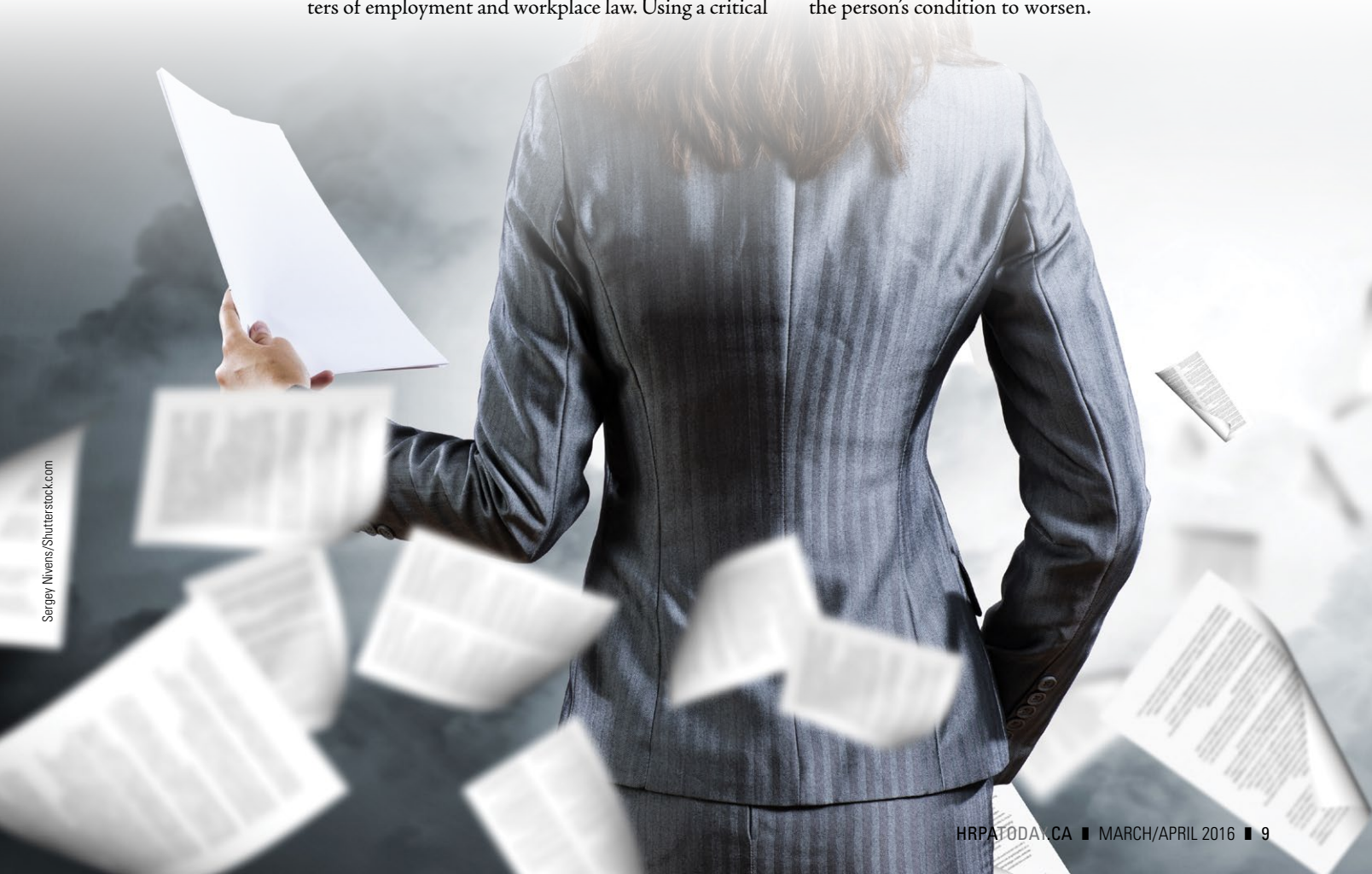
By Brenda Clark, CHRE

**A**mong HR's many roles, human resources professionals are responsible for ensuring their organizations comply with labour and employment law – keeping the employer informed of their legislative requirements and making sure employees are afforded at least the minimum requirements set out in employment legislation and common law. Consequently, a broad knowledge of employment law is a necessity for effective HR practice.

As we all know, this is not an easy feat and, unfortunately, we don't always get it right. Last summer, HRPA interviewed 50 Ontario employment lawyers on where HR professionals make mistakes in matters of employment and workplace law. Using a critical

incident approach, HRPA asked the lawyers for instances in which an organization's HR staff made an employment or workplace law error that had some kind of negative consequence. From the 228 total incidents, a list of the top 10 most common mistakes was derived (see the top 10 list on the following page).

Employment law errors have serious repercussions for both employer and employees. For example, failure to properly pay vacation or overtime can result in court costs; there can be significant fines and the embarrassment of having the organization's name published on the Ministry of Labour website. And failure to provide the appropriate accommodation for an employee with a mental health issue could cause the person's condition to worsen.



## TOP 10 MOST COMMON HR LAW MISTAKES

Rank	Mistake	Percentage of total incidents
1	Termination pay, termination notice, termination with or without cause and pay in lieu of notice	70%
2	Mental health or physical disabilities that deal with the duty to accommodate	55%
3	Contracts and employment agreements	45%
4	Discriminatory grounds such as family status, age, marital status, etc... that deal with the duty to accommodate	32%
5	Forgetting that common law principles also apply	32%
6	Dealing with harassment and violence in the workplace	26%
7	How to properly interpret the Employment Standards Act, 2000	21%
8	Severance pay entitlements	19%
9	Vacation time, vacation pay and bonuses	19%
10	Continuation of benefits to employee after termination	19%

Source: 2015 HRPA survey, "Where employment lawyers believe HR professionals make the most mistakes in applying employment and workplace law"

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### HRPA JURISPRUDENCE EXAMS

As you can see, there's much at stake when employment law errors are made. With the passage of the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) has a higher duty of care and will do what is necessary to ensure that its members are competent – including the proper application of employment law.

This is one of the key reasons why HRPA is adding jurisprudence exams to its CHRP and CHRL designation requirements starting in Fall 2016. The exams (Jurisprudence 1 for CHRPs and Jurisprudence 2 for CHRLs) test the

ability to correctly apply knowledge of employment and workplace law to situations calling for such application. The 80-question exams, which will eventually be administered online, will be a multiple-choice, scenario item format with only one correct answer.

Amazingly, up to now, HR law knowledge has never been part of the certification process at HRPA or any other Canadian HR association. A big part of that omission was because the CHRP was a national designation and employment legislation is created by the provinces (apart from federally regulated industries). However, with the proper application of employment law

so vital to HR practice, it just made sense for HRPA to start testing applied knowledge in this area.

Testing and certifying employment law knowledge will not only help to build a stronger and more capable HR profession (not to mention reducing the risks and costs of HR law errors for organizations), but it will go far to meeting HRPA's new regulatory mandate of protecting the public – safeguarding Ontario workers from wrongly applied employment law. ■

*Brenda Clark, CHRE, is the chair of the Board of Directors for the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).*

# UPFRONT

## MAJORITY OF PROFESSIONALS STRIKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

When it comes to work-life balance, new research suggests the scales are tipping in employees' favour. In a Robert Half Management Resources survey, 65 per cent of workers characterized their work-life balance as good or very good. Nearly two in five respondents reported they have greater balance than three years ago. Balance has also reached the C-suite. In a separate survey, 80 per cent of chief financial officers (CFOs) rated their work-life balance as good or very good.

While generally positive, the findings show room for improvement. Almost two in five of all workers and 19 per cent of CFOs consider their work-life balance fair or poor. In the survey of workers, 22 per

cent of respondents said they have less balance now compared to three years ago.

Robert Half Management Resources offers five tips to help managers and professionals improve their teams' and their own work-life balance:

1. **Take an individual approach to work-life balance:** Managers should make the effort to learn what work-life balance means for their employees on an individual basis, acknowledging that it is not a one-size-fits-all program. Workers should consider their personal and career goals together when determining which benefits would work best for them.
2. **Communicate:** Adopt a work environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing their needs, and
3. **Establish benchmarks:** Create guidelines that help employees measure how well they're meeting their work-life balance objectives. As they would with any goal, workers should be prepared to track and report on how they are progressing.
4. **Be flexible and make changes as necessary:** Ensure that work-life balance is a topic of conversation at regular meetings with employees, and offer solutions when a situation doesn't seem to be working out. Employees,

Continued on page 13



**MANAGERS SHOULD MAKE THE EFFORT TO LEARN WHAT WORK-LIFE BALANCE MEANS FOR THEIR EMPLOYEES ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IT IS NOT A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL PROGRAM.**



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let your manager know when you're having problems, and what you can do to fix them. Your boss may have suggestions you hadn't considered.

5. **Lead by example:** Managers can set the tone for a successful work-life balance program by incorporating and following through on a tailored approach that fits with their own lifestyle and obligations. Likewise, employees should recognize that what works (or doesn't work) for them can serve as an example to others, and share their experiences with colleagues and superiors.

## HOW WORKPLACES CAN PROMOTE HEALTHY ACTIVE LIVING

Busy schedules, looming deadlines – the demands of today's workplace can make it challenging for employees to prioritize a healthy, active lifestyle, but it doesn't have to be that way. A new report, *Moving Ahead: Workplace Interventions to Reduce Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour*, produced by The Conference Board of Canada's Canadian Alliance for Sustainable Health Care and issued with ParticipACTION, provides a model for how Canadian employers can help employees change their behaviour about physical activity.

"With more than half of Canadians spending at least one-third of their waking hours at work, the workplace is an ideal and important setting for health promotion. Corporate wellness initiatives must fit with the organizational culture so that employees are more likely to participate," said Louis Thériault, vice-president, Public Policy at The Conference Board of Canada.

In addition, inactive employees must decide to change their behaviours and participate, which is a challenge in most organizations. Faced with competing priorities, employees often feel that they cannot prioritize their health.

The report identifies two broad types of initiatives that employers can implement in their workplaces to effect change:

1. Initiatives intended for the entire employee population, such as awareness

campaigns, education programs and instructor-led activity sessions

2. Initiatives targeting the particular needs of specific, high-risk employees like health coaching or counseling and targeted activity sessions led by an instructor

You can check out the Conference Board's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Health Meter ([bit.ly/1S8M2sJ](http://bit.ly/1S8M2sJ)) to find out where your physical activity and sedentary behaviours rate in one of four categories.

## TAKE THE CHRP/CHRL HR DESIGNATION ASSESSMENT CHALLENGE

Want to see how you measure up against your CHRP and CHRL peers across different HR functional areas like strategy, organizational effectiveness, total rewards or OHS?

Take the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)'s HR Designation

Assessment – a timed, multiple-choice evaluation that will help assess your current knowledge relative to what is expected of those qualifying for the CHRP and CHRL designations.

The HR Designation Assessment tool is part of HRPAs new CPD Needs Analysis Self-Assessment tool – a new online training needs analysis tool that will help members create an individually tailored continuing professional development plan in about 30 minutes.

Your CPD plan will highlight both your HR competency strengths and gaps and recommend and prioritize specific areas for professional training and development options. You can also use the plan as your business case for your employer to invest in the learning and development outlined in the report.

Since the tool's launch in January at the HRPAs Annual Conference, more than 500 members have taken the assessment, including the entire HR team at Economical Insurance in Waterloo, Ont.

**INACTIVE EMPLOYEES MUST DECIDE TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOURS AND PARTICIPATE, WHICH IS A CHALLENGE IN MOST ORGANIZATIONS.**



Photo: Africa/Shutterstock.com

“We had staff take the self-assessment tool to help them identify their strengths and areas for development,” said Jeff Desbiens, VP HR at Economical Insurance. “It was a great and insightful tool that helped staff gain a better understanding of their HR career. They were able to share the assessments with their managers and explore strengths to build on or identify areas to develop more capability to help them get where they wanted to go for their career

plan. And for more junior staff, the tool helped illustrate how broad HR is and all the ways you can grow and branch out in your HR career.”

Take the HR Designation Assessment: [www.hrpa.ca/skills](http://www.hrpa.ca/skills)

## TOP 10 SIGNS YOU'RE TALKING TO A LIAR

In January, *Liespotting* author Pamela Meyers spoke at HRPA's Annual Conference on how to root out liars.

Although most people think they're pretty good at detecting deception, apparently it's not that easy. But neither is lying – when we lie, our brains go into hyperdrive trying to keep up with the con and our bodies leak all kinds of signs that we're not telling the truth.

Here are 10 signs that a person may be lying. Taken on their own, they may not mean much, but if you see them in clusters, you might want to dig a little deeper:

**Distancing:** Classic example is when former U.S. president Bill Clinton denied “having sexual relations with that woman” instead of actually naming Monica Lewinsky.

**TMI:** Liars have a bad habit of offering up more information and detail than what's asked of them.

**Non-contracted denial:** When telling a lie, people will typically emphasize denials by saying “I did not” versus the more casual “I didn't.”

**Specific denial:** Liars will often narrow the field of denial to a specific event because it's more comfortable. As in “I didn't sleep with him on Saturday night,” versus the more general “I didn't sleep with him.”

**Religious references:** “I swear on a stack of Bibles that I'm telling the truth!”

**Duping delight:** This is the unconscious sign of delight that the liar has gotten away with a whopper. Often expressed with a big ol' grin.

**Contempt:** This is another facial cue that basically tells the questioner that they have been dismissed. It's marked by one lip corner pulled up and in (like a snarl). If you see this – run.

**Freezing upper body:** Many people associate fidgeting with lying, but actually most liars will unconsciously tense up their torso while telling their falsehoods.

**Eye contact:** Again, many consider a lack of eye contact to be a sign of deception. In fact, liars try to overcompensate by maintaining inappropriate levels of eye contact (normal is about 60 per cent).

**Asymmetric speech/body language:** When someone says yes and they're shaking their head no (or vice versa) – you may be being lied to. ■



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# Mediation Without Tears

HAVING REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS AND A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE WILL ALLOW YOU TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE MEDIATION PROCESS

By Michael P. Fitzgibbon

**P**ositions can become entrenched very quickly in employment disputes. Although it might appear that the judicial process can right any perceived wrong allegedly committed by the employer, in truth, the judicial process is often inadequate in providing justice to the parties in employment cases.

We are, therefore, fortunate that most employment disputes will settle – at some point. A timely settlement generally serves the interests of all concerned. Once positions harden – which they often do following service of the statement of claim (or other process) – settlement usually comes at a greater cost, emotionally and financially. Mediation, while not a *panacea*, is well suited to many – if not most – employment issues.

Mediation can arise in different contexts: in civil litigation, under statutes including the *Human Rights Code*, the *Labour Relations Act, 1995* and the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*, and before labour arbitrators under collective agreements. Mediation can also be used proactively as a litigation avoidance strategy in order to head off potentially costly and disruptive problems at an early stage.

Here are some thoughts on how to use mediation to maximum impact.

## KNOW YOUR MEDIATOR

In many cases, a mediator is assigned to the case without discussion with the parties (for example, in human rights and employment standards cases). In other

cases, the parties, usually through counsel, select the mediator.

Where the parties choose their mediator, it's important that they do so strategically by considering the mediator's experience, personality, style and approach, and match these to the particular case and the individuals involved.

Some cases (and parties) require a mediator who will act as a facilitator and who will give the parties an opportunity to be heard. In other cases, such an approach is fatal because what is required is a mediator who will "push" the parties to a settlement in a more forceful way.

In the end, though, all mediators should:

- Be an expert in the area of the law
- Take the lead of the parties (and their representatives)

Continued on page 17



# 2015 HRP A LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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**MEDIATION REQUIRES A STRATEGIC MINDSET. EVERYTHING THAT IS SAID, SHARED OR DISCLOSED PRIOR TO AND DURING THE MEDIATION WILL FRAME THE DISCUSSION AND, ULTIMATELY, THE SETTLEMENT.**

- Provide an honest, direct and consistent opinion about the merits of each parties' claim or defense
- Offer creative solutions, particularly where positions become hardened or where the settlement is heading for the proverbial ditch
- Push a settlement, but know when to call it a day

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

Mediation is a confidential and non-binding process designed to resolve disputes short of adjudication with the assistance of an impartial third party. Mediation provides a venue for:

- Presenting your arguments
- Understanding the other side's case
- Being heard
- Testing and assessing the merits of your case and that of the other party
- Obtaining the benefit of an impartial third party's views of your case
- Negotiating a comprehensive, final and conclusive settlement of the dispute

There are many advantages to mediation, including:

- Speed
- Informality
- Cost containment
- Confidentiality
- Reality check
- Having a hand in the settlement

Entering mediation with an attitude of, "I will convince them that they are wrong and I am right," will certainly be met with disappointment and, ultimately, dissatisfaction with the process. What's required is flexibility and a problem solving mindset that looks past "who is right, and who is wrong," and gets to the heart of the dispute.

The process also requires patience, persistence, broad-shoulders and a capacity to accept and respond to honest feedback about the case. It is also important to accept that mediation is a *process* that will

meander at its own pace. Rushing or forcing the process, though tempting, can prove detrimental to a settlement. Be patient and trust the mediator.

## PREPARING FOR MEDIATION

Mediation requires a strategic mindset. Everything that is said, shared or disclosed prior to and during the mediation will frame the discussion and, ultimately, the settlement. It is therefore important to gather all relevant information and documents and prepare a theory of the case that can be presented and returned to during mediation.

Questions will be asked of the parties during the mediation by the mediator and by the other party, and it is crucial that these be anticipated by honestly and dispassionately assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the case and developing a theory of the case that is balanced and stands up to challenge. Reasonable answers to the hard questions are what will fuel the mediation and give the mediator something to say to the other side.

Consider, as well, who should attend the mediation. It can be fruitless to make a

phone call at the end of a long day of mediation to someone who has none of the context of the day's discussions, but who has ultimate authority to settle or not. If the decision maker is not at the mediation, frequent updates should be provided as the day progresses so that, when the call is made, there will be fewer surprises.

The employer should also prepare and rank a range of acceptable outcomes in advance of the mediation, but also be ready to deviate from the plan through creativity and open mindedness.

## CONCLUSION

Mediation makes business sense in *most* employment cases, but mediation is not appropriate in all cases. Where either or both parties attend the mediation with an expectation of "hitting a home run," they will usually leave disappointed. Mediation, by definition, requires compromising your best-case legal position in the hope of achieving a settlement that is equally dissatisfying to both parties. Mediation with the right mediator, the correct mindset and a willingness to be flexible and creative can achieve amazing outcomes, even in cases where settlement was thought to be impossible. ■

*Michael P. Fitzgibbon is a founding partner of Watershed LLP, Management Labour & Employment Lawyers.*

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# Plot a Course to Strategy



## WHEN HR TAKES STEPS TO ANALYZE AND PLAN, IT CHARTS A COURSE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

By Melissa Campeau

**D**eadlines, meetings and jam-packed calendars make it difficult to think much beyond the here and now. But feverishly checking items off a never-ending to-do list is a bit like being a hamster on a wheel when it comes to making actual progress. Stepping back from the hustle to assess, collaborate and develop strategy can mean all that effort helps generate movement towards a target. And that

can help get an organization where it wants to go, instead of just spinning its wheels.

Businesses rely on strategies to define how to get from a current position to a targeted one. Those strategies provide guidance and context for supporting tactics. When HR is operating strategically, talent and departmental practices align and help to produce real, progressive results, moving the organization closer to its destination.

**“WE SHOULD CONSIDER OUR COMPETITION NOT JUST IN THE MARKETPLACE, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF COMPETITION FOR TALENT. WHO ARE CONSIDERED THE BEST EMPLOYERS OUT THERE? AND WHAT ARE THEIR VALUE PROPOSITIONS COMPARED TO OURS?”**

– NAN OLDROYD, HR EXECUTIVE

Consider the area of compensation, for example.

“A strategic HR model would look at how you design a system that rewards performance, leadership and culture, in line with the business strategy,” said Nan Oldroyd, an experienced HR executive. This can go a long way to supporting strategic goals.

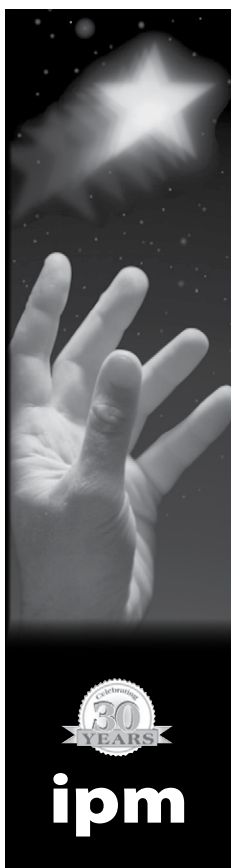
That doesn’t demote transactional HR duties to a lower priority, however.

“I would not say that transactional HR is less important than strategic HR practices,” said Charles Marful, director, Canada’s Talent Team, Ernst & Young. “You may have a great strategic HR plan, but how well will that work if your people aren’t paid?”

Transactional HR is essential, but it can easily monopolize an HR professional’s time. A 2011 PwC report showed that more than 75 per cent of HR work hours are spent on such tasks as pension administration, benefits and revising workplace policies. Carving time out to consider and develop strategy doesn’t happen without effort, but to meet its potential, an organization needs an HR leader’s insights on talent, culture and more.

### TRAINING A LENS

HR’s areas of responsibility have ballooned over the years, so zeroing in on where to focus can be tough. The overall business strategy is your fundamental starting point.



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As the director of HR strategy and compensation with Xerox Canada, Nadia Cerisano is responsible for organization design and strategic workforce planning.

“Without a business strategy, I can’t address either of those areas,” said Cerisano.

So Cerisano collaborates with the other executives in her organization to understand each area’s direction, goals and needs.

“I work with the VPs in defining their strategy to a level of clarity where I can understand the workforce implications, and then I consider what this materially means to our talent practices,” she said. “As an HR leadership team, we then use these learnings to determine how HR needs to evolve as a team so we can continue to innovate and enable our business to thrive.”

The nature of HR means its reach, impact and responsibilities are organization wide.

“HR is part of the business and it can enable the business to grow,” said Marful. “It’s just like how you think about growing your business through a marketing function. When you look at HR that way, it can take on a totally different role.”

Business and HR strategy must be integrated to be effective.

“In the same way that business would collaborate with the financial team and sit down with HR and ask what are the new goals, growth plans such as capital and acquisitions, efficiencies or synergies, we in HR should also look at those financial targets as part of our strategy,” said Oldroyd. “You consider the goals of the organization and what the people component should be, then you have to take a look at the current state versus the future state and identify the steps to get there.”

An HR leader also needs to consider the HR department or team itself.

“As we’re working with the business groups to help build their strategy, we need to build our strategy, too,” said Oldroyd. “Not just in how we’re addressing how HR will respond to meeting the businesses needs, but we need to look at our own department to ensure that our direction supports the business strategy and that we continue to optimize our talent and our people practices. We need to participate but then we need to ensure that we’re growing ourselves as well.”

## KNOWING YOUR BUSINESS, AND MORE

The work of developing strategy for HR in collaboration with the rest of the executive team requires deep business acumen and credibility, earned through experience and a track record of success.

“If you don’t have that, the organization isn’t going to invite you to the executive table in the first place, and they’re not going to invest in a time-consuming and cerebral project like developing strategy,” said Cerisano. There’s no substitute for business acumen and a deep understanding of how your organization makes money. An

HR professional who can provide that kind of meaningful insight is an invaluable resource to an organization.

## STRATEGY INFLUENCERS

While the needs and priorities of each organization will differ, certain hot-button issues are likely to impact strategy as it relates to the HR function.

“As part of strategy development, you need to know what the trends are and what’s emerging, externally,” said Olydroyd. “What’s disruptive to your business and your workforce? What’s enabling? What can make things easier and more efficient for your people to run the overall business strategy?”

Understanding these trends and concerns, filtered through an HR lens, means a human resources professional can contribute proactively and strategically.

## CULTURE KEEPER


One area that should figure prominently in strategic planning is organizational culture. As the “keeper of culture,” HR is the first to know if something is out of synch. When there’s misalignment between a business strategy and an organization’s culture, it’s a recipe for trouble. If an organization’s strategy emphasizes innovation, for example, but the culture doesn’t encourage risk-taking or positive dissent, that’s a potentially major roadblock to success. This is where HR can offer insight and collaborate to get culture and strategy in line.

## SHAPE-SHIFTING WORKFORCE

HR is also likely to be more keenly aware of the shift towards a more transient workforce, and how that can impact engagement, culture and other key aspects of business.

A growing number of organizations now count an increasing number of contractors, freelancers and remote workers into their personnel mix. In a Deloitte’s *Human Capital Trends 2015* report,

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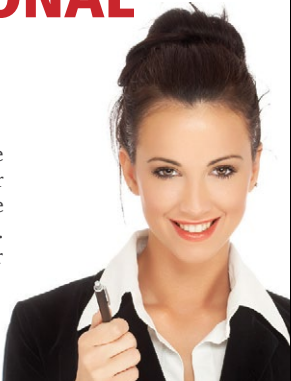
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**“YOU CONSIDER THE GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND WHAT THE PEOPLE COMPONENT SHOULD BE, THEN YOU HAVE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE CURRENT STATE VERSUS THE FUTURE STATE AND IDENTIFY THE STEPS TO GET THERE.”**

– NAN OLDROYD, HR EXECUTIVE





47 per cent of Canadian organizations reported having plans to increase their use of contingent, outsourced, contract or part-time workers in the next three to five years.

HR will need to find ways to recruit and retain this complex collection of workers and ensure this is a factor when developing strategy. While the group presents some challenges to traditional HR practices, contract and freelance workers also offer significant potential advantages. They're typically highly skilled and agile. Teams can be quickly assembled and disassembled. They can help organizations increase the scalability of projects, and a globally available workforce can extend an organization's geographic reach.

## TALENT COMPETITION

While many of the organization's business areas will study what competitors in the marketplace might be doing, "We should consider our competition not just in the marketplace, but also in terms of competition for talent," said Oldroyd. "Who are considered the best employers out there? And what are their value propositions compared to ours?"

Competition for the best employees is often fierce. Understanding how others might be attracting that talent can provide critical knowledge to help steer future direction.

## METRICS AND ANALYSIS

Strategy relies, as a base, on a thorough understanding of starting points and targets. That's where measurement becomes crucial. A 2015 report by Accenture, *Talent management meets the science of human behaviour*, points out that nearly everything related to people in the workforce can be measured and analyzed. According to the report, "As new insights into brain science and human behaviour emerge – and as analytics finally enable organizations to test hypotheses and form conclusions by analyzing a newly available treasure trove of data – HR will arm itself with the tools and insights of a scientist to drive better performance from their workforces."

Practically speaking, metrics help an organization understand if it's staying on course with a strategic direction, or needs to readjust.

"In our organization, we have what we call a strategy scorecard," said Cerisano. "The scorecard outlines the strategic priorities, the operational activities that we're going to undertake to meet those priorities, who's accountable for them and the three-year plan to get us there." The scorecard helps Cerisano and her team define how much change is going to happen, and by when. "From a workforce implication standpoint, that's critical information that an HR professional needs in order to determine how quickly we need to evolve our talent practices."

Metrics can also glean insights about employees that can help steer an organization.

"It's not only about defining the HR strategy to support the business, it's also looking at the people you have and how you can influence your strategy with that knowledge," said Marful. For example, he suggests that if your database tells you a number of employees have a technical skillset that's not being tapped, there might be a way to leverage those latent abilities. Or you might discover that the majority of people who leave the organization join a certain type of company offering a particular service.



**THERE'S NO SUBSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS ACUMEN AND A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION MAKES MONEY.**

"There might be an opportunity to use your workforce's talents to develop a service offering you don't currently have," said Marful.

## TRANSFORMATIVE HR

"I think big data is changing the world for us," said Oldroyd. "Things like analytics really allow us to be able to inform the business overall and the business strategy more proactively than we would have been able to in the past." This includes detailed information about employees' needs, preferences, areas of strength, performance and more.

"For example, if you've really done a good job of segmentation in understanding your employee insights and analytics, you can share that data with the business so everyone has a better understanding of where they need to build capability in the workforce if, for example, our business strategy is focused on a particular area of revenue growth," said Oldroyd.

That's a seismic shift from the earliest days of HR, when the department's role was purely transactional. Over time, it evolved to focus on personnel management, and most recently came to embrace the idea of HR as a strategic business partner.

As business begins to understand the impact of strategic HR expertise, the profession is poised to take on a role with even greater influence.

"If we share the best insight and expertise we can bring to an organization, HR has an opportunity to be not just strategic, but genuinely transformative," said Oldroyd. ■





# The Rewards of Giving Back

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE HR FUNCTION

By Sarah B. Hood

In 2009, Strandberg Consulting prepared a report for Industry Canada, titled *The Role of Human Resource Management in Corporate Social Responsibility*. It found a strong business case for HR professionals to play a key role in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities within their organizations, citing increased retention and cost savings among the benefits. How has CSR thinking evolved since then?

The Strandberg report defined CSR as “the balanced integration of social and environmental considerations into business decisions and operation.” However, these days, definitions vary.

“Generally speaking, it’s what you do above and beyond compliance with regulations: what your company does on a voluntary basis to meet the expectations

not just of your shareholders but stakeholders – which, of course, includes employees,” said Signi Schneider, vice president, Corporate Social Responsibility for Export Development Canada.

Linda Fisher Thornton is the CEO of Virginia-based leadership development firm Leading in Context and author of *7 Lenses, Learning the principles and practices of ethical leadership*. She says CSR is, above all, “an approach to business that incorporates a broad understanding of ethical responsibility, including a responsibility to support the good of society and the health of the planet.”

According to Paul Klein, founder and CEO of Impakt, a certified B Corporation that exists to create profitable social enterprises, “broadly, CSR refers to the ways in which a corporation contributes to positive

social or environmental change. It encompasses governance issues, supply chain and ethical sourcing, community relations, social impact and environmental impact.”

There are numerous benefits for the companies that do CSR right.

“Consumers often look at a company’s ethical brand value when purchasing,” said Fisher Thornton. “Companies are finding that ‘doing good’ can have powerful positive effects on their organization’s success.”

As for recruitment, “CSR is a powerful attractor of ethically aware and socially responsible job applicants,” she said. “A group of HR managers I worked with recently mentioned that applicants were asking about community service involvement and environmental sustainability as they were considering whether or not to accept a position at the company.”



A strong CSR mindset can be an incredible asset for attracting top talent to an organization.

“Many HR studies show that CSR ranks among the top five reasons that talent will choose one company over another,” said Schneider. “I receive emails from employees who tell me how proud they are of the work that we’re doing.”

## WHAT'S HR GOT TO DO WITH IT?

CSR fits naturally within the HR function.

“Human resources professionals often have the best idea of employee expectations,” said Schneider. This may be as simple as recognizing that employees are eager to support a current charity relief drive.

Senior executives are now coming to recognize the importance of questioning how social responsibility relates to the organization’s overall mission and mandate: “How do we change from CSR as a philanthropic costs centre to social change as a business opportunity?” said

Klein. “HR is one of the most important aspects of that.”

Not every corporation needs an elaborate CSR program.

“For many companies, it’s a proxy for corporate donations. And that’s not wrong,” he said. “Then you’ve got a handful on the other end of the spectrum that are doing things really thoughtfully in a way that’s contributing to solving something and, I would argue, making a contribution to their business.”

Klein names two projects as head and shoulders above the rest: Bell Let’s Talk, the multi-year national campaign to bring mental health issues into the open, and one his firm works with, The Home Depot Canada Foundation’s “The Orange Door Project,” a three-year, \$10-million commitment to helping end youth homelessness in Canada. It includes an initiative called Hire Up, Canada’s first national hiring portal for youth who have experienced homelessness, which will be rolled out at Home Depot stores across the country this year.

“Historically, The Home Depot Canada Foundation provided support specifically to affordable housing initiatives. In 2014, we completed a research project that showed the growing incidence of youth homelessness in Canada. With this knowledge, we decided to focus the majority of our efforts on this cause,” said Amanda Cornelisse, manager of community affairs and The Home Depot Canada Foundation.

The Home Depot “associates” are strongly engaged in the company’s CSR activities; its “Team Depot” contributed over 60,000 volunteer hours in 2015 to 285 hands-on service projects.

“They are also the driving force behind our annual in-store fundraising campaign in support of The Orange Door Project. In 2015, 182 Home Depot stores collectively raised more than \$1.2 million for 120 unique charities across Canada,” said Cornelisse.

At Export Development Canada, employees can work for four months with Care Canada.

**THERE IS NO SINGLE RULEBOOK FOR HR PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN FURTHERING CSR STRATEGIES WITHIN THEIR COMPANY; BY THEIR VERY NATURE, CSR ACTIVITIES MUST FIT THE PERSONALITY OF THE ORGANIZATION.**

"They're working overseas in what would normally be seen as a hardship post, but they absolutely love it," said Schneider.

This kind of buy-in grows organically. One way to start is by setting up a cross-function committee or advisory teams around different focus areas, says Nan Oldroyd, an HR executive in Ontario.

"Communication [is also key], whether it's a newsletter or internet or regularly occurring meetings. How do you tell the story about the progress you've made?" she said.

"Companies have found ways to embed this into hiring priorities and performance evaluation priorities," said Klein. "If you are a sourcing person, finding ways to source ethically could become part of your evaluation and compensation."

There is no single rulebook for HR professionals who are interested in furthering CSR strategies within their company; by their very nature, CSR activities must fit the personality of the organization.

"Often, CSR starts off as an initiative that employees bring forward," said

Schneider. "In a more mature state, it can be circumstances where employees are bringing forward questions about ethical issues or an environmental footprint."

This type of situation could pertain to anything from encouraging double-sided photocopying to ensuring that no supplier is engaged in child labour. HR could anticipate this type of request by including CSR questions in routine employee surveys.

Sometimes the initiative is top-down: "We've seen many organizations where the CEO will see the need to meet a higher level of public expectation in a certain area; that, sometimes, is a good place to start," said Schneider.

If a formal strategy is needed, "I would address it in the same way that you address business strategy," said Oldroyd. "If you're looking for a key priority to be incorporated into the business strategy, you create your business case. You sit down with the CEO and senior leadership team and talk about the key benefits of investing in it."

### **A LONG-TERM PROCESS**

"[Regardless of the approach,] implementing CSR is a long-term process that will require time and attention, and will involve everyone in the organization," said Fisher Thornton. "It takes a strong awareness to succeed in making CSR a daily habit. Once there is strong awareness, leaders can invite employees to suggest ways that the organization could embrace CSR more fully in its daily work."

Consistency and follow-through are also important to having CSR work properly.

"The critical thing with CSR is that you have to make the commitment. You have to go public about it – externally and internally. You have to measure it, so you are accountable to it and you can celebrate milestones along the way, and it needs to be genuine," said Oldroyd. "If you go into it because it's about 'looking good,' that will not ring as authentic with investors, employees, customers or any other stakeholders." ■



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# Continuing Professional Development Needs Analysis

Prepared for  
**Barbara**  
CHRL  
Date: Jan

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# Be Positive

## THREE WAYS TO CREATE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

By Shawn Murphy

It's a traditional belief that the needs of the organization trump employees' needs. This belief has become a barrier for many leaders to adapting a more modern leadership perspective. The opposite belief – that employees' needs trump those of the company – isn't true either. Today's leader needs to adopt a belief that's rooted in mutually beneficial outcomes: how do leaders meet the needs of both the organization and its employees?

When leaders maintain the traditional view that the organization is mightier than anything else, it blocks a critical work reality from emerging – workplace optimism.

### WHAT IS WORKPLACE OPTIMISM?

Workplace optimism isn't just a part of an organization's culture. Workplace optimism is a characteristic of the organizational or team climate. Climate is how it feels to work somewhere. It's based on employees' perceptions of the work environment.

Climate is significantly influenced by a leader's style. According to the Hay Group, a leader's style has the greatest

influence on employees' perception of the work environment. Employees in a positive climate, or an optimistic workplace, outperform those in negative climates by 10 to 30 per cent.

Outdated beliefs aren't the only barriers to workplace optimism. There are four other major barriers that interfere with creating a positive work climate.

### Blind impact

If a leader's style is so important to creating workplace optimism, it becomes more dubious when she is unaware of the impact she is having on her team. A leader unaware of her impact doesn't use the motivating importance of purpose, organizationally or personally. Additionally, she doesn't connect the dots between people's work and the organization's direction. The consequence of this is minimized impact to the organization's goals and employees' personal goals.

Workplace optimism will struggle to emerge if a leader doesn't understand the influence she has on people and results. Instead it causes confusion and frustration.

### Antisocial leadership

This isn't antisocial in the psychological sense; rather, this is about a leader's resistance to embrace social behaviours illuminated by the growing influence of social technology. Antisocial leaders don't encourage, build or evolve a community of people united by a shared purpose.

This barrier also prevents a leader from seeing the importance of belonging. According to Gallup, we spend one-third of our life working. Shouldn't a major part of our lives be a positive influence? Belonging helps employees feel positive about where they work.

### Profit myopia

Another barrier to workplace optimism is the outdated belief that profit is the primary success measure for business. Leaders with profit myopia are focused primarily on the short-term. Their teams chase solutions that satisfy stakeholders and/or short-term goals, alienating customers and employees.

Employees will likely struggle to find work meaningful, a major contributor to

## LEADERS NEED TO KNOW HOW THEIR LEADERSHIP STYLE INFLUENCES – POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY – PEOPLE’S PERFORMANCE.

the optimistic workplace, when chasing profits is the predominant message a company’s leaders send. This isn’t to say profit isn’t important – it’s vital to a company’s ongoing success. However, a leader with profit myopia fails to recognize the influence of intrinsic motivators on people and their work product.

### Silo syndrome

Silo syndrome afflicts a leader when he cannot see beyond his immediate responsibilities. This barrier prevents a leader from collaborating with other departments. It also blinds a leader from seeing the impacts of work on other people’s lives.

With this barrier to optimism, a leader is unaware of – or doesn’t care – how work affects employees’ family lives. The ubiquity of smartphones and tablets keeps employees plugged into work well

after they leave for the day. While this is helpful, it can lead to fatigue or burnout. Neither of these outcomes will help optimism emerge.

### OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO CREATING WORKPLACE OPTIMISM

What, then, can a leader do to overcome the barriers to workplace optimism? Here are three actions a leader can do to shift how they lead their team to help cultivate optimism.

#### Lean on leadership

Leaders need to know how their leadership style influences – positively and negatively – people’s performance. The best way to do this without investing money is to identify three to five people that the leader trusts. She can then ask for feedback on her leadership style and effectiveness.

Leaders can then use the feedback to identify changes to her style. She can also lean on some of these leadership skills that are linked to cultivating workplace optimism: humility, honesty, reflection, grit, resilience, sense making, vulnerability, noticing, connecting, experimenting and prioritizing.

### Reinforce relatedness

To overcome the silo syndrome, leaders can focus on creating a sense of relatedness between employees. CEO of Canada’s Tangerine Bank, Peter Aceto, spends the first 10 minutes of all of his meetings connecting with employees. Leaders can adopt this practice to deepen the connection between people on the team.

### Create clarity

When employees don’t have clarity on team goals or work priorities, confusion, chaos and frustration set in.

Leaders can create clarity by sharing the company’s goals with employees. They can also co-create with employees team goals that align with the company’s. This builds buy-in and support for what’s important to the organization. To make it a mutually beneficial arrangement, leaders can work individually with employees to determine how they can best contribute to the team goals.

Essential to maintaining clarity is providing ongoing feedback – what’s working and not working. Employees want to know how they are doing. Without feedback, little professional growth will occur. Without growth, high performing employees will leave.

Mutually beneficial relationships will thrive when a leader’s style inspires and motivates, when relatedness is reinforced and there is clarity in expectations and performance needs. Not only do these areas promote workplace optimism, they also help the team and, ultimately, the company achieve great results. It starts with leaders shifting their beliefs about how to meet the needs of both the company and its employees. ■

*Shawn Murphy is an independent consultant with 20 years’ experience working with organizations to create workplace optimism.*

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# How Can You Help?

EMPLOYERS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO SUPPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN THEIR WORKPLACE

By Heather Hudson

**W**hat issue costs Canadian employers \$77.9 million every year? Domestic violence. And that's an answer that may be surprising to some.

New research indicates that it's probably affecting someone in your workplace right now.

"Over a lifetime, one in three workers will experience domestic violence. If you have a workforce of any size, you can be almost certain that the problem is there," said Barb MacQuarrie, community director of the Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children at Western University in Ontario.

A 2014 survey of more than 8,400 people, conducted by The University of Western Ontario and the Canadian Labour Congress, found that 33.6 per cent experienced domestic violence from a partner and 35.4 per cent reported having at least one co-worker who they believe has experienced it.

Domestic violence can enter the workplace through harassing phone calls, unwanted visits, disruptive texts and emails, as well as distraction, fatigue, lateness, absences, unexplained or frequent bruises and sudden changes in residence.

In 2015, The Conference Board of Canada released the report, *Domestic Violence and the Role of the Employer*, which examined what Canadian employers are doing to support employees experiencing domestic violence.

# policies & procedures

Charles Boyer, research associate with the Conference Board's Workplace Health and Wellness Research Group and co-author of the report, says the employer does have a role to play to protect its employees from the impact of domestic violence.

"In some provinces, when an employer finds out that an employee is experiencing domestic violence that will likely put them in harm's way, the employer has a duty to put in place reasonable precautions to protect the employee," he said.

The report found that employers have an opportunity to enhance the health and wellbeing of employees experiencing domestic violence, but that few offer training and education to managers and employees on understanding and addressing these issues.

To date, only Ontario and British Columbia have passed legislation relating to domestic violence in the workplace.

"Ontario is the first province to explicitly mention domestic violence [in its

workplace legislation], but many provinces have provisions that give employers responsibility for preventing and responding to violence in the workplace," said MacQuarrie.

In 2007, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety included domestic violence in its third edition of the Violence in the Workplace Prevention Guide, proving that awareness is seeping through, though not as assertively as MacQuarrie would like.

"There are some really progressive employers, but, for the most part, this is still not 'big time' on the agenda of employers and HR," she said. "We've got a long way to go to really understanding this."

## HOW CAN HR ADDRESS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE?

The impact of domestic violence can become a real workplace concern, according to Boyer. It affects victims' wellbeing and productivity every day. And employers recognize that.

"We asked employers if they think domestic violence impacts performance and productivity and, across the board, 96 per cent agreed that of course it does," said Boyer. "Most of them agreed that paid leave, safety policies and other supports could help victims regain their health and wellbeing."

In most workplaces, the HR department is the ideal place to form policies that help support victims of domestic violence and restore productivity in the workplace.

The first step is for HR professionals to seek training on domestic violence for themselves. Organizations such as your company's EAP, women's shelters and legal aid will help you find out what community supports are available to those in need – and how best to access them.

MacQuarrie says training can also be found in educational institutions like hers at the University of Western Ontario.

"Here at the Research Centre Workplace Education Program, we have options of training that can be customized," she said. "This type of training is readily available all over the country."

When it comes to creating policy, MacQuarrie suggests including:

- A definition of the problem (domestic

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**“IN SOME PROVINCES, WHEN AN EMPLOYER FINDS OUT THAT AN EMPLOYEE IS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAT WILL LIKELY PUT THEM IN HARM’S WAY, THE EMPLOYER HAS A DUTY TO PUT IN PLACE REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT THE EMPLOYEE.”**

— CHARLES BOYER, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, WORK-PLACE HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESEARCH GROUP, THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA



- violence) and potential signs
- A statement of the kind of support available in the workplace
- Identification of support people in the workplace for employees to access if they suspect domestic violence or are victims of it themselves
- An outline of what will happen when an employee turns to the support program for help

An important component of any domestic violence policy is confidentiality.

“I wouldn’t recommend guaranteeing absolute confidentiality, but to the extent possible – with information being shared only to ensure safety,” said MacQuarrie. “When you have obligations to protect everybody in the workplace, some other people are going to have to know to be part of a plan.”

Boyer says managers and employees will ultimately need to be well trained on detecting the signs of domestic violence and understanding the workplace policy on handling it.

“They are the ones who will likely first detect or hear about signs of abuse and should know where they can turn to address this and better support a co-worker,” he said.

While a workplace policy on domestic violence should include access to

community resources, the employer may also consider what can be done within the organization to help protect and support the employee.

These include:

- Leave policies or flexible work arrangements for court or legal appointments
- Accommodations such as:
  - ✦ Telephone screening
  - ✦ Changes to paycheque delivery
  - ✦ Equipping security with a photograph of the abuser

Manitoba recently introduced legislation that provides paid leave to employees experiencing domestic violence. They’re following the lead of the government of Australia, which has more than 860 individual collective agreements covering 2 million workers that gives employees access to paid leave.

“Part of the cost associated with domestic violence is driven by losses in employment. Supportive practices like paid leave for an employee to go to court or seek counseling can indicate to an employee that the organization will support them and help them regain their health and wellbeing,” said Boyer. “In our previous experience in other health-related areas, employees who are connected to the workplace

through meaningful work are better able to regain their health and wellbeing. Helping a worker stay connected and supported not only helps the health of an employee, but may also help save an organization’s bottom line by having these employees avoid longer health-related leaves of absence.”

## **IS THERE AN OBLIGATION TO REPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO THE POLICE?**

Under the Ontario legislation, the obligation to report is for an attempt, threat or incident of violence and there’s a similar threshold across jurisdictions, says MacQuarrie.

“Just because you’re aware that somebody is experiencing domestic violence doesn’t mean you have to report it,” she said.

She emphasizes that employees should be trained to report the suspicion of domestic violence to a supervisor within the workplace, not the police.

“Reporting is a scary word and tends to have a very official interpretation,” she said. “Sometimes, what’s needed is a consultation about somebody who is experiencing difficulties and how can we get together to do some problem solving. Ultimately, what you want to see coming out of these situations is a safety plan.” ■

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# Mission Possible

## THREE THINGS THE MILITARY DOES WITH RECRUITING AND ONBOARDING THAT COULD HELP YOUR BUSINESS

By Jay Ballard

**A** common complaint among companies is that it can be expensive to recruit quality talent – and if the new hire decides to leave shortly after joining a new organization, those expenses are a loss.

The military is as concerned about recruitment and retention as civilian businesses. A 2005 RAND study on U.S. Army recruiting estimated that it costs approximately \$15,000 for each person who makes it to boot camp; when an organization the size of the U.S. military recruits between 155,000 to 200,000 personnel per year, those expenses add up. There is an obvious drive to maximize recruiting success and initial retention, with the following three focal areas being important contributors to that goal.

### RECRUITERS

The primary HR-related expense for the U.S. military is the recruiter program. Recruiters are experienced military members who have been handpicked for the job because they've excelled personally and professionally. They tend to be the first military person

that many potential recruits have ever met, so it's important that they are trained in recruiting techniques and can function as role models for their service.

A recruiter's job is to explain the military to potential recruits as well as identify candidates suited for the military lifestyle. They operate as both salespeople and gatekeepers. Virgin Atlantic has been using this technique for several years – they put some of their best people in the recruiting process in order to increase success by identifying candidates who best align with company culture and energy.

With psychometric testing becoming more prevalent during the interview process, there can be a tendency to rely more on those results and less on a human recruiter's impressions. The military does test potential recruits, but the recruiters use those results to inform, rather than dictate, their final hiring decision. Using some of these techniques, particularly with regards to the quality of recruiters and the focus on hiring for corporate culture fit, the military sees better candidates and optimizes its future retention goals.

# recruitment

**A RECRUITER'S JOB IS TO EXPLAIN THE MILITARY TO POTENTIAL RECRUITS AS WELL AS IDENTIFY CANDIDATES SUITED FOR THE MILITARY LIFESTYLE. THEY OPERATE AS BOTH SALESPEOPLE AND GATEKEEPERS.**



## SURVEYS

Each U.S. military service conducts entry and exit surveys to track the reasons why recruits join and why they decide to leave. This information is used to fine-tune recruiting slogans and internal programs. For instance, the entry survey given to new recruits in the U.S. Navy has indicated that the top two reasons given for joining the service were that it was a job, and for the training and education benefits. Armed with this information, the Navy is able

to focus its recruiting pitch and increase the quality of education programs for service members.

If your organization is small, an informal meeting with new hires to find out why they joined your company could provide valuable information. If your company is large and has a survey program in place, is the data used to refine HR programs, or is it collected to gather dust?

## IMMEDIATE IMMERSION

Historically, U.S. Navy boot camp graduates were assigned to operational ships or squadrons, but upon arrival at those new bases they would be diverted to a manpower pool for the first 90 days. This was done so that those units and ships could draw from the manpower pool for cooking, cleaning and operational support without depleting their ranks of trained war fighters. Imagine the impact on a new sailor arriving on an aircraft carrier with visions of participating in flight operations, but unexpectedly enters a reality of scrubbing floors for three months.

One of the most impactful changes the Navy made was to immediately immerse those new sailors in operations so they could gain initial qualifications and experience. They were informed upfront that they would be sent off for 90 days, but they now had a taste of why they joined in the first place. This change to the onboarding process positively impacted morale and increased first tour retention.

A civilian equivalent would be giving new hires initial experience on a major project team before sending them into more entry-level jobs. Ed Catmull describes how the “pay your dues in menial jobs” cultural mindset stifled innovation and creativity at Disney Animation in his book, *Creativity, Inc.* It might be worth reviewing the first few days of your company’s onboarding process to see if there are ways to generate excitement in your new hires.

Not every military HR program or process is directly applicable to the corporate world, but reviewing these three areas in your company might improve your recruiting and onboarding results. ■

*Jay Ballard is a writer, speaker, consultant and U.S. Navy combat veteran.*

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# Working through Trauma

## RETURNING TO ROUTINE AFTER TRAUMATIC EVENTS

By Noi Quao

**O**n a Friday evening last November in Paris, after many people had left work and were enjoying a night on the town, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks occurred. That evening, 130 people were killed and more than 350 people were injured in a shocking event that made headlines around the world. The city was on lockdown and many lives were turned upside down. The following Monday, most Parisians began their coping process – by returning to work. In addition to speaking candidly about their experiences, most people were merely determined to get back to routine. The events were horrific, but the story also became one of resilience.

When traumatic events occur, the aftermath commonly interferes with a person's ability to function normally in their personal life and at work. Everyone reacts to traumatic events in their own way. In many cases, it can take days or even weeks to return to normal routine. Some experience the temporary effects of a traumatic event, such as an increase in errors, irritability or customer service complaints. Others experience more severe effects, such as increased anxiety, depression, absenteeism or – in more extreme circumstances – post-traumatic stress disorder.

A recent study by Morneau Shepell found that more than half (52 per cent) of employees indicated that the reason for their most





### WHEN TRAUMATIC EVENTS OCCUR, THE AFTERMATH COMMONLY INTERFERES WITH A PERSON'S ABILITY TO FUNCTION NORMALLY IN THEIR PERSONAL LIFE AND AT WORK.

recent absence from work was a non-illness related issue. These same employees were more likely to report higher work-related stress and lower levels of support from their organization for mental wellness. Regardless of the reaction to a traumatic event and how a company provides support to its employees, increased absenteeism or a decrease in productivity often has a negative impact on an organization's bottom line.

When employees are properly assisted by the HR team and other leaders within the company, the negative impact of a traumatic event on employee engagement and workplace productivity can be mitigated.

#### ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS

For employers and colleagues of someone affected by a traumatic event, it is important to keep open lines of communication. The best ways for employers to support their employees in light of a traumatic event is through the following:

1. **Acknowledge that the event occurred.** The past cannot be erased, so it is best to speak about it directly with those affected. Explain that you support your colleague and, if applicable, acknowledge awareness of your shared experience of the traumatic event.
2. **Encourage the return to work and household routines in**

**the shortest time possible.** Pair this with the right support through counselling, which is often provided through an employee and family assistance program (EFAP).

3. **Be ready to listen to the employee's story/concern without providing insight of your own.** Though you may want to share stories of similar traumatic events, they may not be well received. In many cases, it is best to simply listen.
4. **Offer practical support.** Rather than saying, "Let me know if you need anything," offer practical assistance, such as helping to meet a deadline or giving the employee a ride home after work.

Most people who return to work after a traumatic event – as many Parisians did last November – are doing so in an effort to return to their usual routine. It is important to provide a balance between pushing for the return to routine and compassion. The best way to do this is offer support, listen and take employees' reactions into consideration.

In the wake of a traumatic event, it is essential for leaders to provide an environment of support for all employees affected, whether from an internal resource or through external expertise. ■

*Noi Quao is manager, Traumatic Event Support Services at Morneau Shepell.*

# HR CAREER PATHS: Heidi Walker, CHRL



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

By Lisa Kopochinski

**G**rowing up in Oakville, Ont., Heidi Walker says it was always expected that she would attend university. Thinking she would probably become a teacher – as she knew it would be a career that she'd always enjoy – she majored in English at McMaster University.

“Following university, I moved to Japan to teach English as a second language,” she said. “It solidified how much I liked teaching and I especially enjoyed teaching adults.”

However, it was not until after her three children were born that she discovered the human resources field when she began working part-time as an HR generalist.

“I decided to go back to school to build on my bachelor’s degree, so I applied to both Teacher’s College and the HR management post-degree program at Humber College,” she said. “I decided to pursue HR because I felt there were more diverse opportunities in the field.”

She earned her Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation several years ago, which has now been

upgraded to Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL). Her career trajectory has taken her through several positions.

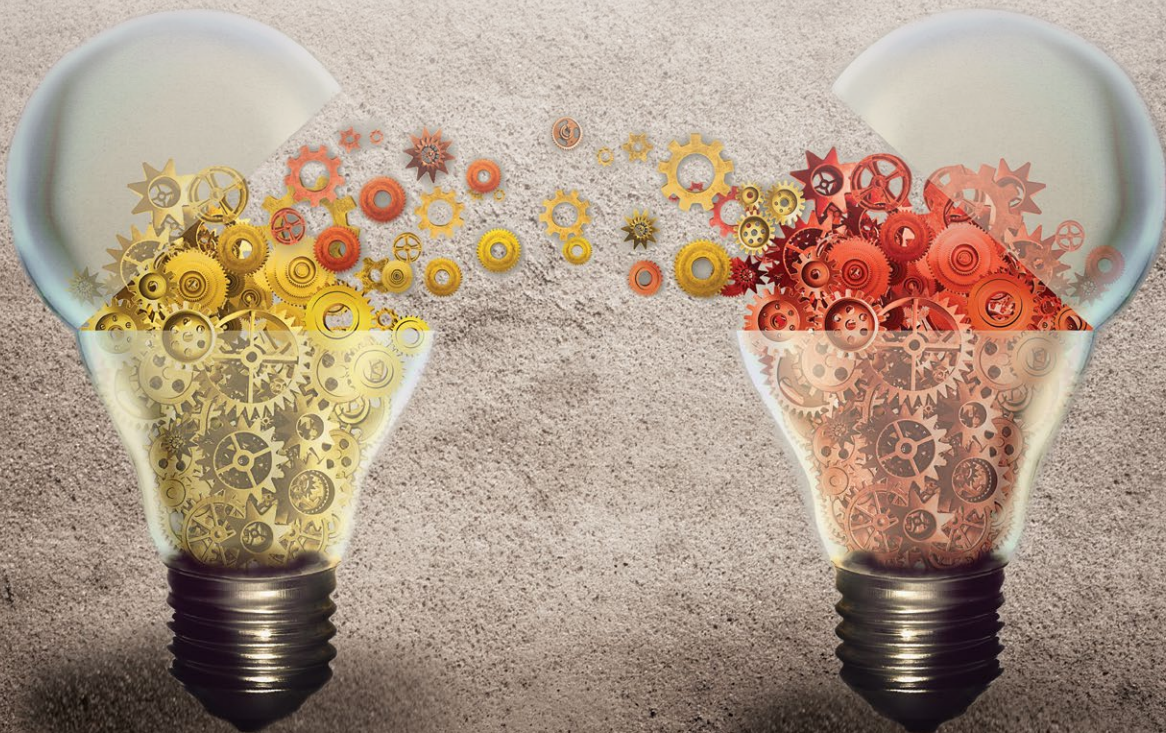
She joined Maple Leaf Foods in June 2015 as manager, Operations Learning and Development, working in the company’s Mississauga location, and says this position is a great fit because it allows her to build relationships within the organization.

“My previous experience in learning and development has proved very beneficial as I am part of a small collaborative team,” said Walker.

*HR Professional* caught up with Walker to find out more about what her responsibilities entail on a daily basis and what advice she has for those who are also interested in the learning and development area of human resources.

### What are your main areas of responsibility in your current job?

**Heidi Walker:** I’m responsible for all aspects of learning initiatives for the Operations group at Maple Leaf Foods, leading learning development across all operations functions. I execute



# career paths

planned learning initiatives, and design and support learning sessions. Along with developing content, I am developing an annual learning plan that supports the long-term learning strategy for the [manufacturing] plants. As the lead for the Alchemy key user network, I collaborate with plants and HR to ensure that operations employees receive training in all relevant areas.

## What do you like most about your job?

**HW:** What I look forward to every day is interacting with the plants. I am developing relationships with the plants and especially enjoy seeing how the training I create and support can influence the operations employees.

## What does a typical day at work for you look like?

**HW:** No day is ever exactly the same. Sometimes, I am fortunate enough to visit a plant and I'm able to interact with plant level colleagues directly. Many of my days are filled with meetings with executive sponsors, subject matter experts and colleagues. I have many projects in progress with various operational groups.

## What are some of the challenges you experience on a day-to-day basis?

**HW:** Manufacturing is a new industry for me, and I am trying to learn specifically about our plants and processes. I'm fortunate enough to have great support both within my learning team and at the plant level. It's always challenging to balance training needs with the daily requirements of production.

## What are your ultimate career goals?

**HW:** My long-term goal is to consult and provide learning and development expertise to a variety of client groups. Ultimately, I would like my input and influence to build a learning culture within an organization.

## What advice do you have for others interested in pursuing an HR career specializing in learning and development, or for those looking to move up the ladder?

**HW:** For anyone entering the HR field, pursuing one of the designations (CHRP, CHRL, CHRE) is a good way to get the necessary requirements to obtain an HR position. Learning and development is a specialty within the HR field, and many companies don't have a specific team dedicated to training. If you're interested in learning and development, I would seek roles in companies that have dedicated learning departments and would focus on those with a strong learning culture.

Ask for stretch opportunities to work with your company's learning team either as a subject matter expert, or projects that involve your area and the learning team.

## What do you like to do in your spare time?

**HW:** I enjoy spending time with my three children, traveling and scuba diving. I also have a passion for music, theatre and photography. ■



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MEET THE HR INFLUENCERS:

# Laura L. Randell, CHRE

FLEXIBILITY AND FOCUS

By Lisa Gordon





**“YOU HAVE TO BE VERY AGILE TO SHIFT FROM THE TACTICAL TO THE STRATEGIC ON A DAILY BASIS, AND I ENJOY THAT.”**

**L**ike many of her peers, Laura Randell didn't consciously plan to have a career in human resources. But from her first exposure to the field 19 years ago – followed by a series of diverse and progressive positions – she has honed a unique and very specialized skill set.

Those capabilities serve her well in her senior role as director of sales, operations, marketing and HR at York University's Schulich School of Business. Leading a team of 20, Randell has a wide range of responsibilities, not the least of which is coordinating 325 faculty and instructors who deliver the university's full range of executive education offerings.

*HR Professional* asked Randell to share her thoughts on what it takes to rise up through the HR ranks into a multi-faceted senior leadership role.

#### **Describe your first HR job.**

**Laura Randell:** I worked as an HR generalist for CIBC call centres, where I was responsible for the teams in Toronto and Moncton, with about 750 people.

#### **When did you decide you wanted a career in human resources?**

**LR:** I didn't really make a conscious decision; it just happened. I took a leave of absence from a job in the public sector and I got a job in recruitment in banking, and it went from there. I think I really decided to pursue HR as a career when I was living in

Australia from 2003 to 2007. While there, I worked for Woolworths and Rabobank, a Dutch bank. That gave me global experience and exposure, because I worked in different countries, and I also had regional exposure working for the bank, with responsibility for all of Asia-Pacific.

#### **Describe your current job. What are your main areas of responsibility?**

**LR:** My current job here at Schulich is very unique. It's like a COO position. My primary job is to run education programs for the public. We have 150 executive education programs a year and I'm responsible for overseeing all of those – the development, making sure we have the right instructors and that we deliver the best programs to the public. I oversee all the sales, so my team has to fill those classes. I also have operations responsibility across two sites: the Schulich School of Business Executive Education Centre on the York campus, and also the downtown campus. That's full operational accountability for both sites, ranging from the strategic to the tactical. So, it's operating the sites but also the programs – two very distinct areas. I also lead the strategic marketing function for the entire Executive Education business and am the head of HR.

#### **What do you love about your job?**

**LR:** I like the variety. Every day is totally different and I never know what is going

## IN A NUTSHELL

**First job:** I worked for a small neighbourhood burger bar from age 14. I loved it; I learned a lot and I met my best friend there.

**Childhood ambition:** To be a criminal lawyer. I still plan to become a lawyer at some point; even if I never use it, I do plan to study law.

**Best boss and why:** I worked for a couple of inspirational leaders at Rabobank. For me, their common trait was that they trusted me to get the job done, and then gave me feedback that was meaningful.

**Current source of inspiration:** My husband, who is a very busy executive himself. He's my professional and personal role model. He has a Ph.D.; he's so disciplined and focused, and he inspires me to be better every day.

**Best piece of advice you ever got:** Listen before talking.

**Favourite music:** The music I grew up with: 1980s alternative. Give me that music any day!

**Last book you read:** It was *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* by John Darwin.

**How you spend your time away from work:** I enjoy reading history and I'm starting grad school in June; I also like cycling, cooking and watching British crime shows like *George Gently* or *Inspector Morse* – you name it, I watch it.

“THERE IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD UP CANADIAN EXPERTISE ON REMOVING BARRIERS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, WITHIN THE RECRUITING, HIRING AND DEVELOPING PROCESS IN ORDER TO ENSURE SUCCESS FOR BOTH EMPLOYER AND YOUTH EMPLOYEES.”

to be happening here. It can be something very tactical and in the weeds, but it can also be developing our strategic long-term plan. You have to be very agile to shift from the tactical to the strategic on a daily basis, and I enjoy that.

### What are the challenges you experience in your job?

**LR:** One of the challenges for me was that I had never led a unionized team in Canada, so the labour relations piece was new. Also, I think the challenge comes from just dealing with diversity every day. Everything from meeting my P&L numbers to developing a marketing strategy, to dealing with people and supplier issues, and all the different things that happen on a daily basis. It's extremely fast-paced; I could be dealing with all of those things within the space of an hour. It's also challenging to work as a business within a university.

### What's key to leading HR during a difficult time for a client organization?

**LR:** I think the key is to understand how HR can help the business be successful. What that means is possibly paring back projects that HR considers important, and focusing on things that really need to get done now. Having the ability to respond to internal and external factors is critical, as well as being able to flex and concentrate on bringing value to help grow the business.

### What skills are important for success in HR?

**LR:** The main thing is to understand how an organization operates and delivers value, and how what you do contributes to that.

You need self-awareness, meaning you need to know how you and HR in general are being perceived in the organization. I do think the key is core technical HR knowledge and business acumen. You need to understand how the business makes money, and who the customers are. What makes your business unique? That affects your value proposition and your people strategy; it's all related.

### What tips do you have for new grads or those in entry-level HR jobs who want to move up the ladder?

**LR:** First, find someone in the job you want to have in 10 years, and chat with them. See how you can learn from them, and find out how they got there. I think understanding that can help people decide if they really want it for themselves. Sometimes, people get where they want to be and don't want to be there anymore! Second, absorb as much as you can from really strong leaders and figure out what makes them successful. Third, gain as much experience across as many parts of HR as possible, especially compensation and recruitment. I truly believe those areas will always be in demand. Finally, work in different industries so you can move laterally or move up, without being pigeonholed into one industry. Always say yes to opportunities that come your way!

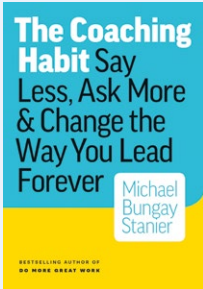
### What's the future of HR?

**LR:** I think it's about understanding and applying data to help make and prioritize decisions. I think that's the key to everything. ■



# OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRL



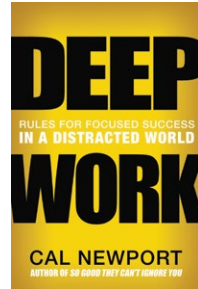
## THE COACHING HABIT: SAY LESS, ASK MORE & CHANGE THE WAY YOU LEAD FOREVER

Michael Bungay Stanier  
Box of Crayons Press, 2016

Well-researched and filled with humorous anecdotes and resources, *The Coaching Habit* demonstrates the power of seven simple questions to enable managers to coach team members to higher and more fulfilling performance levels. Leveraging the science of the brain, Bungay Stanier incorporates easy and effective methods to ingrain these new coaching habits into our daily behaviours. Effective coaching, writes Bungay Stanier, should be a daily, informal act. New and seasoned managers as well as established coaches will find the tools and tips in *The Coaching Habit* an invaluable tool.

### Point of interest

Through the strategic use of his seven questions, managers can zero in on the performance issues and interests of their team members. But the “secret sauce” of building a great coaching habit is to stay curious.



## DEEP WORK: RULES FOR FOCUSED SUCCESS IN A DISTRACTED WORLD

Cal Newport  
Grand Central Publishing, 2016

This process of learning hard things never ends, writes Newport. And we need uninterrupted time to do it. Our current embrace of distraction is founded on faulty thinking about knowledge work. Knowledge work is often ambiguous and hard to define. In addition, we are often lured into spending too much time on shallow activities, such as checking and responding to emails. Social media tools fragment our time and reduce our ability to concentrate, yet are ubiquitous in our workplaces. Newport’s central argument is that deep work should be a priority for business despite the culture of busy-ness embraced by most companies.

### Point of interest

In this new economy, writes Newport, three groups will have a distinct advantage: those who can work well and creatively with intelligent machines, those who are the best at what they do, and those with access to capital. To remain valuable, we must master learning complicated things.



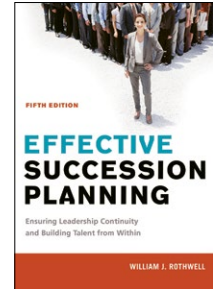
## WHAT GREAT TRAINERS DO: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO DELIVERING ENGAGING AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Robert Bolton and Dorothy Grover Bolton  
AMACOM, 2016

Trainers improve the effectiveness of the organization by helping individuals succeed. Yet, according to the authors, training often fails on a massive scale. Too many trainers are given responsibilities without adequate training themselves. *What Great Trainers Do* offers a comprehensive and engaging roadmap for trainers looking to improve their skills based on their years of successfully training trainers. Included are numerous examples and solutions for trainers to use when confronted by problems during training such as understanding resistance, eliminating disruptive behaviour and avoiding trainer defensiveness.

### Point of interest

According to their research, trainers who embodied high levels of respect, empathy and genuineness achieved the best results in their training. These three qualities are the core conditions of effective teaching.



## EFFECTIVE SUCCESSION PLANNING: ENSURING LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY AND BUILDING TALENT FROM WITHIN

By William Rothwell  
AMACOM, 2016

Succession planning is more multifaceted than ever. As products, markets and management activities become increasingly complex, prospective employees both inside and outside the organization require extensive prequalification. This fifth edition incorporates the many changes to the economy over the past 15 years, including, for example, how succession plans were recast as a direct consequence of 9/11.

### Point of interest

Rothwell’s chapter on the future of succession planning and management (SP&M) offers 15 interesting predictions. He predicts that career planning will be increasingly integrated into SP&M and envisions decision makers becoming more inclined to revive company-sponsored career planning and management programs.

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# Creating Win-Win Solutions for Youth Unemployment

By Sevaun Palvetzian

In Canada, over 500,000 youth are not in education, employment or training (NEET). In the Toronto region, the number comes to over 80,000 for youth aged 15 to 24. These young people are effectively in limbo, and the reasons may include barriers like socio-economic status, demographic background or personal circumstances that prevent them from entering the job market. Early joblessness can lead to reduced confidence, lack of hope and long-term financial instability.

The government can't solve this problem alone. Employers can help close the gap, and doing so can address their own labour needs, creating a win-win solution for both employers and youth who need jobs. According to CivicAction's 2014 report released with the launch of Escalator, hiring barriered youth can present numerous benefits to employers, including reduced labour, training and talent pipeline costs associated with hiring dedicated employees at the entry level and then developing them. Tapping into diverse pools of young talent can offer real competitive advantage by reflecting a broad customer base. And showing a commitment to youth opportunity and corporate social responsibility can help enhance brand image and deepen employee engagement.

Often, employers may be willing to create opportunities for youth, but may not have concrete ideas on where to start. By uncovering best practices from real employers that can be replicated across industries, companies can learn from each other and identify tips and lessons that would be useful in the field. Starbucks Canada, for example, is showing a commitment to hiring young people who have faced various barriers to employment, by signing the City of Toronto's pledge to



commit 10 per cent of their new store hires to Opportunity Youth. Through working with a City of Toronto program that helps unemployed youth, they have found that they are recruiting motivated young people they would not normally have access to. There is a great opportunity to build up Canadian expertise on removing barriers, both formal and informal, within the recruiting, hiring and developing process in order to ensure success for both employer and youth employees.

There is a price to inaction. According to U.S. figures, when young people don't get connected to a positive career pathway, the cost to society is an estimated \$1 million per youth over the course of

their lifetime. At a time when employers in some sectors report difficulty filling and maintaining entry-level roles, there is real need for HR strategies that can make a difference. Luckily, HR leaders can play a key role in moving the needle for youth in Canada, especially those who are facing multiple barriers. Together, HR leaders, their organizations and government can work together to help ensure that young people are able to thrive and contribute to society. ■

*Sevaun Palvetzian is CEO of CivicAction. For more information about initiatives to solve youth unemployment, visit [www.civicaaction.ca](http://www.civicaaction.ca).*

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