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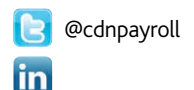


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About the Cover

This issue of HR Professional addresses the theme of mental health and how it applies to human resources.

Photo by Julos/Photos.com

contributors



Yafa Sakkejha

Yafa Sakkejha is the general manager and partner at Beneplan Inc., which runs the Beneplan Co-Operative, a non-profit, member-owned structure that provides group health benefits to small and medium employers in Canada. She has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Post*, *CBC*, *Toronto Star*, *Benefits Canada*, *Advisor's Edge* and was named a rising star in Toronto's entrepreneurial scene by *The Globe and Mail*. She helped launch the TEDxToronto event and a wellness vacation company. She has spoken at the HRPAs annual conference on returning to work after a mood-related disability. She graduated with a B.Comm (Hons) from Queen's University. Sakkejha discusses the dos and don'ts of an employee's mental health leave, starting on page 41.



Linda Lewis-Daly

Linda Lewis-Daly has over 20 years' experience developing innovative workplace physical and mental health programs to support employee wellbeing. In her private consulting practice and as a GoodLife Fitness' Workplace Wellness Program consultant, Lewis-Daly assists organizations in the development and implementation of programs that support employee engagement and health promotion focusing on sustainable behaviour change. She is regularly featured in the media, both print and radio, as a subject matter expert on workplace wellness program design. She also co-authored the wellness publication *Managing My Life: Managing My Health*. Lewis-Daly explores reducing mental health stigma in the workplace, starting on page 38.



Steve O'Brian

Steve O'Brian is VP of Client Services for Chronus Corporation. O'Brian oversees marketing and client services for Chronus and brings 20 years of marketing and operations experience to the organization. Prior to joining Chronus, O'Brian led the marketing efforts at University of Washington Professional & Continuing Education for nearly five years. During that time, he significantly expanded the role of marketing and its value to the organization, helping more than double revenue. Read O'Brian's take on implementing a workplace mentoring program and why such a program benefits organizations, starting on page 43.



Richard Matthews

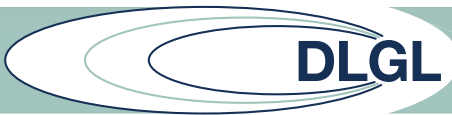
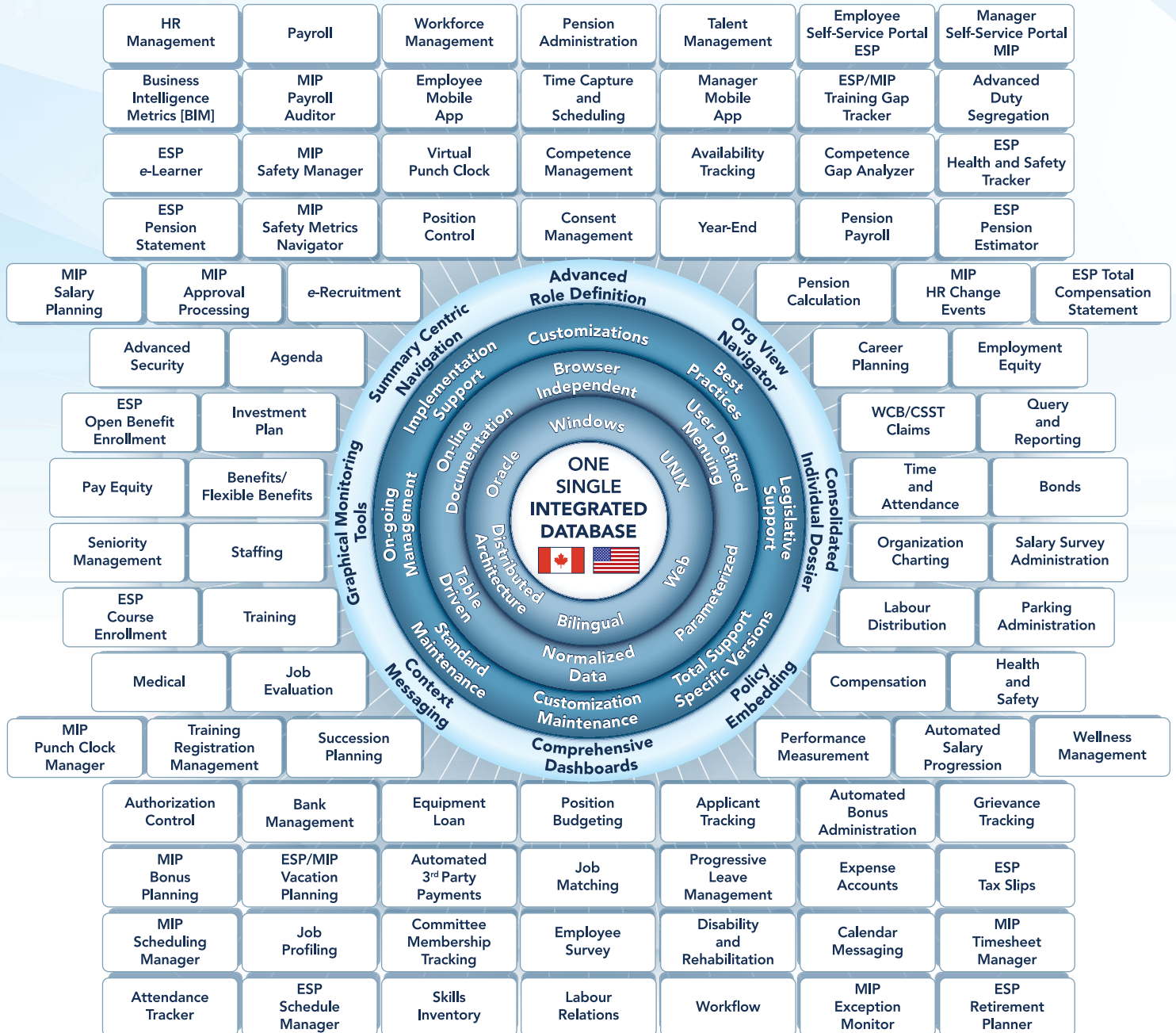
Richard Matthews has been part of the Canadian Recruiting landscape since 2000 and is the founder of Granite Consulting, the online communities RNG/HRNG and the annual Recruitment Innovation Summit(s). He is known as a thought leader and expert in social and professional networking. He is one of Canada's leading resources on recruitment strategy, best practice and process.

Richard can be found attending, hosting and speaking at the latest recruitment industry events, authoring articles, sharing industry insights and building the Granite network. Read what Matthews has to say about Canadian recruitment trends, starting on page 45.



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letter from the editor

THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

Welcome to a new year and the first 2014 edition (and my first edition as editor) of *HR Professional*.

For this January issue, we are working to address an increasingly pertinent topic in Canada: mental health in the workplace. When you look at the staggering statistics interspersed throughout this issue (for example, on any given day, 500,000 Canadians will miss work due to mental health challenges, as writer Melissa Campeau discovered in writing her article, "The Mentally Healthy Workforce"), it's clear why this is such an important discussion.

Mental health covers the spectrum from diagnosable mental disorders, to more common, everyday afflictions such as stress or trying to achieve a more appropriate work-life balance. With such a broad, critical topic to consider, it's difficult to even scratch the surface. However, I hope you find practical, relevant advice and information throughout our mental health edition. Fostering a psychologically healthy work environment should be a goal for all HR professionals and employers. It has to be a priority and something that is actively worked on, without the assumption that it will just "happen" organically.

Should you be in need of mental health assistance for yourself, a coworker or someone else in your life, there are resources listed in this issue that I hope you find helpful.

I also look forward to meeting you at HRPAs 2014 Annual Conference & Trade Show at the end of January. Please seek me out; I'm looking forward to chatting about your thoughts and ideas for *HR Professional*. ■

Thanks for reading,



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A NEW REGULATORY ACT FOR THE HR PROFESSION



By Phil Wilson, C.H.R.P., S.H.R.P.

The profession is at an inflection point in Ontario and it has become one of the most exciting times to be an HR professional. Here are the reasons why.

Human Resources management is a growing profession. HR consistently shows up in the lists of high-demand professions.

The demand for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation is growing every year. Between 2007 and 2013, the proportion of job postings in Hire Authority listing the CHRP designation as a requirement jumped from 36 per cent to 70 per cent.

And over the past 23 years, since HRPAs first regulatory act (the *Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990*) was passed, the role of Human Resources professionals has evolved tremendously. Responsibilities have grown from managing the personnel department concerned primarily with administrative tasks, payroll and vacation requests; to a strategic role, overseeing essential functions such as talent management, forecasting and fulfilling the talent needs of our organizations; and organizational development, leading large-scale transformational change. As CEOs said when interviewed for HRPAs 2011 report, *The Role and Future of HR: The CEO's Perspective*, HR executives have become valued contributors to the business – trusted advisors who often play the role of confidant to the CEO and other executives. According to the CEOs surveyed, there is no question that HR issues are of paramount importance and that senior HR executives have rightly earned a place at the table.

A NEW ACT

With so much growth behind us and a bright future before us, it's fitting that, in November, the Ontario Legislature unanimously passed the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*. This public statute replaces the *Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, 1990*, which was a private statute. The importance of this lies in the fact that public acts carry more weight and credibility than private acts. Our new Act places the Human Resources management profession in the same tier as other established Tier 1 professions.

This new Act acknowledges that HRPAs members possess a high level of professionalism and human capital management

knowledge that creates enormous value for the organizations that employ them.

With the passage of the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, the public can have even greater confidence in regulated HR professionals who are HRPAs members. The new Act provides consumers and businesses with a fair and transparent vehicle to make complaints about HR professionals and will protect consumers and businesses from HR professionals who are not authorized to use the CHRP designation.

A NEW MINDSET

This new recognition of HR as a Tier 1 profession is just the beginning. The Act provides us with the right statutory foundation to build upon, but there is much work to do, including what HRPAs VP Regulatory Affairs, Claude Balthazard, calls the “professionalization of the HR profession” – or the evolution in the behaviour, values and attitudes of HR professionals to start thinking of themselves as a true profession.

As Claude wrote, “The professionalization of HR has as much to do about how we think and conduct ourselves as anything else.”

The various components that support a Tier 1 profession are now coming together – statutory recognition as a self-regulating profession, comprehensive post-secondary educational programs in Human Resources and the recognition by CEOs that HR is a strategic function for the organization.

Indeed, this is an exciting time to be an HR professional. ■

Phil Wilson, C.H.R.P., S.H.R.P. is Chair of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) & V.P. Felix Global Corp.



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UPFRONT

TD economics explores mismatch of perception and reality in new job report

A new TD Economics report throws “cold water” on predictions of large and persistent job shortages in Canada, as well as views that today’s youth will be a “lost generation.” The Jobs in Canada report can be found at www.td.com/economics.

“Perceptions can take on a life of their own without hard underlying facts supporting them,” said Derek Burleton, a Deputy Chief Economist at TD Bank Group, and co-author of the report. “Still, there is room for improvement in Canada’s labour market, and we were pleased with the federal government’s focus on skills and training development. Our view is a more concerted effort among all levels of government as well as employers, employees and educators will be needed to provide Canada with a world-leading workforce for the 21st century.”

To test for labour shortages and mismatch, TD economists compiled data on unemployment rates, wage rates and vacancy rates (a measure of unmet labour demand) for around 140 occupations. Results uncovered some surprises. For instance, occupations widely thought to be in shortage – such as trades, engineers and health care workers – have recorded considerably lower unemployment rates than average, but vacancy rates that are only moderately higher.

As one would expect, vacancy rates have risen more significantly in the Prairies, particularly in those occupations perceived to be in shortage. Additionally, employers in Alberta and Saskatchewan were having difficulties filling occupations where an ample labour supply is widely perceived.

“However, the story on the wage data remains curious, as wage gains out west, across the occupation spectrum, have not increased

to the extent that one might have thought,” added Sonya Gulati, senior economist at TD Bank Group and co-author of the report.

Another perception is the post-secondary system is graduating too many Canadians in areas that are not in demand, thus leaving a large pool of underemployed people. OECD over-qualification and under-qualification rates for Canada relative to other countries provide some supporting evidence. Still, the job market outcomes of recent graduates, including those with liberal arts degrees, are likely better than many Canadians perceive.

Other labour market trends identified in the report include:

- A degree of labour market “polarization” – which refers to rapidly-growing demand for high and low-skilled employment at the expense of a relative decline in medium-skilled jobs – has taken place in Canada, but not nearly to the same extent as observed in the U.S.
- Older workers are punching well beyond their weight in terms of their contribution to net new employment. At the other end of the age spectrum, the challenges of youth in the job market have intensified since the onset of recession.
- Temporary jobs – especially contract positions – have been on a gradual rise and now make up one in seven positions. This upward trend has fuelled concerns surrounding the quality of jobs being created.

“Despite Canada’s solid track record in creating jobs, there are inherent vulnerabilities in the labour market and skills development more specifically that are holding back the economy’s potential,” concluded Burleton. “Bold and complementary action across governments, employers, employees and educators is needed to ensure that living standards continue to grow.”



Photo by Mediaphotos/Photos.com

Job market outcomes of recent graduates, including those with liberal arts degrees, are likely better than many Canadians perceive, a TD Economics report says.

Are programs to identify high potentials working?

HRRI'S 2011 RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS EXPLORE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIGH POTENTIAL PROGRAMS

To make an organization's high potential programs pay off, organizations need to systemically evaluate the accuracy of their high potential ID process, review their criteria for leadership potential and formally train assessors to pick high potential candidates, concludes *Beyond the best and brightest: Addressing the challenge of identifying high potentials in the workplace* – a new research paper by Len Karakowsky and Igor Kotlyar. To read the report, please visit bit.ly/I5x9FV.

The report is the end result of research chosen for a 2011 grant by the Human Resources Research Institute (HRRI).

"The report explores how organizations identify high potential employees, what happens to individuals when they are identified, what causes organizations to be satisfied or dissatisfied with their high potential programs," said Kotlyar, an assistant professor at the Faculty of Business and IT at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

"Some interesting things stood out. In the lab, labeling individuals as high potentials seems affect how they perceive feedback – especially negative. They may become more sensitive to feedback, which may have implications for their risk-taking preferences. In real life situations, when someone is identified, all of a sudden they

get a lot more visibility and there's more to lose and their perspective changes," said Kotlyar.

Kotlyar and Karakowsky, a York University management professor, also conducted a national survey of HR professionals around their in-house high potential programs.

"We found they use several perceptual lenses to examine their high potential programs: identification effectiveness, motivational aspects and whether the programs are fair and equitable. All three are relevant. Often you read that programs are purely about identifying the best. The survey revealed it's not just about accuracy, but delivering motivational value and perceived fairness.

"This creates funny interactions. Research shows that performance in your current job is insufficient for identifying leadership ability. However, organizations often put a lot of weight on current performance when identifying high potentials. And it seems like the reason they do that has to do with that motivational lens – to ensure the employee continues to perform well in their current roles.

"However, when an organization IDs someone for higher level leadership positions, it should recognize that the skillsets required will be different from their current position. They should really be assessing them for those future skills."

NEXT STEPS

The team will next look in more detail into how high potential leaders are being developed, including the effectiveness of leadership development programs and peer mentoring programs.

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Canadian workers can expect a third year of modest salary increases in 2014

Amid soft economic growth, Canadian organizations are planning moderate base salary increases for the third year in a row. The average pay increase for non-unionized employees is projected to be 2.9 per cent next year, almost exactly in line with actual gains in 2013, according to The Conference Board of Canada.

“While Canada’s economy is in relatively good shape, growth has been sluggish. For the most part, organizations will be looking to control costs and carefully allocate their compensation dollars,” said Ian Cullwick, Vice-President, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada.

“The divide between East and West persists. Frenzied resource development and near bottom unemployment rates means that Alberta and Saskatchewan are again expecting to offer the highest pay increases next year.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Average pay increase for non-unionized employees is projected to be 2.9 per cent in 2014
- The highest average increases are in the oil and gas sector at 4.1 per cent, while at 1.8 per cent the health sector will have the lowest average increases
- Alberta and Saskatchewan are again expecting to offer the highest pay increases next year, as employers in those regions struggle to recruit and retain employees

Salary increases vary considerably depending on region and industry. Regionally, Alberta and Saskatchewan employers will lead the nation with projected average increases of 3.7 per cent. The lowest average increases are expected in the Atlantic provinces at 2.5 per cent, followed by Ontario at 2.6 per cent.

Nationally, 58 per cent of organizations reported challenges recruiting and/or retaining employees, a decline from 69 per cent in 2012.



Photo by legereak/Photos.com

The oil and gas sector has reported recruitment and retention challenges.

Organizations in Alberta and Saskatchewan face a different set of challenges than those of the rest of the country – three-quarters of organizations said they struggled to attract and retain talent. In the oil and gas sector, 81 per cent of respondents reported recruitment and retention challenges.

The expected increase in the private sector is three per cent, while the average increase for employees in the public sector is expected to be 2.7 per cent.

Short-term incentive pay practices are widely used across most industry sectors. Actual short-term incentive payouts exceeded targets last year. In 2013, payouts were 11.6 per cent of total base pay spending versus a planned target of 11 per cent. Short-term incentive targets for 2014 are similar to 2013 targets. The highest short-term incentive pay targets will be in the oil and gas sector at 16.6 per cent.

The findings are based on the responses of 411 organizations across Canada. The survey was conducted between June and August 2013.



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Majority of HRPAs members say minimum wage increase would not affect their organizations

As a follow-up to the Consultation Paper on Ontario's Minimum Wage that was released by the Ministry of Labour in July 2013, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) conducted a survey of its membership on Ontario's current approach to setting the minimum wage, and determining changes to it in the future. The survey drew a large response from HRPA members and reflected the diversity of where they work – 18 per cent in small organizations, 37 per cent in SMEs and 45 per cent in large businesses.

While the majority of respondents (64 per cent) answered that an increase in Ontario's minimum wage would not have a negative impact on their organization, HRPA heard from the 20 per cent who said that it would – making the case that any increase in minimum wage is automatically reflected in the price of consumer goods, which are then purchased by minimum wage earners. Many also argued that any increase in the minimum wage would have serious consequences on businesses' ability to operate in Ontario, resulting in increased unemployment and more pressure on the EI system. The commentary captured the complexity of the issue – respondents differed on whether or not minimum wage should be a "living wage", several pointing out that minimum wage was never meant as a guarantee of being able to earn a living, and is just meant as a "floor" for the salaries of unskilled workers. For

others, the question is how best the government can ensure an adequate living wage for all workers in Ontario, while protecting the ability of employers to do business here, in the face of competition from around the world. Suggestions for breaking the cycle focused on providing skills training for unskilled workers, to support them in earning more than the minimum wage, stimulating consumer spending and addressing the cost of housing, childcare, food and other basic living expenses, including financial incentives for minimum wage earners who are supporting children.

91 per cent of respondents believe that there should be a formal mechanism in place to review the province's minimum wage, with 61 per cent advocating for a mandated review process which requires the government to conduct a periodic review of the minimum wage rate. Most replied that such a review should happen every two years, while 20 per cent of respondents expressed concern that a regular review process would result in regular increases to the minimum wage, a cost which would ultimately be prohibitive for business, with the added effect of goods and services becoming too expensive to afford.

According to respondents, the most important factor when reviewing the minimum wage rate should be the cost of living. Other factors, including unemployment and taxes, as well as the impact of minimum wage on businesses, registered very low. ■

If you have news to be featured in Upfront, email Jill Harris, editorial director, at jharris@lesterpublications.com. Note: Not all submissions will be published, and submissions may be edited for grammar and style consistency.

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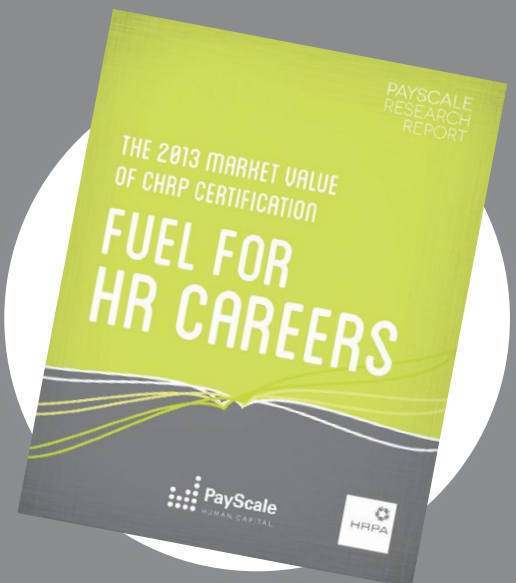
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COURTS AWARD HUMAN RIGHTS DAMAGES IN WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CASE



By Jonathan Pitblado,
J. Pitblado Law Office

A SUMMARY OF THE P WILSON V SOLIS FOODS CASE, 2013 ONSC 5799

This recent case appears to be the first case in Ontario where a court, as compared to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, has awarded Human Rights Code damages in a wrongful dismissal case.

Those Human Rights Code damages were significant.

The court battlefield for Human Rights Code damages was opened in the summer of 2008 via amendments to the Human Rights Code. Those amendments allowed a plaintiff to claim damages for breach of the Human Rights Code in addition to wrongful dismissal damages.

THE GENERAL FACTS

Mrs. Wilson was a middle-aged lady with a C.G.A. designation. She was originally hired by the defendant to be an assistant controller. She made \$65,000.00 per annum plus some fringe benefits.

After a brief time, she was given a lateral transfer to the position of business analyst. She had a fairly good performance review in that new position.

She then developed some back problems and disclosed them to the employer.

Senior management of the defendant met within a week after the performance review. The meeting notes showed the plaintiff complaining about back issues and her performance and long-term prospects with the company were questioned.

Several months later, a generic medical note from a family doctor was provided for some time off. Then, soon thereafter,

the family doctor provided a note indicating a gradual return to work of four hours per day the first week, six hours per day the week after and then, finally, eight hours per day the week after that.

The employer provided a functional abilities form for her doctor to complete. It was completed and returned in a timely way, and showed very few restrictions other than a need for her to alternate sitting, standing and walking.

The employer did not want her to return to work until she was 100 per cent healthy, as stated in its letters to her. Mrs. Wilson's family doctor then produced a note indicating that she would have to be off work completely for several weeks in order to recuperate to 100 per cent functionality.

In the meantime, the employer was planning to sell a division, and did so while Mrs. Wilson was away from work. The employer then informed Mrs. Wilson by letter that her services were no longer

required as the sale of the division had lessened their need for her.

The employer gave Mrs. Wilson two weeks of E.S.A. termination pay. That compensation made sense under the Employment Standards Act, as she had been employed for approximately 16 months. No common law notice monies were advanced.

Mrs. Wilson admitted in her trial affidavits that the loss of the division would have dropped her workload, at least in the short term, by 20 to 50 per cent.

The defense submitted that they let the plaintiff go because of the sale of the division. Thus, they argued, there should not be any liability for Human Rights Code damages. They did, however, admit to owing some common law notice period damages.

The trial judge awarded normal wrongful dismissal damages of three months' income, minus the two weeks of E.S.A. termination pay.



[THE JUDGE] FOUND THAT THE PLAINTIFF'S BACK DISABILITY MUST HAVE BEEN "A REASON" THAT THE DEFENDANT LET HER GO. IT DID NOT NEED TO BE THE "DOMINANT REASON."

Most importantly, the judge awarded the plaintiff \$20,000 in general non-pecuniary damages for breach of the Human Rights Code. He found that the plaintiff's back disability must have been "a reason" that the defendant let her go. It did not need to be the "dominant reason."

THE NEW BATTLEFIELD IN ONTARIO

Many HR professionals know that the Ontario Human Rights Code was amended in the summer of 2008 to allow claims for Human Rights Code damages to be grafted on top of wrongful dismissal claims in courts.

This is the first case in Ontario where Human Rights Code damages have been awarded by a court in addition to wrongful dismissal damages.

Why is that important?

Well, for many plaintiff lawyers, there will be cases where the plaintiff will get emotionally and financially exhausted pursuing a claim as an applicant before the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, only to be told that the employer did not breach the Human Rights Code, but did wrongfully dismiss them.

In that scenario, the applicant gets no relief. He would have to start over by proceeding with a wrongful dismissal suit in court, assuming that no limitation period had passed. Most applicants would not have the emotional or financial strength to do that.

Further, in strong cases, the plaintiff/applicant would want to recoup his legal fees and under the present appellate case law; that cannot happen with the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal.

Proceeding directly to court for both wrongful dismissal damages and general non-pecuniary damages solves that problem for the employee.

DEALING WITH THESE CASES

It will likely be imperative for HR professionals to instruct their counsel to seek summary trials in all Simplified Rules cases where Human Rights Code damages are sought.

Why?

So that the Summary Trial record, which contains the Statement of Claim, Statement of Defence and affidavits of the parties along with the exhibits can be copied and sent to HR and relevant management well before trial. If an agreement is struck with the plaintiff's counsel to exchange law briefs well before trial, then two things become quite easy and relatively cheap: trial preparation and settlement negotiations.

Although examinations for discovery have occurred in Simplified Rules cases since 2010, and transcripts are, of course, available from those discoveries, a well laid out affidavit with exhibits tells a powerful story, far more so than discovery transcripts.

A copy of the Summary Trial Record can justify any litigation decision made, and can be a teaching tool for an HR professional to prevent any Human Rights Code breaches at their company.

Remember, a company can be liable for Human Rights Code add-on damages if the trial judge infers that a prohibited ground of discrimination was "a reason" for dismissal – the trial judge does not have to believe that the prohibited ground of discrimination was a "dominant reason" for dismissal. ■

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The MENTALLY

WITH AWARENESS AND TRAINING, WORKPLACES
CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION FOR EMPLOYEES AT
RISK FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

By Melissa Campeau



HEALTHY Workforce

It's a statistic that almost doesn't compute, it's so staggering. One in five Canadians will experience a mental health illness in any given year. The personal toll this takes is tough to calculate, but the financial cost is measurably alarming, taking \$50 billion out of our economy annually. What's more, the problem is on the rise. If we do nothing to reverse this trend, experts predict the cost of lost productivity in Canada will be a whopping \$198 billion over the next 30 years.

Your organization is not immune. In any given day, 500,000 Canadians miss work due to mental health challenges. But there are ways to turn these numbers around. Given that most Canadians spend at least 60 per cent of their waking hours at their jobs, workplaces have a significant impact on our health, for better or for worse.

A workforce that's made aware of mental health challenges and has been trained to understand and assist unwell employees can have a remarkably positive impact.

"Research shows there's reduced onset of illness in a socially supportive workplace," said Donna Hardaker, trainer with Mental Health Works, a nationally available program by the Canadian Mental Health Association. "This means that some people will not become ill at all because they have a socially supportive workplace, while others who are unwell may have a shorter duration or less of a symptom load."

In fact, studies suggest that between 10 and 25 per cent of mental disability costs

directly incurred by employers could be avoided with early and effective intervention.

MENTAL HEALTH VS. MENTAL ILLNESS

When experts discuss mental health in the workplace, they're referring to more than just the absence of illnesses like depression or anxiety. The World Health Organization defines mental health as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. When a workplace supports these things – an employee's ability to cope with stress and work productively – it's a mentally healthy environment.

But even in an ideally healthy work environment, an employee might have trouble coping, thanks to genetic predisposition, trauma or other environmental factors. Because we spend so much time in the workplace, a manager might be among the first people to suspect a problem. For example, someone who has always performed well might suddenly start coming in late and making frequent mistakes. Or the problem might be less obvious.

"There's the issue of presenteeism," noted Sapna Mahajan, director, mental health prevention and promotion initiatives with the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). "There are people at work

and they're physically there, but they're not productive. Their presence is actually causing more harm than good because other employees have to take on work for them." Even just one team member suffering the effects of a mental health challenge can poison an entire team's productivity.

SETTING THE STANDARD

To deal with this challenge, organizations need information and a plan. With this in mind, the MHCC developed the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, comprising guidelines, resources and tools to help employers of any size build a mentally healthy workplace.

Applying the recommendations in the Standard may sound like a giant undertaking, but it doesn't have to be. While there are many places to start, a logical first step is to assess an organization's overall mental health. The survey tools at the Guarding Minds at Work site, developed by researchers from the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction, are free and immediately available.

"The survey assesses the workplace on an organizational level, not an individual level," said Mahajan. "It's not asking people, 'Do you have a mental illness?' It assesses 13 psychosocial factors, like engagement, balance, involvement and influence in one's workload."

Mahajan points out the importance of understanding your organization's

strengths and weaknesses, too.

"The number one thing to do is to actually look at your own data. What is the turnover rate? What is the disability rate and the benefits data?" Add this information to your survey results, suggests Mahajan, and you should begin to see the areas that need the most focus.

"If you're not actually assessing what you need and where you have a gap, you may not be seeing much impact when you attempt to affect change," she added.

RAISE AWARENESS

Despite the prevalence of mental illness, a 2008 study found only 23 per cent of Canadians would feel comfortable talking to their employer about a mental illness. Part of the silence likely stems from negative perceptions and beliefs still lingering in popular culture. There's a tendency to whisper about it or just clam up.

"You can't help prevent mental illnesses in the workplace without first overcoming the stigma," noted Mahajan. An awareness

campaign can right some wrong information, boost comfort levels with the subject and finally get people talking.

A campaign could take any number of forms and might involve print material or meetings between teams or with the entire organization. There are also online tools, including five-minute mini-documentaries made available through The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre). The short videos are part of a program called Working Through It and feature first-person narratives from people who've had a diagnosis of mental illness. In the videos, these people discuss how they coped, managed at work, navigated the disability system and were able to return to work and sustain their wellness.

"We originally created the videos for people who may be experiencing these things in the workplace but we've realized you can actually launch an entire mental health awareness campaign with this tool," said Mary Ann Baynton, program director

for the Centre.

It's crucial that employees get the same awareness information as managers, notes Hardaker.

"While it's not a co-worker's job to manage the performance of another co-worker, it's within an employee's power to build a workplace that encourages respect and care," she added.

TRAIN FRONTLINE MANAGERS

Understanding what to do for someone who might be unwell is a critical next step.

"However, by the time a problem is brought to an HR professional's attention, it's often at the point of crisis," said Baynton. An HR pro who wants to identify and resolve issues earlier – before the situation becomes critical – should focus efforts on training frontline managers and supervisors.

"Most of the time, when we can identify and support somebody, deal with their stressors, deal with their triggers, even deal with the diagnosis of a mental illness earlier, we can reduce the severity, the fre-

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“IF YOU’RE NOT ACTUALLY ASSESSING WHAT YOU NEED AND WHERE YOU HAVE A GAP, YOU MAY NOT BE SEEING MUCH IMPACT WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO AFFECT CHANGE.”

– Sapna Mahajan, Director, Mental Health Prevention and Promotion Initiatives, Mental Health Commission of Canada

quency or the duration of symptoms,” said Baynton.

Training for managers and HR professionals might include gaining a better understanding of what makes for a psychologically safe and supportive work environment, or specific tactics for communicating effectively with an employee who may be unwell.

Research suggests the majority of man-

agers need and want that kind of training, too. A 2012 Ipsos Reid survey found even though 90 per cent of supervisors and managers feel it’s important to improve their emotional intelligence, two out of three thought they’d need additional support to do this more effectively and 60 per cent said dealing with conflict is one of the most stressful parts of their job.

“Often, one of the first things I hear

from people in management roles is that they don’t know anything about mental health,” said Mahajan. “And why should they?” Managers are unlikely to have had formal education in this area and might find themselves in deep water when handling a sensitive situation.

Hardaker, for one, leads sessions to help managers understand how to communicate effectively with an employee who might be unwell.

“When you’re working with someone who is experiencing the impact of a mental health issue, it can be very difficult for that person to answer questions and engage in typical performance management discussions,” said Hardaker. “The standard approach is: ‘This is a problem. What are you going to do about it?’ For someone having mental health issues, that’s too short. So we build the capacity for HR professionals and managers to slow the conversation down so the employee feels heard and understood. Then a manager can ask, ‘What will you do to commit to your own success?’”



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MHCC has developed a hands-on training course called Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). It's a two-day long, not-for-profit course, similar to first aid but focused on mental health.

"Just like with first aid, if you come across someone that's bleeding, you don't sew them up because you don't know what's causing the bleeding," said Mahajan. "You look at the problem and ask yourself, will a Band-Aid do or should I call 911 right away?" Just as physical first aid is administered to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained, MHFA is given until appropriate treatment is found or until the crisis is resolved.

There's also a series of resources under the title *On the Agenda*, available on the Great West Life Assurance's Mental Health Works site, covering such training topics as psychological support, civility and respect and workload management.

The courses, says Mahajan, go a long way to breaking down barriers and getting people to speak more openly about mental health.

"And once staff know that every supervisor is trained," she said, "they may also feel more comfortable approaching their manager with questions or concerns."

When organizations do share details of plans and progress, it can have spinoff benefits, as well.

"Organizations that have started to

do training and awareness have reported it's the conversations themselves – never mind the initiatives or the outcomes – that start a shift to a psychologically safer workplace because we're starting to talk about the fact that we value worker mental health," said Baynton.

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

In some cases, early intervention and effective conversations between the employee and a manager or HR rep could mean significant accommodations can be averted.

"A manager might discover, after having an effective conversation with an employee, that small changes – flex hours or the ability to telecommute on occasion – could ease the burden for the struggling employee significantly," said Hardaker.

In other cases, where formal accommodation is the best course of action to help the employee, an HR pro and a manager can consult the organization's EAP or visit a resource such as the Workplace Strategies for Mental Health site for solutions.

POSITIVE RESULTS

All these measures – awareness campaigns, training, better communication tactics – can help. In a recent *Ottawa Citizen* article, Camille Quenneville, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association for Ontario, says corporations that focus on mental health in the workplace report

higher productivity, increased morale, decreased absenteeism, lower health care costs and less employee turnover.

In some parts of Europe, where the statistics suggest as many as one in four people suffer from the effects of mental illness, in-depth study of the financial benefits of mental health programs have been promising. In the United Kingdom, for example, early identification, management and prevention measures have made a big impact. Those efforts are estimated to produce annual savings of nearly \$400,000 for an organization with 1,000 employees and mental health costs of \$1.3 million.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Some execs may fear a quagmire of legal implications if their organization launches a mental health campaign in the workplace, but these concerns are unfounded. The Standard is voluntary and as Mahajan pointed out, "It's a set of tools, not rules." She added, "Taking these measures may actually decrease liabilities because you're doing something about mental health. You're following the Standard."

According to Baynton, small steps can add up to positive changes.

"Really, it's about how we treat each other on a daily basis," said Baynton. "It's not some big change of process. Rather, it's that we start to influence processes in a positive way over time that will be sustain-

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able.” Some benefits might be immediate. Others will be more gradual. New ways of relating to and communicating with each other will eventually become woven into the fabric of an organization’s culture.

HR professionals shouldn’t feel they need to become mental health experts overnight. Instead, suggests Baynton, they should start by looking at the all the different processes in the employment lifecycle – recruiting, hiring, training, performance and discipline, even redeployment and termination – and begin to look at these things with a fresh lens. HR pros should consider, “How could we do this in a way that could be healthier for everyone?”

There’s no question a psychologically healthy workplace is a win for employees and for the organization as a whole. And while the financial argument is compelling, the benefits go well beyond the bottom line, says Hardaker.

“It’s about contributing to the wellbeing of society. It’s about the greater social good.” ■

Looking for more information? Surveys, video presentations, training tools and plenty more are available from trusted and expert resources across the country.

- Mental Health Commission of Canada, mentalhealthcommission.ca (The Standard, mental health news, course listings and more)
- Mental Health Works, mentalhealthworks.ca (by the Canadian Mental Health Association, offering workshops, custom solutions, consulting services and more)
- Canadian Mental Health Association, cmha.ca (general mental health information)
- Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, camh.ca (general mental health information, hotlines and access to experts)
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com (“Working Through It” weekly emails, facilitator resources, HR-specific information and more)
- Guarding Minds @ Work, guardingmindsatwork.ca (by Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workforce, offering assessment tools and resources)
- Human Resources Professionals Association, hrpa.ca/mentalhealthresources (general mental health information and professional development)

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— Laura Frangella, CHRP, B.A., Principal, FocusedHR

WORK

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Is it Attainable?

AS CURRENT COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN WORK AND HOME, THE IMPORTANCE OF A SUCCESSFUL WORK-LIFE BALANCE REMAINS AS CRITICAL AS EVER

By Lisa Kopochinski

The term “work-life balance” has been bandied about for years in the media, but what does it really mean and is the Canadian workforce actually achieving it?

According to the Ottawa-based Human Resources Council for the Nonprofit Sector, an organization that is funded in part through the Government of Canada’s Sector Council Program, the definition of a work-life balance is as follows:

“A self-defined, self-determined state of wellbeing that a person can reach, or can set as a goal, that allows them to man-

age effectively multiple responsibilities at work, at home and in their community; it supports physical, emotional, family and community health, and does so without grief, stress or negative impact.”

While this sounds good and is definitely something that both employers and employees should be experiencing, is it really happening? It is especially pertinent since technological advances today have made many workers feel an increased amount of stress due to the dependency on email and having to stay connected outside of regular work hours.





Alan Kearns, President and Founder, CareerJoy



Laura Frangella, CHRP, B.A., Principal, FocusedHR

Photo by Laura Frangella, Alan Kearns

“In the past decade, there have been a lot of changes to Canadian workplaces,” said Laura Frangella, CHRP, B.A., principal at FocusedHR, a Toronto-based company that assists organizations in establishing and maintaining effective HR capabilities by providing services in training, policy development, performance management, legal compliance, change management and strategic planning. The firm has more than 50 years of combined human resources experience in diverse sectors including manufacturing, distribution, retail, pharmaceutical, energy and not-for-profit agencies, construction and health care.

“We have an increased rate of female workers today. The ‘breadwinner’ role is shared and balancing work and childcare has become more challenging. Many Canadians are also in the ‘sandwich generation,’ spending more time taking care of children and elderly parents.”

Frangella says we all still have much further to go in achieving a work-life balance, but it is important for companies to do so

for many reasons.

“A healthy work-life balance reduces staff turnover rates, which in turn lowers recruitment and training costs, reduces absenteeism and use of sick leave and improves productivity,” she explained. “Work-life balance reduces stress levels and employees feel they have control over time management in meeting their work-life commitments. Employees will have increased focus, motivation and job satisfaction knowing that family and work commitments are being met.”

It really is a balancing act, she adds, because the needs of the business also have to be met. “I do believe it is a give-and-take relationship, whereby employees will be more motivated in doing a great job if they feel supported.”

Alan Kearns, president and founder of CareerJoy, a Toronto-based firm that provides career management advice to both individuals and employers, views things a little differently.

“I don’t see balance. I see work-life in-

tegration,” he said. “We always talk about work-life balance, but it’s a myth. In today’s world, that’s almost impossible. We can work anywhere at any time and it’s about giving people flexibility about where, how and when they work. It’s focusing more on deliverables and less on time.”

Kearns – who has shaped his 15 years of career management experience into a company that helps people from coast to coast navigate through a wide variety of career-related issues – says the way people work is still very much structured in the industrial age. That is, the worker shows up, essentially punches a timecard, does their work and goes home. Yet we don’t work that way anymore.

“Globalization, outsourcing, insourcing, multiple projects – all of these trends have created a tremendous amount of convergence,” he said. “But people are still often being managed according to the old industrial model.”

He says it’s important for companies to move away from viewing work as time and shift their thinking to viewing work as results.

He cites a personal example of where he was a speaker at a recent conference in Victoria, B.C. His offices are in Eastern Canada, so he rose early to get some work done to compensate for the three-hour time difference. He was scheduled to attend and speak at the conference that evening, so from noon to 2:00 p.m., he went paddle boarding.

“That’s an example of work-life integration,” he said. “I was unavailable during that time. For the worker with family obligations, maybe they will get on the go train at 4:00 p.m., but they work on the way home and then are with their family from, say 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and then do some work that night. They’ll leave the office early when others are staying behind, but on the other hand, they’ll be working in the evening. I’m convinced that the majority of people will do the work they need to do when it needs to be done. They might just do it at 2:00 a.m.”

STRATEGIES TO ATTAIN BALANCE

Whether one views it as work-life balance or work-life integration, it is still vital that companies create strategies and set successful policies to create a situation that



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works for both employer and employee. If employers don't do this, the result is often a rise in employee absenteeism, lack of engagement, decreased productivity, performance issues, an increase in physical and mental implications and a decrease in profits.

Frangella said employers and HR professionals can encourage a healthy work-life balance within a workforce by initiating strategies such as "having flexible work schedules, the ability to work from home, time off for personal issues and reduced workloads. Some employers have wellness programs and provide onsite resources in the areas of nutrition counseling, relaxation training, active living challenges and stress management strategies."

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are also beneficial and provide employees with support and assistance in assessing and resolving work, health and life issues. Additionally, limiting the use of mobile devices on evenings or weekends and when employees are on vacation also assists in supporting a successful work-life balance.

Kearns is a big proponent of what he calls a digital Sabbath.

"Take 24 hours off from your computer and email," he said. "Disconnect yourself digitally. It's amazing what that does. It disrupts your pattern of constantly being 'on.'"

When an organization is focused on improving a work-life balance for its employees, it begins by ensuring that senior

management are committed to supporting their staff to achieve a healthy balance between work and other pursuits and not foster a round-the clock work culture.

"Today's workers have competing responsibilities, such as work, children, housework, volunteering, spousal and elderly parent care and this places stress on individuals, families and communities," said Frangella. "A healthy work-life balance reduces staff turnover rates, which in turn lowers recruitment and training costs, reduces absenteeism and use of sick leave and improves productivity."

The HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector offers a section on work-life balance in its online HR toolkit (<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/home.cfm>) that is designed to help managers, employees and board members better understand, address and manage issues relating to HR in nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, on its website (www.ccohs.ca), the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) offers initiatives that include benefits, policies and programs that help create a better balance between the demands of the job and the healthy

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Reducing Work-Life Conflict: What Works? What Doesn't?

There are often two main aspects associated with work-life balance – the first is lack of time and scheduling conflicts, and the other is feeling overwhelmed, overloaded or stressed by the pressures of multiple roles.

Research from Health Canada indicates that there are four broad categories associated with work-life balance:

- **Role overload:** This form of work-life conflict occurs when the total demands on time and energy associated with the prescribed activities of multiple roles are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably.
- **Work-to-family interference:** This type of role conflict occurs when work demands and responsibilities make it more difficult to fulfill family-role responsibilities (i.e., long hours at work prevent attendance at a child's sporting event, preoccupation with the work role prevents an active enjoyment of family life, work stresses spill over into the home environment and increase conflict with the family).
- **Family-to-work interference:** This type of role conflict occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult to fulfill work role responsibilities (i.e., a child's illness prevents attendance at work, conflict at home makes concentration at work difficult).
- **Caregiver strain:** Caregiver strain is a multi-dimensional construct defined in terms of "burdens" in the caregivers' day-to-day lives, which can be attributed to the need to provide care or assistance to someone else who needs it.



From Health Canada, www.ccohs.ca.

management and enjoyment of life outside work. Work/life initiatives can potentially deal with a wide range of issues, including:

- Onsite childcare and emergency childcare assistance
- Seasonal childcare programs (such as March break or Christmas)
- Eldercare initiatives (these may range from referral programs, eldercare assessment, case management and a list of local organizations or businesses that can help with information, products or seminars)
- Flexible working arrangements
- Parental leave for adoptive parents
- Family leave policies
- Other leaves of absence policies such as educational leave, community service leaves, self-funded leave or sabbaticals
- Employee assistance programs
- Onsite seminars and workshops (on such topics as stress, nutrition, smoking and communication)
- Internal and/or external educational or training opportunities
- Fitness facilities or fitness membership assistance

When starting a work-life balance program, CCOHS stresses the importance for a company to appoint an individual or – in some cases – form a joint work/life committee. To research needs and implement the program, the following two steps should be taken:

1. Assess the workplaces' current situation and objectives. Survey employees, supervisors and managers. Ask about needs, concerns, etc. Find out about bottom line or underlying concerns (i.e., employees report not being able to cope with workplace stress. What is the true source of this stress?)
2. Get buy-in from all levels. Educate all members of the company about the benefits and challenges of introducing these programs. Be clear on the intentions and goals of the program. Provide any necessary training and/or education to help address these concerns.

"An employee has to feel that although they spend most of their time at work, they are also paying attention to all important facets of their lives," said Frangella. "A good work-life balance is crucial to a person's quality of living." ■

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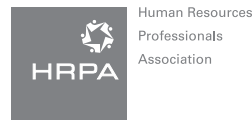


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UNDER PRESSURE



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A NEW NATIONAL STANDARD MAKES EMPLOYERS MORE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING WORKPLACE STRESS

By Sarah B. Hood

The economic meltdown, the tech revolution, the overwhelmed caregiver, the nightly news: the topic of every elevator conversation, it seems, is related to our spiralling stress levels. How should HR respond?

“Stress is part of life,” said Antoinette Blunt, CHRP, SHRP, FCHRP, president of Ironside Consulting Services Inc. in Sault Ste. Marie. “The issue is how much is reasonable, how do we manage it and when does stress become unmanageable?”

Indeed, stress can be positive before it becomes overwhelming.

“There is good stress; there is a level of stress that’s a motivator, that helps push you forward with deadlines,” explained Andrea Binnington, CHRP, based in Milton, Ont. “Different people are stressed by totally different things; what stresses one person out would be totally manageable for other people.”

Jennifer Lee is the project manager for Work With Us, a workplace-based support program for Canadians living with depression or arthritis run jointly by The Arthritis Society and Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Her program defines stress as “the emotional and physical strain caused by our response to pressure from the outside world.” The 2013 Statistics Canada Health Profile reports that “23.4 per cent of Canadians have perceived stress in their lives”; according to the Canadian Community Health Survey, “most days in their life were quite a bit or extremely stressful.”

In 2011, the Sun Life Wellness Institute’s Buffett National Wellness Survey reported that 56 per cent of senior HR respondents considered stress to be the top risk to workforce health.

“Stress is top ranked for good reason,” said Dr. Richard Earle, managing direc-

tor of the Canadian Institute of Stress. “Higher stress levels elevate absence costs by up to 19 per cent, all disability costs by up to 30 per cent and turnover costs by up to 40 per cent. Also, according to Towers-Watson, stress-based mental health issues are the drivers behind 85 per cent of long-term disability claims.”

Stress, according to Earle, “is the mechanism whereby we rev up the energy to deal with problems or opportunities; it’s the main thing that companies pay for.” He defines problematic stress in terms of return on investment (ROI). “What are you getting back from what you’re putting in? That’s the core question that HR needs to address,” he said.

When people feel great satisfaction and reward for their efforts, they don’t suffer from stress; when they feel overused, unappreciated and undercompensated, they do.

“You have to work foot-to-the-floor for about two years before you see the signs of burnout,” Earle said. This happens when the body is over-stimulated with “upper” hormones like adrenalin for so long that it eventually tries to exert balance by flooding the system with the depressing hormone cortisol.

CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Stress causes numerous health problems, says Lee.

“Poor concentration, low productivity, feeling unfulfilled, feeling very tired and not being able to step out of a work mindset at home [are symptoms of ongoing stress],” she said. “It has been shown that long-term chronic stress is associated with depression and difficulties with sleeping.”

Furthermore, Binnington noted, “You’re looking at impacts to the compa-

WHEN PEOPLE FEEL GREAT SATISFACTION AND REWARD FOR THEIR EFFORTS, THEY DON’T SUFFER FROM STRESS; WHEN THEY FEEL OVERUSED, UNAPPRECIATED AND UNDERCOMPENSATED, THEY DO.

ny, [like] having people off on sick leave. The stress can cause discord within the climate of the company; potentially, your overall morale starts to drop.”

Stressed workers can have a big impact on an organization, overall.

“Turnover of key talent goes up and the reputation of the company goes down,” said Earle. “People are less creative in problem-solving; they’re less committed.”

It’s a fine line to walk for employers, who need to find a proper balance for their workers.

“We need a certain amount of stimulation, interest and agitation to keep us on the ball and engaged,” said Dr. Martin Shain, principal with The Neighbour at Work Centre. “But it’s very important for supervisors to know when they’re pushing too hard.” While some cases of unhealthy stress originate outside the workplace, he continued, “We can estimate that somewhere between one-quarter and one-third [are due to] workplace events – people behaving towards one another in a way that causes what is increasingly called ‘mental injury.’”



A NEW STANDARD

Shain is a member of the Technical Committee that advised the Canadian Standards Association on the creation of a new Canadian Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, introduced in January 2013.

"[The Standard] emerges from the rec-

ognition that mental harm in the workplace is a largely unmanaged risk that we can and should be doing something about, and it's based on a lot of scientific and legal evidence that says this is harmful and also preventable," he said.

The Standard will oblige employers to take more responsibility for protecting the mental health of their employees in much

the same way that they are expected to prevent risks to physical health and safety. It calls for "a systematic approach in assessing and addressing risks to mental health that arise from the ways that people are organized and managed," said Shain, and HR professionals "need to be instrumental in creating policies that are consistent with [it]."

An organization that performs according to the Standard will, as it states, "maintain procedures to monitor, measure and record" conditions affecting psychological health and safety, take "preventive and corrective action procedures to address risks" and engage in "management review and continual improvement."

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

The signs of stress manifest themselves in many ways.

"Mood Disorders Society of Canada has identified some physical signs and symptoms, such as muscle tension, stomach and digestive problems and restless sleeps," said Lee. "Some emotional signs include depression, irritability and mood swings, and social indicators can include things like intolerance of others or social withdrawal."

The effects depend on the individual, according to Shain. Different people exhibit different symptoms of suffering from stress.

"It can be unusual behaviour: uncharacteristic aggression, sudden withdrawal, appearance of depression," he explained. "It can take the form of agitation, interpersonal conflict or not recognizing where other people are coming from."

There are also specific work-related cues to be on the lookout for.

"I would look for missed deadlines or unacceptable reports," said Earle, in terms of employee performance. "Turnover, internal and external client dissatisfaction, the drug benefit plan – [specifically,] antidepressants on the uptick. Employment standards, human rights and harassment complaints, absences on Monday – they suggest drugs or alcohol."

And workplaces can do more to make sure their employees are not dealing with overbearing amounts of stress on a consistent basis.

"As we have said in our Mental Health

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in the Workplace Series, 'workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker,'" said Lee. "Through Work With Us, we focus on providing the tools people need to practice self-management techniques that can be beneficial."

The Canadian Institute of Stress uses online profiles to measure stress. DNA HR Assessment in Montreal also provides a variety of useful tools, such as the Interqualia assessment that shows level of challenge versus level of skill.

"It's based on 18 non-technical skills. Quickly you can see why someone is anxious or bored, and it will recommend a plan of action for what you should do," said DNA senior consultant, Denis Arseneau, B.Sc., CHRM, CTOX, CHRP. "This one is unique; it can be good to prevent burnout, but it's also good to assess someone who wants to go back to work."

"WE NEED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF STIMULATION, INTEREST AND AGITATION TO KEEP US ON THE BALL AND ENGAGED. BUT IT'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR SUPERVISORS TO KNOW WHEN THEY'RE PUSHING TOO HARD."

– Dr. Martin Shain, Principal, The Neighbour at Work Centre

"This speaks to the necessity of more negotiation within work groups," said Shain. When new and greater burdens are imposed, "the fact is that teams that [discuss together how to cope with the increased workload] seem to weather the storm better than teams that don't. Teams that have a maintenance program in place to deal with extra and often unexpected work demands typically do better."


Organizational transparency also goes a long way to managing stress in employees, according to Blunt.

"From a broader perspective, what can help to maintain the balance of stress is keeping your employees informed of major changes like mergers, sales and department realignments. If people find out first from you, regardless of whether they have an ability to affect the change, they will have the ability to cope with it," she said.

"The other issue is understanding what the benefits are in your company – are you open to providing a personal leave of ab-

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Great-West Life's Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace identifies four key areas where HR managers can reduce stress and increase satisfaction: by reducing, clarifying and legitimizing demands; by increasing worker's control over their jobs; by reducing effort and strain; and by increasing rewards – which need not be monetary.



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“WORKPLACE STRESS IS THE HARMFUL PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSE THAT OCCURS WHEN THERE IS A POOR MATCH BETWEEN JOB DEMANDS AND THE CAPABILITIES, RESOURCES OR NEEDS OF THE WORKER.”

— Jennifer Lee, Project Manager, Work With Us

sence, regardless of what the situation is? People really need to look at their employee assistance programs (EAPs), and to expand that further as far as looking at coping and health and wellness programs, or devoting a certain number of dollars that can be accessed for a fitness club membership or yoga classes.”

Ultimately, in Earle’s opinion, “There are only three ways to deal with a low-ROI situation. Number one, leave it. Number two is to change it. Small fine-tunings, not from HR or top managers, but from the workers themselves, can adjust the ROI. There’s so much you can do with a feedback loop from the people who actually know the job. In most companies, hardly any roll-up happens from the people who know the job.”

He offers the example of one of his client companies, where he asked a group of customer service representatives for ways to increase their work satisfaction, and in particular to address the common problem of lower back pain. The company implemented a suggestion from the team: replacing their eight-foot telephone cords with 15-foot cords. “Six months later, their disability days for lower back pain were down by 52 per cent.”

The third approach is to learn how to live with the status quo.

Among the various resources available through the Canadian Institute of Stress is instruction in raising personal satisfaction levels.

MAKING CHANGES

“It’s necessary to look for some win-win solutions that the people who write the cheques can get behind,” said Earle. “You’ve got to demonstrate that it’s a saving for the company.”

In the climate of the new Canadian Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, making the case for investing in stress reduction has never been more pressing.

“One of the things that HR professionals need to appreciate is the legal climate in which the Standard emerged. Employers are really in the crosshairs of about seven different branches of law where they can be hit with liability for mental injury. HR folks have a responsibility to be aware of this themselves and also to be talking it up to senior management,” said Shain.

“People come into the workplace with problems, but what we’re interested in is what the workplace does to detract from mental health,” he continued. “This is basically a whole new horizon of risk.” ■



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HEALTHY MINDS

REDUCING STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE

By Linda Lewis-Daly, GoodLife Workplace Wellness Program



TACKLING STIGMA AND CREATING A PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE WORKPLACE CULTURE REQUIRES AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM; IT IS NOT AN ISOLATED PROGRAM OR A TICK ON A CHECKLIST OF UNRELATED ACTIVITIES.

Let's face it... we all have a bad day from time to time. But when bad days string together and become chronic, serious physical and psychological side effects can negatively impact our work performance and relationships with others.

Mental illnesses like depression and anxiety cost Canadian workplaces over \$50 billion a year in lost productivity, benefits costs, disability leaves, presenteeism and absenteeism, according to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). This figure is estimated to be understated as employees suffering from a mental illness are often doing so alone – so great is the fear of stigma surrounding mental illness and mental disorders. While one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in any given year, that number is likely closer to one in three if full disclosure were made. In fact, the Conference Board of Canada (2002) suggests that 51 per cent of employees keep quiet about their mental illness.

Consider for a moment your own workplace. If one in five of your workforce is suffering a mental illness, what is that costing your company in lost productivity? What are you doing to build awareness of workplace mental health in a manner that encourages mental health conversations as a normal part of doing business?

We have seen public figures such as

Olympian Clara Hughes, actress Margot Kidder and Margaret Trudeau share their stories freely with the intention of breaking down stigma by starting the conversation. Pop culture is attempting the same with popularized television shows like *Big Bang Theory*, *Glee* and *Homeland* depicting characters both struggling and thriving with a mental illness diagnosis in an attempt to change our perception of mental illness.

But is this public storytelling enough to break the cycle of stigma? Well, it is certainly an important start and progress is being made... slowly.

HOW THE WORKPLACE FACTORS IN

Unfortunately, negative mental health stereotypes still exist in the workplace, making it challenging for anyone suffering to get access to resources they desperately need. As a result, employers play a critical role in de-stigmatizing mental illness and performance managing with genuine concern and mental health in mind.

People with mental illness might be our parents, our children, our neighbours, a co-worker or it might be us. Mental illness is not rare and can be severe or mild; it may have periods of relapse or recurrence but there are very successful treatments available to allow one to realize their potential and contribute productively at work, at home and in the community.

After all, mental illness is a disease, not a fault of character.

Workplaces can either help or hinder people's performance, mental health and resilience.

Tackling stigma and creating a psychologically safe workplace culture requires an integrated system; it is not an isolated program or a tick on a checklist of unrelated activities. Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, released January 2013 by MHCC, though voluntary, offers Canadian employers with a solid framework to assess, adapt, train and protect employees from psychological harm while promoting psychological wellbeing practices in the workplace.

Here are some examples of mental health stigma-fighting initiatives:

1. Policy and leadership

The most important component of any workplace mental health strategy is leadership endorsement and top-down management commitment. Establish a well-communicated zero-tolerance policy on all forms of harassment and discrimination. Active endorsement and participation in mental health initiatives by management and unions sends a clear message to staff of the importance of addressing mental health in the workplace.

IF ONE IN FIVE OF YOUR WORKFORCE IS SUFFERING A MENTAL ILLNESS, WHAT IS THAT COSTING YOUR COMPANY IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY?

2. People management

Front-line managers or supervisors are often the first to be able to spot changes in an employee's behaviour or work habits. The manager is in a unique position to be able to observe, ask questions and support a team member who may be struggling. Yet, the workplace needs to provide them with the skills to be able to do this effectively. A Conference Board study (2011) reported that 44 per cent of managers have had no training in dealing with workplace mental health issues.

3. Train for awareness and skills

Help employees understand what

mental illness looks like and how it might be experienced in the workplace. Train managers to be effective and confident in recognizing and addressing a potential mental health problem, without assessing or diagnosing. Managers should be accountable for promoting work-life balance – recognizing warning signs or performance indicators, understanding what mental health supports are available while respecting privacy and limiting organizational liability. Mental health training can help them develop the confidence and skills to engage in what could be considered difficult or delicate conversations.

4. Early intervention

Don't delay reacting to a workplace indicator that may identify an employee at risk of a potential mental health problem. Don't engage in stigma-supporting conversations and be sure to immediately address any stigma-supporting comments of others. Do bring the conversation about mental health into team meetings as a way to normalize and socialize mental health as being as important as physical health in assuring a safe and healthy workplace. Small interventions early on can help prevent long-term negative effects of mental illness costs to your bottom line.

Canadian companies must commit to elevating and addressing mental health and safety in the same degree of importance that physical health and safety resides in workplace policies, practices, performance management and workplace wellness systems. Only then can workplace stigma be eradicated. ■

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By Yafa Sakkejha, General Manager and Partner, Beneplan Co-operative

THE DOS & DON'TS OF A MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE

WHAT TO DO WHEN A WORKER NEEDS TIME OFF TO DEAL WITH A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

You have an important employee come in to your office and state that they need to go on sick leave. Based on office rumours, you suspect it's due to a mental illness. Now what?

1. Don't ask them what sort of sickness it is unless they offer it.
2. Do show compassion. Mental illness is a sickness, just like a broken leg or a cancer diagnosis.
3. Do make sure they have a copy of their benefits booklet and understand how the sick leave process works.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE REST OF YOUR STAFF

4. Do realize that by the time the employee has requested time off, they have probably told other employees about their situation. Word can spread quickly.
5. Don't contribute to rumours in the workplace – instead, if it comes up, focus on positive statements and the fact that we can't understand what an ill person is feeling unless we've been there.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE EMPLOYEE WHILE ON LEAVE

Why should you communicate with the employee at all while they're off? Employees who keep in closer contact with their employer during their leave are reported to return to work sooner and have an easier transition back in to the workforce. Ignoring them completely might be construed as a signal that they're not wanted back.

6. Do keep in touch with the employee while they are on leave. A weekly call is a good idea.
7. Do make sure your tone does not sound like you are asking how quickly they will return to work. Tricia Greco,

HR director at Mary Kay Cosmetics Canada, has advised to simply ask them how they're doing. "I usually say that we're thinking of them, their team misses them and provide an update on what's going on at the office so that they feel in the loop." Greco suggests calling them every week or two. "Keep the tie to a company a positive one, rather than an 'aren't you better yet?' tone."

8. Do follow up if you receive no response. Greco advises that "if they don't return your call, leave it alone for a week, but do try again. They have a responsibility to keep in touch with their employer."
9. Do eliminate stigma. Evelyne Mitskopoulos, CNP, Director of Wellness at Beneplan, advises that if the employee has shared with you that the reason for their leave is a mental illness, your first conversation should be one of support. "Acknowledge that this is a medical condition, just like cancer, and appropriate treatment can be successful. Point out the features of your benefit plan that can help, such as the Naturopath, Nutritionist or EAP program."



benefits

ALWAYS CO-OPERATE WITH THE INSURANCE COMPANY

10. Do co-operate with the insurance company who is paying the disability claim. Rebecca McAfee, Manager of Disability Claims and Rehab Services at The Co-operators Life, says that employers are key to the process. "We ask them what their behaviour was like at work before the claim. It's important for employers to be open and honest. Those who are the most helpful allow us to better intervene to help someone heal and return to work more quickly."
11. Do be open to suggestions from case-workers. For example, they might suggest that the employee work a different shift in order to avoid a certain person.
12. Don't assume that the insurance company is purely business-minded. "Many of our staff have experience as nurses and physicians, and we are here to help the employee, not just as a business," said McAfee.

ADDRESS TRIGGERS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

13. Do address potential stressors in your workplace. "Examine your own workplace. Are there any easy fixes you can tackle right away?" said Greco. "For example, if you have an employee who becomes stressed out when a particular client calls, train them to transfer the call to a supervisor."
14. Don't forget to include 360-degree feedback in performance reviews. Let employees rate their supervisor anonymously, and identify if there are any behaviours that might be triggering a stress response.
15. Do try to prevent stress and depression from creeping up by encouraging fitness. Mitskopoulos recommends starting a walking group, providing a discounted gym membership using your volume or being flexible about hours so that employees can get some exercise in.
16. Do review the CSA Group's white-paper on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace at <http://bit.ly/1fn45Fb>.

HOW TO EASE THE TRANSITION ON DAY ONE

17. "Do bring people back gradually," said Greco. "I always ask them to return on a Wednesday. It's not a full week, so they can ease back in. Schedule their first few days to have meetings with a number of people to get caught up on what has happened."
18. Do welcome them with positivity. "Send out an email to the team welcoming them back, but it's up to the employee to share more details if they wish," said Greco.
19. Do have faith in their abilities. "It doesn't take them long to be right back at it," said Greco. "It's like riding a bicycle. They integrate very quickly."

■
Yafa Sakkejha is the General Manager and Partner at The Beneplan Co-operative. She can be reached by email at yafa@beneplan.net.

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STOP WAITING



By Steve O'Brian,
Chronus Corporation

FIVE REASONS TO START BUILDING A WORKPLACE MENTORING PROGRAM

The role of human resources within a company has drastically changed over the years, evolving from “simple” functions such as payroll and benefits to more complex strategies such as talent management and leadership development. As part of these new responsibilities, many organizations have implemented mentoring programs within their companies, matching employees of different skill sets, backgrounds and experiences in order to foster employee engagement and a strong corporate culture. In fact, studies have shown that more than 70 per cent of Fortune 500 companies now offer mentoring programs.

This article outlines five different benefits that mentoring programs can provide for both the employee and employer, and how these benefits can result in increased employee retention, a more effective workforce and heightened performance for both the employee and the company.

CAREER PLANNING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

While employees often have their own goals and objectives for their careers, mentoring programs can help identify how these individual career goals can align with the company, critical for retaining valuable workers and developing leaders. Mentoring serves as a simple platform to offer career development opportunities

and guidance to employees looking to advance professionally, as well as enhances the quality of leadership and individu-

through mentoring, helping students land that first job. In enterprise, for example, one of Chronus Corporation’s large retail office supply customers is now able to offer career development to their entire workforce, rather than just the select few, to create a true learning culture at all levels.

ONBOARDING NEW EMPLOYEES

When dealing with increasingly dispersed teams in a global economy, it’s more important than ever for enterprises to help new hires quickly gain the skills and knowledge required to become effective employees. New hire turnover is expensive, and keeping these new hires engaged is essential from the start. In fact, 90 per cent of employees make their decision to stay in the first six months (Aberdeen Group, 2006). Assigning new hires to an experienced mentor is an efficient method to reduce the time to competency for new employees and reduce attrition. Linking new hires to specialists, peers and managers can help new hires feel welcome and productive quickly. The various knowledge bases that are accessed by new employees through a mentoring solution can be a critical driver of success for an onboarding program.



als within the company. The very nature of mentoring relationships ensures that it focuses equally on the development of individuals as well as the development of interpersonal links between individuals, forming a cohesive organization. One example is how some academic customers are connecting students and alumni

Illustrations by rafal_olechowski & neyro2008 / Photos.com

training & development



Photo by endpack / Photos.com

INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Employees come from vastly different backgrounds, both personal and professional. With these varied experiences, there is a wealth of information to be shared between employees, ultimately leading to a smarter, more effective workforce. A mentoring program is an easy way to organize, create, capture and distribute knowledge across the company by providing direct access to a wide range of experts

and peers. Mentoring creates a culture where learning, and the sharing of knowledge, become part of the daily fabric rather than a forced task. As an example, an aerospace company is using mentoring as a platform to transfer technical knowledge from impending retirees to junior employees. Organizations can also implement reverse mentoring programs, where junior employees train senior employees on new technology methods.

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

A diverse workforce helps stimulate innovation, cultivate creativity and steer business strategies. Mentoring programs enable employees to share a range of opinions, ideas, knowledge and experiences thanks to the environment of trust, belonging and understanding. Employees are given a platform to voice concerns, find solutions and are ultimately inspired to perform to their highest ability. These mentoring programs allow organizations to develop and retain diverse talent, and even build a robust pipeline for future leaders, giving an organization a strong competitive advantage.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

A business typically operates more efficiently and effectively when its employees are actively involved and engaged in the success of the company. If employees are intellectually and emotionally committed to accomplishing their work and the vision of the organization, it creates a heightened sense of ownership where each employee wants to do whatever they can for the greater good of the company. Mentoring programs can increase engagement by offering the opportunity for regular feedback, creating clarity on various issues such as job expectations, career advancement and rewards. Mentoring also increases the quality of working relationships, contributing to an increase in customer satisfaction, employee productivity and retention.

Mentoring programs are a win-win for both employees and the companies that offer them. There are benefits to be gained on both sides, resulting in long-term career success and retention. ■

Steve O'Brian is VP of Client Services for Chronus Corporation.

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By Richard Matthews, Founder,
Granite Consulting

WHAT'S THE LATEST IN CANADIAN RECRUITMENT?

RECENT AND DEVELOPING TALENT ACQUISITION TRENDS

As conference chair, each fall I look forward to bringing HR, recruitment and talent professionals across Canada under one roof to gain insight on innovative recruitment practices and tools from Canada's top employers at the annual Recruitment Innovation Summit. The industry has embraced the Summit as a prime opportunity to share best practices, learn new techniques to improve their quality of hire and learn about the best technologies for sourcing candidates.

One of my favourite things about the conference is being part of some of the great conversations I have with recruitment leaders and practitioners about the market, the trends and the candidates.

This year in particular, I really wanted to take the time to hear what people are saying, hearing and fearing about talent acquisition. Below are a few key findings that I took away from my conversations:

1. Social media, like job boards beforehand, are not the "silver bullet" in recruiting. Yes, we have found new, improved and quicker ways to "connect," but recruiters still need to engage, screen, profile and build trust bridges between the candidate, the recruiter and the organization. If you're one of those recruiters who blasts their message out to every one of your 5,000 contacts and waits to see what happens next, your luck is going to run out. Sooner or later, you will be asked to explain how you recruit top talent and to elaborate on why you do this better or differently than the rest; so, you better start thinking about that. To the talent acquisition leaders out there, there is no way that your team does this and gets top talent, right?

2. Affordable recruitment technology is available. Organizations are getting smarter, more strategic (process and metrics) and want to maximize their recruiters' time, energy and efforts. Automation allows organiza-

tions to focus on real recruiting and not the administrative tasks that often slow things down. As you go down this path, beware that your "automation" does not impact or tamper with brand, culture and the candidate experience.

3. Candidate experience is hotter than ever. Social media has significantly increased the various ways in which we connect with people and invite them to take a look at "who we are". There are only a few organizations that are tying their outbound messaging to their inbound experience. There is a very powerful opportunity here for organizations to create a strong and noticeable brand, build talent pools and identify talent scouts, potential customers or goodwill ambassadors. Organizations need to remember that it only takes one bad experience, by one candidate who tells a few people, to damage your brand.

4. Where is all the great recruitment talent? Simple. 80 per cent of them are working their butts off and delivering great results to their current employer. However, there is another 20 per cent who are actively engaged in a search, but there are a ton of mid-level recruiters clogging up your systems, slowing down your process and making you ask the question, "Where are the good ones?" Finding talent for your team requires effort, dedication, time and commitment.



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5. **Candidates are getting smarter.** Candidates are weary of the “apply online” method. We all have heard the term “black hole” of recruitment and candidates have no faith in the online process, so if they really want the job, they will research, find out who the hiring manager is, call them directly and deliver their own message as to why the two of them should connect and talk about their “fit.” This method can be debatable. On one hand, the research, dedication and resourcefulness of the candidate should be applauded. On the other hand, are hiring managers ready for the potential onslaught of calls from candidates who think they’re qualified?
6. **Doing more with less.** How often do we hear, “Mary was let go and they are not replacing her;” “We have to find a less expensive solution;” or the straight and to-the-point, “We have no budget”? Often enough. The kicker is that any organizational leaders will tell you the most important asset in their company is talent, yet many organizations do nothing to support that statement. It’s up to the recruiting leaders to get the “ear of the leaders” to let them know what we are capable of and start investing (time, energy and resources) to talent acquisition in our companies. ■

Richard Matthews has been part of the Canadian Recruiting landscape since 2000 and is the founder of Granite Consulting, the online communities RNG/HRNG and the annual Recruitment Innovation Summit(s).

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A man in a dark suit and tie is shown from the chest up, balancing a glass globe on his hands. The globe is suspended in the air between his two hands, which are held flat and facing each other. The man's face is partially visible at the top of the frame. The background is a plain, light color.

INTERVIEW

MR. WORLDWIDE

WITH AN HR HERO: BADAR KHAN, SHRP



By Heather Hudson

Proving that HR is a profession with no borders, Badar Khan has built an internationally acclaimed career on world-class HR strategy and development. From his native Pakistan to Qatar, the United Arab Emirates to Europe to the U.S., he's worked with some of the biggest global companies, transforming fledgling HR departments into veritable leadership academies.

Khan tells *HR Professional* about life in the HR fast lane and why Canada is his toughest challenge yet.

HRP: When did you decide you wanted a career in HR?

BK: In 1984, I graduated as a mechanical engineer in my native Karachi, Pakistan. While working as a project engineer on two large construction projects there, it became clear to both me and my colleagues that I have a natural flair for managing, communicating and relationship building. As a result, I was introduced to the training and development manager of Aga University Hospital in Karachi and my career in HR began.

HRP: What was your first HR job?

BK: I started as an education coordinator in the training and development department at Aga University Hospital. My initial responsibilities included designing, presenting and coordinating a new staff induction program. I also developed job specifications for all the engineering functions of the hospital and coordinated and presented employee development programs. It was during this job that I learned facilitation and presentation skills, training evaluation and design and how to develop and write job specifications and descriptions.

After a year, I was selected as one of 15 HR professionals to take a vigorous three-week master's class from the Academy of Education and Development. It was a unique and rewarding opportunity and I was privileged to be one of the few who had that distinction in those days.

HRP: Tell me about your job now. What are your main areas of responsibility?

BK: I am based in Canada, but at the moment I am working as senior advisor and internal consultant to the HR department for Ashghal, the public works authority for the state of Qatar. My responsibilities include setting up the HR strategy and roadmap and conceptualizing and initiating strategic programs and policies, such as leadership development, succession planning, competencies profiling and performance management. My role is to set up these programs and develop internal capability to sustain these programs when I leave the organization.

HRP: What do you love about your job?

BK: I love being able to be a positive influence and shape the organizations and careers of the people I have worked with. Most of the organizations I have worked with were in their infancies when it came to HR systems and processes when I started, including Union Texas Petroleum and Qatargas. The feeling and recognition that I have contributed to their success is a joy.

Also, some of the young graduates I have coached and trained in Qatar are now government ministers, CEOs and senior professionals of large companies. It's rewarding to see people you have helped reach a certain level of competence.

HRP: What are the challenges you experience in your job?

BK: The greatest challenge for an HR professional is to give quality support to the core business and ensure that you have the right culture and programs in place to support the overall direction of the company. HR professionals need to fully understand the business and its needs and develop collaborative partnerships. We also need to develop credibility to ensure that employees trust us and see us as facilitators rather than policemen of the organization.



Photo by Comstock/Photos.com

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

BK: It's about sharing expectations with the client organization's leadership about the work to be done and challenges at hand. We must also see that a regular follow-up process is in place to ensure that expectations are met and any fine-tuning is done well in time.

HRP: What skills are important for success in HR?

BK: In-depth business knowledge, excellent technical knowledge, relationship building skills, empathy and passion for your work.

The HR profession is becoming increasingly competitive. We need to ensure that we are in the process of continually improving our knowledge and skills.

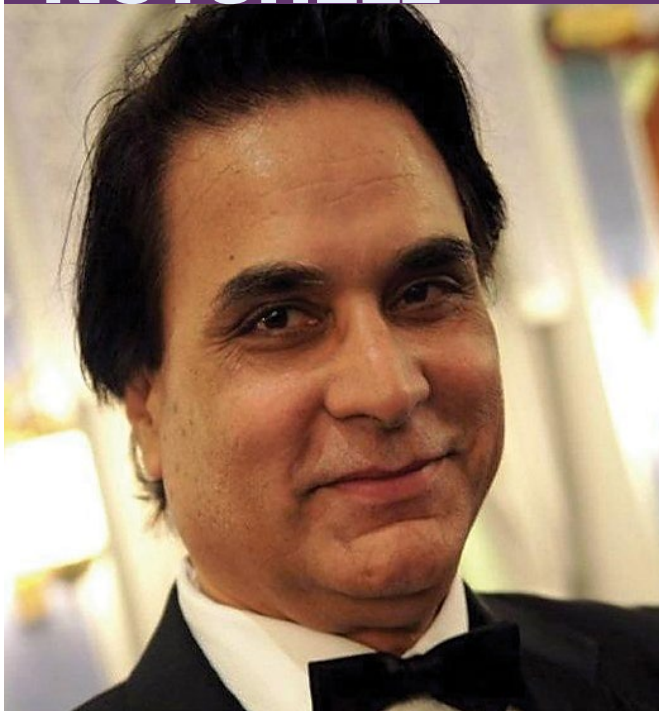
HRP: What tips do you have for new grads or those in entry-level HR jobs who want to move up the ladder?

BK: Be the best. Be a finisher. Develop credibility and trust by delivering on time and according to promises. Be passionate about what you do.

HRP: What's the future of HR?

BK: HR will become a closer ally to business and a key player in the success of organizations. A growing number of CEOs now have an HR background, which is a testament to the growing importance of HR in the organization.

IN A NUTSHELL



First job: The Aga Khan University Hospital

Childhood ambition: To become an international cricket player

Best boss and why: Faisal Al Suwaidi, Ex-chairperson, Chairman of the Board, Qatar Petroleum, because he was an outstanding listener. You felt like the most important person in the world while talking to him.

Current source of inspiration: Imran Khan, cricket player turned politician. I admire his determination and will to be successful despite heavy odds.

Best piece of advice I ever got: "Be the best in what you do and be passionate about it."

Favourite music: Old Indian and Pakistani music, Celine Dion, Stevie Wonder

Last book you read: *How to be Exceptional: Drive Leadership Success By Magnifying Your Strengths*, by John Zenger, Joseph R. Folkman, Robert H. Sherwin and Barbara Steel

How you spend your time away from work: I travel a lot, so it's important to spend time with family when I'm home. I also like to read, play Scrabble and watch cricket.

HR professionals will also become better regulated. HR professionals will be entrenched in the core business functions and have a complete understanding of the core business.

HRP: Your career has spanned many borders. What's the key to success in working in different countries?

BK: The key to success in working with different nationalities and in different countries is one's ability to adapt to cultural and regional needs. I have seen many top-class, Western-trained HR and other professionals fail miserably in the Gulf because of their inability to do this. Cultural sensitivity is critical.

HRP: What are the differences or varying priorities between the countries where you have worked?

BK: Countries in the Gulf are oil and gas rich and the workforce is predominantly made up of expatriates, who are good coaches and mentors. But the priority in this region, after profitability, is to develop their national talent. One of my main contributions in these regions was putting HR programs in place that were specially adapted to the psyche and needs of this region.

Working in the U.S. during the early stages of my career taught me professional work ethics and the need for competence, a sense of humour and openness in sharing information. That culture is all about contribution and achievement.

I'm relatively new to Canada and I find it more difficult to make inroads here compared to any other place I have worked before. In

A GROWING NUMBER OF CEOs NOW HAVE AN HR BACKGROUND, WHICH IS A TESTAMENT TO THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF HR IN THE ORGANIZATION.

—Badar Khan, SHRP

this age of globalization, we need to be more open and receptive to international experience. There needs to be some concrete effort at the highest level to make the assimilation process easy for foreign-trained workers.

HRP: How has your international focus helped shape your own thoughts on HR?

BK: It is all about adaptability and understanding the needs of culture and the organizations. The skillset needed is the same everywhere; it's your ability to change and adapt to new surroundings that is most important. ■



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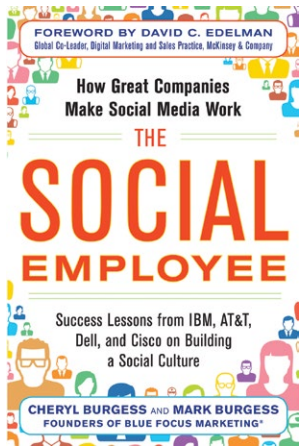
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OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP



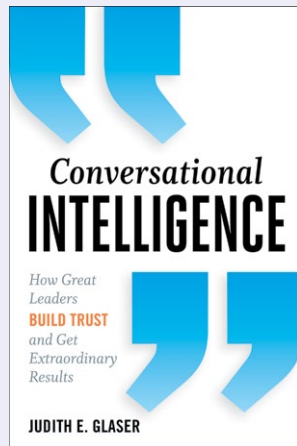
THE SOCIAL EMPLOYEE: SUCCESS LESSONS FROM IBM, AT&T, DELL, AND CISCO ON BUILDING A SOCIAL CULTURE

Cheryl Burgess and Mark Burgess
McGraw-Hill, 2014

We are in an age of networked intelligence rather than the information age. Today, harnessing the social employee by building a strong internal network where employees share and listen is what produces intelligence. Employees are the front line of your brand, the social ambassadors to the public. Activating employees around brand is not just a matter of employee retention; it's a way of unlocking an employee's hidden talents.

Talking point

"Companies that fail to activate their employees in the social era don't just risk losing their workers, they risk losing their best workers."



CONVERSATIONAL INTELLIGENCE: HOW GREAT LEADERS BUILD TRUST AND GET EXTRAORDINARY RESULTS

Judith Glaser
Bibliomotion, 2014

Neurological and cognitive research shows that a conversation goes deeper than we realized and is more than simple information sharing. Conversational Intelligence™ offers insightful examples using the latest research on the brain to demonstrate how conversations can build up or tear down a company's culture and dramatically influence its revenue.

Talking point

Conversational Intelligence (C-IQ) is vital to an organization's ability to create shared meaning about what needs to get done and why. Review the levels of C-IQ outlined in the book to see how your company measures up.



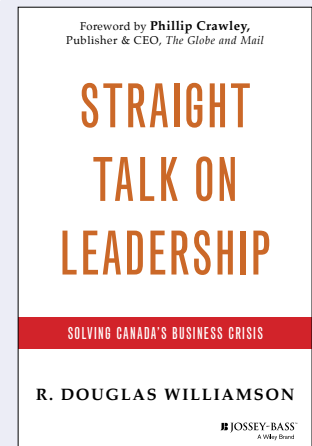
MOGUL, MOM, AND MAID: THE BALANCING ACT OF THE MODERN WOMAN

Liz O'Donnell
Bibliomotion, 2014

As productivity levels and workforce demands increase, women's participation in the workforce is vital to both. Increasingly, women are becoming the family breadwinner, leading to harder choices about work and family. O'Donnell outlines some refreshing ideas for women and employers to consider while recognizing the tensions within the world of work and home.

Talking point

Women and work has been the subject of countless debates and arguments. What working arrangements have you implemented to allow women to stay in the workforce?



STRAIGHT TALK ON LEADERSHIP: SOLVING CANADA'S BUSINESS CRISIS

Douglas Williamson
Jossey-Bass, 2013

"Canadians must urgently improve the quality of our business leadership talent pool by developing new mindsets, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours." Since the Recession in 2008, a myriad of books on leadership describe the transformational leadership competencies required by organizations now. Here you will find a down-to-earth and practical book on what transformational leadership looks like and how organizations can achieve it.

Talking point

Williamson takes a hard look at Canada's role in the world economy and has sharp comments where we are failing. Canadian businesses in every sector of the economy need to do a better job of developing transformational leaders if we are to compete globally. ■



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THE CHRP

A REFLEXIVE VALUE PROPOSITION



By Claude Balthazard, Ph.D., C.Psych., CHRP

The most important thing to keep in mind about the value proposition for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation is that it is a 'reflexive' value proposition. This is the case for all voluntary designations. The ultimate value for the professional of having any voluntary designation derives from the value it has for the public (or users of the professional services). Thus, if we want to increase the value the CHRP holds for those who have it, we need to increase the value it has for consumers of HR professional services.

Let's look at what creates value for the users of a voluntary professional designation.

First and foremost, consumers of HR professional services are looking for competent and ethical professionals – individuals who they can trust to know what they are doing and who will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. With voluntary designations, it will be a fact that a good number of non-designated professionals will also be competent and ethical. The difference is in the quality assurance – the probability that a given designated professional would be incompetent or unethical should be very low, whereas with undesignated professionals, it might be more of a 'crap shoot.' This consistency is very important because it is what gives users of a professional service peace of mind.

There are two key aspects to quality assurance for professional services. First, it is important for the standards to be high enough (ensuring safe and effective delivery of services) to be of value to the users of professional services. Secondly, it is important that the standards be enforced effectively. Without this effective enforcement of standards, the quality assurance will be hollow – all promises, no delivery.

**IF WE WANT TO INCREASE THE
VALUE THE CHRP HOLDS FOR
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PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.**

For the CHRP designation, it is important that the quality of professional service provided by individuals with the designation be noticeably better than the 'average' non-designated professional. If the consumers of HR professional services cannot see a difference, the designation will be of little value. The standards have to be high enough to make a difference.

The other aspect of quality assurance is enforcement – the processes and procedures in place to ensure that the quality is there. The rigourousness and thoroughness of the processes and procedures in place to ensure quality is what gives credibility to the designation. Not only that, the higher the standard of quality, the more rigourous and thorough the quality assurance processes and procedures need to be.

The challenge, of course, is that those aspects that create value for the public are those same aspects that make the designation more of an investment for the professional to obtain and maintain. This is especially true with a self-regulation model of professional regulation because

the standards of quality and the processes and procedures to enforce those standards are set by members of the profession. In other words, the standards and the processes and procedures that back these up are largely self-imposed.

The 'reflexive' value proposition model suggests that we should look to the users of the professional service to set the standards – standards of qualification, of practice, of professional conduct and of knowledge, skill and proficiency.

The main point is there is nothing wrong in concerning ourselves with the value proposition of the designation for those who have it or might choose to pursue it, but what we should really be concerned about is the value proposition the designation creates for users of the professional service. ■

Claude Balthazard, Ph.D., C.Psych., CHRP is Vice-President, Regulatory Affairs with the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

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