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Calgary	April 12, 2016	March 11, 2016	Bonnie D. DuPont, M. Ed, ICD.D, F.ICD, Scott Munn Cathy Williams
Toronto	May 12, 2016	April 5, 2016	Linda Hohol, Ken Hugessen, Angela Ferrante, ICD.D

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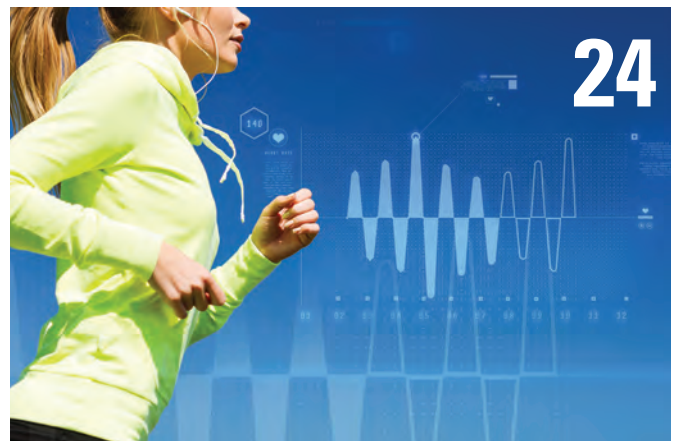
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FEATURES

- The (Tech) Force Awakens 18**
How HR can harness the power of disruptive technology to outthink the competition in a new age of business
- Tracking Success 24**
New health and wellness technologies are affecting corporate culture and productivity
- Meet the HR Influencers 44**
Ruth Brothers, CHRL, CHRE

DEPARTMENTS

- Letter from the Editor 6**
- Leadership Matters 9**
HR on Boards
- Upfront 11**
The latest HR news
- Legal Words 15**
Key strategies for a successful mediation
- Benefits 29**
How employee turnover can increase group benefits costs
- Health & Safety 31**
Would your coworkers save your life?
- Business 35**
Bridging the skills gap between students and employers
- Recruitment 37**
Hiring by the numbers with tools any company can access
- Policies & Procedures 39**
Whistleblowing systems can aid ethical internal reporting
- Career Paths 41**
Sue Lefebvre, MSW, RSW, PCCL: Conflict resolution
- Off the Shelf 47**
What's worth reading
- The Last Word 48**
HR teamwork pitfalls



IN THIS ISSUE

Technology is changing the nature of work and the world of business. The changes that have been occurring in recent years are only the beginning, and HR professionals need to adapt and get on board with disruptive technology. Read the cover story of this issue of HR Professional to learn how to effectively manage the transition to the digital world, and what trends are worth paying the most attention to. The article begins on page 18.

contributors



Yafa SAKKEJHA

Yafa Sakkejha is the general manager of The Beneplan Co-operative, a mutual insurance buying group. All profits of the co-operative are distributed as patronage dividends to member-owners, so there is an incentive to ensure benefits costs are stable. Sakkejha has worked in the benefits field for over 10 years and has experience starting and maintaining small businesses in Canada. Read her article about the ways in which employee turnover affects group benefits costs, starting on page 29.



Wendy CUKIER

Wendy Cukier is vice president of research and innovation at Ryerson and the founder of the Diversity Institute. A leading expert on emerging technology, she is co-author of the best seller, *Innovation Nation*. She chairs the working group of the Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation. Beginning in September 2016, she will be president of Brock University. Read the article she wrote about how to bridge the skills gap between university students and grads and potential employers, starting on page 35.



TONYA LANTHIER

Tonya Lanthier is a registered dental hygienist (RDH) and the founder of DentalPost.net. In her role as a RDH, she had a front-row seat to see what worked, and what didn't, to attract and maintain a top-notch, high-performing team and create a dynamic, motivating office culture. Based on her knowledge of the industry, passion for the profession and dedication to eliminating friction and barriers between dental employers and job seekers, Lanthier launched DentalPost in 2005, now a leading online and mobile job platform for the dental industry. Read the article she wrote about hiring by the numbers, starting on page 37.

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letter from the editor

Positive Disruption

As I write this letter for our July/August issue of *HR Professional*, I'm just returning to Winnipeg from Great Place to Work Institute Canada's annual conference in Toronto, which took place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on April 21. From the speakers to the attendees, it was a wonderful event, and I brought home pages of notes so that I can reflect on what I heard and turn those thoughts into interesting and relevant content for you. A special thanks goes to Jose Tolovi Neto, who sits on *HR Professional's* editorial advisory board, for enabling me to come to the conference.

Technology is a never-ending topic that can be discussed from any angle in today's business environment. The way that people work is constantly changing, with innovations and updates to every aspect of accomplishing tasks. For the cover feature in this issue of the magazine, read about the disruptive technology that's affecting how HR professionals do their jobs. The word "disruptive" may have a negative connotation, but that's not necessarily the case. That article starts on page 18.

Another article in this issue asks an important question: would your coworkers save your life? More accurately, could they save your life? According to the Canadian Red Cross, most Canadian employees don't feel confident in their ability to help with serious medical emergencies. Read the article on page 31, and it may be worthwhile to schedule some first aid training at your office over the summer. If you get everyone involved, it could be a great way for your team to bond and receive valuable, potentially life-saving training at the same time.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of *HR Professional*, and that your summer is fun, safe and productive!

Happy reading,



Jill Harris
866-953-2182
jharris@lesterpublications.com ■



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Legal Editor: Malcolm MacKillop, Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP

HRPA

150 Bloor St. West, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5S 2X9
Phone: 416-923-2324 | Toll-free: 1-800-387-1311 | Fax: 416-923-7264
Email: info@hrpa.ca | www.hrpa.ca

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Email: info@lesterpublications.com | www.lestercommunications.ca

President: Jeff Lester

EDITORIAL

Editorial Director: Jill Harris
Editorial Assistant: Andrew Harris

ADVERTISING

Sales Manager: Sharon Komoski
Quinn Bogusky, Jason Cumming, Walter Lytwyn, Louise Peterson

DESIGN & LAYOUT

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HR on Boards



By Brenda Clark, CHRE

It seems many corporate boards are waking up to the benefits of having the knowledge, skills and perspectives of HR professionals as directors, according to a recent report, *The Chief Human Resources Officer: An underutilized resource for corporate boards*.

The report, authored by executive/director search firms Allegis Partners and Hodge Partners, found that chief human resources officers (CHROs) are uniquely positioned within organizations – along with CEOs and CFOs – to have a “helicopter panoramic view” of the whole organization and are thus well positioned to understand how all the pieces fit together and the impact of decisions across the organization. And because they rarely have direct authority over the business, they learn to lead through influence “and pull people together and convince them,” according to one individual who was interviewed for the report. “Those are the kinds of skills that you need to have when you pull a diverse board together. You help them with a direction, influence management and get on with it.”

The report (which interviewed several CHROs with board experience, along with non-CHROs, including

board chairs, nominations and governance committee chairs) found that most boards realized they needed some HR know-how on their teams when the organization was undergoing significant change, such as spin-offs from larger entities, mergers and acquisitions and major restructuring. In circumstances like these, the interviewees said they needed HR perspectives to help assess change risks and provide advice to affect positive culture change.

But once serving on the board, fellow directors quickly appreciated CHRO advice around talent – especially around things like executive search, succession planning, CEO evaluation and talent risks and opportunities.

As one board chair put it, “Having a CHRO on the board is a strategic advantage for the company.”

THE BENEFITS OF BOARD EXPERIENCE

While the report focused on the benefits of CHROs serving on corporate boards, most experienced HR professionals will have critical knowledge and skills that would benefit both corporate and non-profit boards.

Continued on next page

ONCE SERVING ON THE BOARD, FELLOW DIRECTORS QUICKLY APPRECIATED CHRO ADVICE AROUND TALENT – ESPECIALLY AROUND THINGS LIKE EXECUTIVE SEARCH, SUCCESSION PLANNING, CEO EVALUATION AND TALENT RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

TIPS FROM DISPUTE RESOLUTION EXPERTS



KNOW YOUR HOT BUTTONS, AVOID THEIRS

Knowing your hot buttons is the first step to managing your reaction. Similarly, if you can anticipate what might trigger negative reactions from the other person, and avoid those triggers, conflict can be minimized or avoided. For example, if you know that you get really hot under the collar when people interrupt you, you can think about why you react that way and how you might manage your response if it happens in your next meeting. If you know that your boss does not like having his/her authority questioned, you can think about whether and how to raise an issue that may make him/her feel questioned.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION WORKSHOP

Toronto: July 19-22, September 27-30

Ottawa: October 18-21

"The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to become comfortable with the mediation process, via role play scenarios, on the spot coaching and feedback."

- Rita Mizzi-Gago, Human Resources, TD Bank, Toronto

"The ADR Workshop was by far the best course I have attended in my 30+ year career in HR. A must attend for HR Professionals. I have used the tools on a regular basis."

- Dan Heard, HR, Ministry of Community & Social Services, Bleinheim



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And, of course, there are many pluses for HR professionals serving as directors: it's a great way to learn new skills, build your network and give back to the community by providing your time and expertise to organizations that are doing good work.

I have been involved with two boards, including my current role as chair of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA), and I can attest to the career-boosting benefits of serving on boards.

Networking: Serving as a director means you're working alongside other talented individuals from many different professional backgrounds. It's a great way to quickly expand your network and make meaningful connections and friendships with people who share the same passions as yourself.

Learning: Gain new skills – including management and leadership. If you don't have an opportunity to lead and influence at work, serving on a board is a great way to develop leadership capability and other important skills. For example, HRPA chapter board directors are provided with enhanced training in volunteer management, chapter budget planning and analysis, chapter website management and chapter elections.

Governance training: Serving on a board will give you a fast education on how boards operate both within themselves (elections, committee work, meetings) and with the organizations they advise and support.

Doing good: There are also the rewards of feeling great about yourself by putting your skills and knowledge to good use for a good cause.

If you're interested in using your HR skills to help out a not-for-profit organization, you can search for board positions at Boardmatch.org.

And I hope you do. As the above report suggests, many boards are realizing they need to diversify their ranks with HR talent as they face more human resources complexity. You will be helping to spread the word that organizations need effective HR – and designated HR professionals to devise and execute human resources strategy.

And most importantly, you will be adding one more HR professional to one more board – and that's good for everyone. ■

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

UPFRONT

EXIT (INTERVIEW) STRATEGY

Many employers are taking their workers' parting words to heart, new research from staffing firm OfficeTeam suggests. More than half (54 per cent) of HR managers said their company commonly acts on feedback from exit interviews.

When asked how they follow up on information gleaned from these meetings, 46 per cent of respondents stated they address comments about management. Another 20 per cent make changes to the work environment, while 14 per cent update job descriptions and 10 per cent review employee salaries.

"While losing a high-performing employee can hurt a team or business, companies must recognize the opportunity it offers to gain valuable insight into improving their organizational structure or culture," said Koula Vasilopoulos, a district president for OfficeTeam. "Departing workers can offer firsthand feedback that current staff may not be as willing to share, which can help companies deal directly with issues and may mitigate further turnover down the road."

OfficeTeam offers some pointers for employers when conducting exit interviews:

- **Do time it well.** Consider scheduling the meeting on one of the worker's last days. Keep the conversation brief and professional.
- **Don't make it awkward.** Because departing employees may be uncomfortable discussing certain subjects with their immediate supervisor, have an HR representative conduct one-on-one meetings in a private setting.
- **Do cover the right topics.** Ask general questions about why the worker is leaving, what the person

liked and disliked at the company and recommendations for improvements.

- **Don't get defensive.** Avoid correcting or confronting the person. Listen carefully and gather as many details as possible.
- **Do be upfront.** Explain that any information provided can help to better the organization and will be kept confidential.
- **Don't brush things off.** Give all comments that are shared the proper attention. Also check for patterns in feedback collected from employees, which can signal persistent problems.

WOMEN IN TOP CORPORATE JOBS DROPS

After International Women's Day celebrations and Justin Trudeau being lauded at the United Nations for his progressive approach to gender equality, global talent acquisition firm Rosenzweig & Company released its 11th annual report, which indicates that corporate Canada lagged this past year in recognizing and promoting women leaders.

Last year, the number of women holding the highest executive positions at Canada's 100 biggest publicly traded companies actually fell from the previous year. The latest *Rosenzweig Report on Women at the Top Levels of Corporate Canada* finds only eight per cent of the highest paid executive positions are now held by women, down from 8.5 per cent. (Rosenzweig's first report more than a decade ago found 4.6 per cent of women held top jobs.)

"The Rosenzweig report plays a critical role in showing a realistic profile of where

we stand today, and in exposing Canadian businesses to the clear benefits of bringing women into the C-suite and onto corporate boards," said Heather Munroe-Blum, chair of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and director of RBC Financial Group. "To make broad, meaningful progress requires us to understand the current gaps that exist with a lack of diversity at the top of many Canadian corporations, along with the great competitive value to be had in championing progress in this area."

The annual Rosenzweig report tracks the 100 largest publicly traded companies in Canada, based on revenue, and examines how many of the top-paid executive roles are held by women. Here are some of the findings in this year's report:

- Of 526 top executives, 484 are men and only 42 are women
- Of the 100 largest companies, 66 have all male leaders with not a single woman in a top leadership role
- In the 25 largest companies, only four women are in top-paid executive positions
- In the corner office, only seven CEO positions are held by women among the 100 largest publicly traded companies

INVESTMENTS IN MORALE PAY BIG SATISFACTION DIVIDENDS

The latest ADP Canada Sentiment Survey reveals that a large majority of working Canadians (83 per cent) believe if their employer made an effort to raise spirits at work, their own satisfaction level would significantly improve.



WHY EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION MATTERS

“Satisfaction and wellness are closely linked, so investments in morale, such as special events at work, contests or team outings, can reduce stress and help people feel connected to their colleagues,” said Sooky Lee, general manager, Human Resources Business Process Outsourcing at ADP Canada. “The good news is that organizations don’t need to reinvent the wheel to improve employee satisfaction. The first step is setting up a framework that will be flexible so you can adapt it as the company grows.”

MORALE-BOOSTING IDEAS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. **Have fun:** Have a themed day, such as wearing pajamas to work or having a silly hat contest. A little friendly competition can bring out creative ideas and build teams.
2. **Get outside:** Even a few minutes of fresh air has been shown to reduce stress and lower blood pressure.
3. **Bring some wellness inside:** Hire a yoga instructor to lead a gentle rejuvenating class, or bring in some massage therapists to help your employees relax.
4. **Get everyone involved:** Whether you have a formal social committee or not, it’s important to let everyone have some input into how your organization boosts morale.
5. **Get formal:** You can also look to more formal methods, such as employee discount programs, paid time to volunteer or community giving activities.

SOME WORK STRESS IS BEST

Work stress is par for the course for creative leaders, according to new research from staffing firm The Creative Group.

Seventy per cent of advertising and marketing executives interviewed said their job is somewhat or very stressful. But there’s an upside: Nearly one-third of respondents claimed the more stress they experience, the better their performance; another 60 per cent reported they thrive under some pressure.

“Although feeling challenged at work can inspire action and propel decision-making among professionals, employees at every level – and employers – need to be wary of relying on pressure as a primary motivator,” said Deborah Bottineau, senior regional manager of The Creative Group. “Taking the time to recharge allows teams the opportunity to refocus their priorities without unnecessary stress, and strategize new ideas to further business growth.”

“Executives with years of experience handling stress shouldn’t take their own abilities to manage for granted. They must remain mindful of recognizing and supporting employees who may be struggling to handle work pressures. Checking in regularly to offer extra resources and guidance helps ensure that employees remain productive, committed and refreshed.”

The Creative Group offers three tips to foster a healthy level of work stress among employees:

- **Ask staff for input.** Touch base regularly with team members to ensure their to-do lists are reasonable. Help workers with time management and prioritization, and solicit feedback on how to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- **Encourage teamwork.** When it comes to solving business challenges, two (or more) heads are often better than one. Foster collaboration in the workplace by providing plenty of opportunities for staff to partner with each other on initiatives.
- **Offer relief.** Overburdened employees can quickly slip into autopilot, which can stall innovation. Provide project

professionals or consultants who can assist core staff during peak activity periods.

2016 HSPA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

HSPA awarded its inaugural Awards of Excellence at the Great Place to Work Awards gala on April 21 in Toronto.

The awards, which recognize designated human resources professionals who architect people-driven strategies that add business value to their organizations, went to designated members in three categories: CHRP, CHRL and CHRE.

MEET THE WINNERS CHRP AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Jessica Poling, CHRP

Employee Services Manager, Seasons Retirement Communities

Jessica demonstrated HR excellence by working to improve management’s relationship with bargaining units and local union representatives, resulting in a substantial reduction in the number of grievances (41 per cent). She also created an HR metrics system to track and analyze quality indicators to determine the value and effectiveness of HR initiatives from year to year.

CHRL AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Lisa Gravelle, CHRL

Human Resource Manager, Fairhaven LTC

Lisa was named the winner in the CHRL category for several successful HR initiatives, including adopting a centralized talent prospecting program to consistently generate a pool of right fit candidates, followed up by a detailed onboarding program to ensure new hires are properly aligned to Fairhaven’s cultural values.

CHRE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Anne Marie Malleau, CHRE

Human Resources Director, Great Wolf Lodge

Anne Marie was awarded the inaugural CHRE Award of Excellence on the strength of her HR leadership and contributions to Great Wolf Lodge’s strategic objectives. She cut turnover by almost 13 per cent and increased repeat guest visits by increasing employee engagement and implementing a reward and recognition program. ■

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Key Strategies for a Successful Mediation

PROPER PREPARATION AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT ARE INSTRUMENTAL

By Elaine Newman



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Mediation of a wrongful dismissal action or a human rights complaint has to reflect the long-term human resources strategy.

If the long-term HR strategy is to “win every fight,” that approach must be reflected in the mediation process – low offers, minimal incremental moves to a finite bottom line, isolation of authority and rights-based positional narratives.

If, however, the long-term HR strategy is to improve relations with employees and maintain an image as a progressive employer, that approach must be reflected in every move throughout the mediation – active listening for mutually valuable interests and needs, creative generation of options and mutual problem solving.

When each stage in mediation reflects the long-term goal, as determined and articulated by the organization’s leadership, management of the process is “strategic.”

Ask this question: “What is our organization’s long-term HR strategy?” If you cannot answer this question, you have identified a problem. The strategic plan for HR management is the yardstick against which one determines strategy and measures success in each mediation instance.

CONTROL YOUR LAWYER

Communicate the long-term HR strategy to your lawyer. If counsel is managing your mediation, she must be aware of your strategic goals, and give them voice at mediation. If the goal is improvement in employee relations, it is counterproductive

to let counsel conduct a “winning” mediation, so do not leave this option. It is your HR strategy – and it is your choice.

MEDIATION PREPARATION REQUIRES ATTENTION

Mediation time is expensive and should not be squandered hunting down basic data.

Preparation for mediation requires that basic data be known and analyzed by those presenting the positions and offers. In wrongful dismissal mediation, know the T-4 based salary, value of benefits, bonus entitlement, stock entitlement, pension entitlement and exact length of

Continued on page 17

MEDIATION TIME IS EXPENSIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE SQUANDERED HUNTING DOWN BASIC DATA.



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service. Calculate a monthly value of compensation including all appropriate items. Know the exact sums paid to the employee upon termination, and the period of time that benefits were continued.

If employment was terminated for cause, mediation preparation includes complete evidence of cause – memos, emails, video, photographic evidence, witness statements and investigation reports.

In a human rights case, preparation requires medical reports, ergonomic reports, memoranda of attempted accommodation efforts, emails of complaints and resolutions. Survey available suitable positions. Bring plans for return to work, a plan for monitoring reintegration and communication pathways. If you have reached the point of undue hardship, bring proof. Come prepared to shift the discussion to offering an exit package if necessary.

MANAGE YOUR MEDIATOR

Mediation is a process that belongs to the parties, not to the mediator. Instruct her

to manage the process in the way you want – in the way that is consistent with your goal for that process, and your long-term HR objectives.

Ensure that you use your mediator's skills to the fullest. Exhaust her energies. Decide whether you want to negotiate with your mediator while you negotiate with the other party, or whether you trust your mediator sufficiently to tell her your goals and bottom line, and let her get you to the goal.

Ask your mediator for negotiating advice at critical stages. She knows what's going on in the other room, and you do not. She will know when you are in danger of risking the process.

APPRECIATE THE POWER OF APOLOGY

Even the million-dollar earner needs an apology if the termination was implemented dishonestly or in bad faith. An apology is critical in resolving many difficult wrongful dismissal and human rights complaints. In a recent

mediation, counsel for an American defendant flew to Toronto from Los Angeles just to offer a heartfelt apology to the terminated plaintiff. It was an extremely effective conversation, and allowed for good settlement discussion. Without that initiative, the parties would have faced a lengthy trial for punitive damages.

THERE ARE NO LIMITS

The range of options in settling employment disputes is limited only by the courage and imagination of the parties. Bear in mind that you're dealing with a terminated or disabled employee, and think about what you would wish for yourself if you were on the receiving end of the termination letter. ■

Elaine Newman is a senior mediator, arbitrator and author. She teaches an advanced course, "Strategic Grievance Handling," at Queen's University Industrial Relations Centre, offered in Ontario and British Columbia.



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THE (TECH) FORCE AWAKENS

HOW HR CAN HARNESS THE POWER OF DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY
TO OUTTHINK THE COMPETITION IN A NEW AGE OF BUSINESS

By Melissa Campeau

Maybe your last hour looked a bit like this: you gathered data from an online training module, chatted on an internal messaging system, sent a text to a colleague, pulled a report from Dropbox and then settled in to research potential hires' social media profiles and watch their application videos.

Clearly, tech is changing the nature of work. But the changes we've seen in the last handful of years – the proliferation of mobile and cloud computing, game-like apps for employees and big data among them – are just the beginning. Expect disruptive technologies to come our way at a faster pace than ever.

Conduct business as usual at your own peril; this wave of change will upend how we connect, engage and make decisions, and drastically impact HR's role within an organization.

Shane Cragun, co-author of *Reinvention: Accelerating Results in the Age of Disruption*, says one of the key competencies shared by successful leaders is their ability to master change.

"They can see incoming global shockwaves and learn how to leverage them," said Cragun. "They will not just survive, but they'll handle the change quickly and leapfrog their competition."

NEW WAYS OF CONNECTING WITH TALENT

Many disruptive technologies are already in play within forward-thinking organizations, impacting every aspect of the employee lifecycle.

A recent survey by IBM asked 5,247 business leaders what they believe the future holds and how they're positioning their organizations to prosper in the age of disruption. The report (*Redefining Talent: Insights from the Global C-suite Study: The CHRO Point of View*) finds leaders are "...capitalizing on emerging technologies to improve the employee experience, building a flexible skills base, drawing on analytics to predict future workforce trends and creating a social dialogue with employees to manage change more effectively."

To find job candidates, for example, HR professionals have been making the most of social media for years. A fresh take on recruiting, though, is the idea of using gaming to assess potential hires.

Josh Bersin, principal and founder of Bersin by Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP, points to a company in Australia that's created a game for potential job candidates.

"The game gives them a few challenges to complete and measures their learning agility," said Bersin. For most candidates, it's an engaging way to apply for work. And for a recruiting team, it can help differentiate job candidates in a fraction of the time needed by more traditional models.

Tech's also being used to influence culture, with internal chat programs, employee performance recognition software and sharing tools that make the most of cloud computing and encourage cross-functioning teamwork and collaboration.

DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES – DESPITE THE OMINOUS SOUNDING LABEL – AREN'T INHERENTLY GOOD OR BAD; THEY'RE SIMPLY INEVITABLE.

MORE FEEDBACK, PLEASE

Dozens of high-profile organizations ditched their traditional performance management systems in the past few years in favour of more agile formats. In most cases, the new models are enabled by new technologies.

“In just the past 24 months, there have been at least 20 software companies who’ve created applications for performance management that relies on frequent feedback,” said Bersin. “Many include options for HR to collect anonymous feedback about manager performance, as well.”

“The newer performance management systems are less about the yearly review and more about the quick-pitch elevator story,” said Cheryl Fullerton, executive vice president, People at Corus Entertainment Inc. “A good technology solution can

enable managers and their people to crystallize their thoughts.”

Tech-enabled feedback is playing a growing role in other areas of business, too. HR is increasingly making the most of tools that ask for employee input on any number of issues, collecting real-time data and helping guide the decision-making process. Encouraging employee input in decisions can drive engagement, and the data collected can also help HR spot an emerging trend or issue before it becomes a big problem.

BIG DATA, BIG RESULTS

Data can be collected from a long list of other sources, as well. The Internet of Things (IoT), for example, is defined as the network of physical objects – devices, vehicles,

buildings and other items – embedded with electronics, software, sensors and network connectivity that enables these objects to collect and exchange data. Think smart watches that capture biofeedback, for example, although that’s really just skimming the surface of the tech’s potential.

Collecting information – whether through feedback tools, IoT, talent metrics or any other means – is only meaningful if you can do something with numbers: spot trends, flag problems, make forecasts. This is where cognitive computing, technology with the capacity to learn, is making a profound difference within organizations.

In the Bersin By Deloitte report *HR Technology for 2016: 10 Big Disruptions on the Horizon*, Bersin wrote: “While most companies have been slow to adopt people analytics, vendors have quickly seen the opportunities. Major HRMS, talent management, learning and recruiting vendors now offer ‘intelligent recommendations’ and predictive analytics modules – and they’ve built out their development teams. While it’s difficult to tell how accurate various predictive models are, vendors are moving fast; most already have solid data science teams working on their software.”

He says that new software can do much more than simply measure internal data. It can predict attrition, for example, by factoring external data (job openings, social media activity) into the mix, it can predict which job moves will result in the highest-performing career employees and it can even review data from employees wearing sensors to determine whether a new office layout is working or not.

Having access to real time, in-depth data about myriad aspects of the workforce can help HR make strategic and cost-effective decisions with respect to training, team functionality, performance, strategic workforce planning and more.

THE SHIFTING SOCIAL CONTRACT

Software advances have made it increasingly easy – and common – for employees to directly access and manage such things as vacation requests, specialized training and performance management notes.

At Corus, for example, employees use online tools to request vacation time, access compensation information and approve hire requests or offer letters. In a growing number of organizations, this

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
About the HRPAs Professional Competency Framework	4
Your organization and you	6
Your Self-Assessment Results	
YOUR ASSESSMENT SUMMARY	
1. STRATEGY	7
2. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	8
3. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	9
4. WORKFORCE PLANNING AND TALENT MANAGEMENT	10
5. LABOUR AND EMPLOYEE RELATIONS STRATEGIES	11
6. TOTAL REWARDS	12
7. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT	13
8. HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFE WORKPLACE	14
9. HUMAN RESOURCES METRICS, REPORTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	15
	16
Your Personal Development Plan	
Introduction	
Certificate Programs	18
Workshops & Seminars	19
Webcasts	21
Enabling Competencies	23
Conferences	25
Hot Topics	26
	27

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self-service, self-directed approach applies to training and performance tools, as well.

That shift supports the evolving relationship between employee and employer.

“There’s a shifting social contract with employees,” said Benoit Hardy-Vallée, executive advisor for IBM Smarter Workforce, Canada. “The older type of social contract was about having a job for life and a pension, post-retirement. This promise was in exchange for a lifelong commitment. Now, an employer offers an employee the tools, a great environment and the ability to grow and build on strengths and engage in work. In exchange, the onus is more and more on the employee to manage his or her own training and development.”

Some organizations may have achieved this state, but it’s still a target for others. Much depends on the quality of the user experience.

“The ‘secret sauce’ is always going to be in how service-oriented the tech is,” said Fullerton.

FREING UP HR FOR STRATEGY

When the tech catches up, though, industry thought leaders predict HR will be freed from its more administrative tasks and be able to focus more time and resources on strategic work.

“The HR function is becoming more of an advisor or consultant to help solve problems and advise the business on talent strategy,” said Hardy-Vallée.

Part of that evolving role for HR will focus on behavioural economics and leveraging tech to tailor and personalize growth opportunities, making the most of mobile and cloud computing to offer a non-stop roster of on-demand training opportunities.

THE CATCH(ES)

All this growth and development doesn’t come without a snag or two. For starters, is your organization flush with experts who understand these technologies and can foresee their use into the next handful of years? In the near future, the demand for technical acumen will almost certainly exceed the supply within a typical organization.

“The real challenge is sitting down and thinking about your current organization, the skill set that they have, and then looking ahead two or three years,” said Hardy-Vallée. “You might start forecasting

that certain skills will become more and more necessary. If you’re going to be more socially connected, more cloud based, more connected with your customer, you will need other types of skills.

“The second big thing is considering whether to acquire these skills – if it makes sense to train people, to hire a third party to help with on-demand resources or to hire people that have those skills already.”

FINDING A FOCUS

The sheer number of competing technologies to consider implementing can be overwhelming.

“Don’t get caught in the whirlwind,” said Bersin. “The changes are complex, but if you start with the user, whether that means leadership, citizens, employees, clients, patients, just start with those stakeholders in mind, then work backwards and figure out where to go next.”

As with making any changes, consider what areas of the business need attention.

“Spend time where the company makes money,” said Hardy-Vallée. “Look at the things the business could do better to improve results or reduce costs.” Can tech be applied to those areas to make a positive impact? If teams could be more collaborative, for example, is a tech solution among the possible remedies?

“It’s incumbent upon the HR leader to spend time with the CEO or the business leader they work with to let them say, if I could only do two or three things this year, what would they be? What would drive the biggest improvement for the organization from your standpoint?” said Hardy-Vallée.

THE PRICE IS (BECOMING) RIGHT

The unexpected good news, when it comes

to tech, is often the price tag. There was a time when applying these tech solutions would have been beyond the affordability of any but the largest companies, based on economies of scale. Not anymore.

“The venture community has poured billions of dollars into mobile solutions for HR in the past few years,” said Bersin. The result has been dozens and dozens of useful, engaging and entirely affordable employee-facing solutions.

LEVERAGE THE POTENTIAL

Disruptive technologies – despite the ominous sounding label – aren’t inherently good or bad; they’re simply inevitable.

“If we zoom out, one generation’s worry is another generation’s business as usual,” said Hardy-Vallée. “Twenty or 30 years ago, I’m sure people had other kinds of worries about culture. So just like any change, we have to make sure that what we do with it brings more good than bad.”

How an HR professional handles ongoing disruption can make all the difference to an organization. Trying to ignore technology and the change it brings is both futile and ill advised.

“It’s like saying you want to live in world that doesn’t exist anymore,” said Fullerton.

Instead, diving into the world of tech advances – learning, researching, adapting and riding the waves of change – might just lead to a long list of positives, including increased efficiency, better collaboration and increased engagement.

“Develop a mindset that’s excited about change, that welcomes it and leverages it,” said Cragun. “If you do, you’re more likely to operate as a strategic partner and to help the organization not only flourish, but also get ahead of competitors.” ■

WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY?

The term disruptive technology was first coined by Harvard Business School professor Clayton M. Christensen, in his 1997 best-selling book, *The Innovator’s Dilemma*.

He considered technology to fall into two categories: sustaining or disruptive. To qualify as sustaining, a technology featured incremental improvements over an existing version. To be disruptive, it would need to either create a brand new market, or displace an existing technology and shake up an industry.

Automobiles, for example, weren’t disruptive because they were too expensive for most people to purchase and their introduction didn’t have an impact on the market for horses and carriages. But mass-production of the automobile, 30 years after the product’s first introduction, was a decidedly disruptive technology, making cars affordable for the masses and radically changing the transportation market.



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Tracking SUCCESS

NEW HEALTH AND WELLNESS TECHNOLOGIES ARE AFFECTING CORPORATE CULTURE AND PRODUCTIVITY

By Sarah B. Hood

How many steps have you taken so far today? If you're among the fast-growing number of people who use a wearable fitness tracker, you probably have a pretty close idea. The past decade has seen a minor revolution in the widespread popular adoption of wireless activity trackers under such brand names as Apple Watch, Fitbit, Jawbone, FuelBand, Gear Fit and SmartBand. Their allure rests partly in the ease with which they sync to mobile phones to allow for convenient goal tracking. A survey released by the professional services company Accenture in early 2016 found that the number of Americans who use



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“THE FIRST THING IS TO EVALUATE WHERE AN ORGANIZATION IS IN THEIR JOURNEY AROUND WORKPLACE WELLNESS – ARE THEY NEW TO THIS, OR HAVE THEY BEEN DOING PROGRAMMING FOR YEARS?”

– MIRA JELIC, NOVUS HEALTH

wearables and mobile apps for managing their health has doubled in the past two years.

Some companies have been quick to see the potential advantages of harnessing the power of this technology to engage employees in taking better care of their health. It's not just about weight loss and exercise; the new frontiers of employee wellbeing embrace mental and even financial health as well. But why should employers care?

“The simplest reason is that it's generally been proven that employees who are doing the right things [in terms of] exercise and diet and managing their care proactively will be absent less, more efficient and productive at work, more engaged and more likely to stay when the organization is supporting them in their goals,” said HR technology consultant Steve Boese, president of H3HR Advisors. “When companies are invested in the health and wellness of people, a lot of good things accrue to the organization, quantitatively, in terms of absenteeism and health care costs,

and qualitatively, in terms of goodwill and engagement.”

That investment and care can also change the dynamic of an organization.

“It creates lots of connections between staff. It starts to create a culture around caring and sharing,” said Mira Jelic, co-founder and vice president of Novus Health.

Wireless technology has already enabled many employers, large and small, to create company portals related to health and wellness that employees can access on their smartphones and tablets to connect to referral information, EAPs, benefits and so on. Now, they can go one step further.

Since wearable fitness devices have seen such widespread adoption, says Boese, companies are asking how they can fit into the workplace.

“Is there a more holistic programmatic way to adopt this?” he said. “It would be a good idea to support and integrate what people are doing in their private life. A few companies have emerged in the market to integrate these kinds of personal

devices and activity trackers into a corporate program.”

By providing employees with tracking devices, subsidizing them or simply working with whatever employees have already acquired for themselves, companies can set up challenges and competitions, offer incentives for participation and, most important, measure successes.

“You can measure participation, trends in activity, fitness challenges, eating right challenges; with these wearable devices, these things are incredibly easy to track,” said Boese. These statistics can be matched against goals such as health care claims data, claims against certain types of disease or medical procedures and long-term tendencies in chronic repeat claims.

IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM

Companies looking to implement a program involving new health and wellness technology should be mindful of where to begin the process.

“The first thing is to evaluate where an organization is in their journey around workplace wellness – are they new to this, or have they been doing programming for years?” said Jelic.

Next, she says, is setting goals.

“That’s a partnership; that’s understanding the needs from the employer side to the employee side and identifying which types of programs might be a good fit,” she said. “They should consult a wellness professional; very often their insurer will offer built-in programs as part of the benefit plan.”

She names four main areas that technology can assist with. The first of these is “biometric and productivity feedback to help people reach their personal or other goals.” Next are educational information and access to professional advice and counselling.

“The kind of gains we’re going to see in the next 10 years will eclipse what we’ve seen in the past 10 years: social and professional connection in the workplace where employees and employees gather around competitions and cultural events that support health and wellbeing,” said Jelic. “Technology allows HR professionals to quickly poll the employees: would you rather have healthy snacks in the workroom for lunch-and-learn sessions? It has huge potential, and we’re already starting to see some of the benefits today with the early adopters.”

CHOOSING PARTNERS

Boese names Virgin Pulse as one example of a potential partner in wellness technology.

“They’ve moved past how many steps you take in a week to more holistic views of wellbeing,” he said. Last February, Virgin Pulse joined forces with ShapeUp and Global Corporate Challenge.

“We have employees working around the globe in many types of settings; all the functionality will be available through a mobile application,” said Dr. Rajiv Kumar, president and chief medical officer at Virgin Pulse. “Members use their smartphone and never have to log in through their desktop computer.”

There’s more to wellness than counting steps and calories, and new technologies

are including more and more in their offerings.

“We take a whole person approach to wellbeing assessment, so at the very beginning, we ask questions about physical, mental and financial health and make recommendations on ways to improve. Then we ask users to do things in small steps,” said Limeade vice president of product, Justin Jed. Employees work towards different motivational goals, which could range from improving their sleep to engaging in volunteerism.

No matter which type of program a company chooses, it will require “commitment of the organization and their leadership to the goals of the program, and the willingness to stick it out,” said Boese. “You’ve got to be willing to build slowly, and you need a clear value proposition: how does the employee see the value in it for himself or herself? And you need regular check-ins to make sure things are going in the right direction.”

Above all, he said, “These things take time.” ■

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Revolving Doors

HOW EMPLOYEE TURNOVER CAN INCREASE GROUP BENEFITS COSTS

By Yafa Sakkejha

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Employee turnover is certainly costly to companies, but it can surface in hidden places. Aside from the time and money it takes to recruit, train and transition employees, it can often hit the group benefits piece of the P&L. This silent cost can drive up premiums if a company does not have strategies in place to mitigate the impact.

It is first important to recognize the direct link that claims have on employee benefits premiums. Health and dental benefits are priced on an “experience-rated” basis, meaning that premiums are largely driven by the volume of claims submitted by employees.

Here are the most common ways that churn can drive up benefits claims.

SHORT-TERM CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

An independent day care and primary school in western Ontario often has to hire substitute caregivers to fill in for

parental leaves. As these employees were hired, they were offered participation in the benefit plan although they were on a one-year contract. The employees would not know if they were to stay on full-time until 10 months into their contract, so they naturally took full advantage of the benefit plan. The company saw a 20 per cent increase in their health and dental claims, and, as a result, an increase in premiums. They were faced with having to make cuts to the plan coverage in order to minimize the cost impact.

Solution: Short-term contract employees are normally excluded from benefit plans for this reason. However, if an employer wants to offer something, a limited plan in the first year is a good way to put in a “speed bump” against cost escalations. One example of this is an overall maximum of \$1,000 for health and dental, and no offer of short- or long-term disability until they become permanent.

benefits

HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS ARE PRICED ON AN “EXPERIENCE-RATED” BASIS, MEANING THAT PREMIUMS ARE LARGELY DRIVEN BY THE VOLUME OF CLAIMS SUBMITTED BY EMPLOYEES.

SEASONAL INDUSTRIES

A workplace in a seasonal industry, such as construction, does an annual layoff in the winter when their work slows down, and an annual re-hiring in the spring. If these seasonal employees are provided benefits either during the work period or during layoff, they are likely to maximize their benefits, since they are unsure of whether or not they will be called back. One Mississauga employer saw 10 per cent of their workforce claim short-term disability (STD) every year, around the time that layoffs were coming – the STD plan was more generous than EI.

This is tricky: an employer may want to continue health and dental benefits in order to maintain a link with employees, so as

not to lose the talent. However, it is important to recognize that if workers are not called back, but formally terminated, they should have been given an extension of benefits of at least the ESA minimum durations.

Further, insurance companies usually do not allow seasonal employees to be covered under a benefit plan, and it is important to ask this upon initial underwriting. The reason is because if there is a major claim (death or disability), and the insurer looks into the file, they may reject the claim or refuse to continue coverage of the group on the grounds that this was not disclosed upon policy setup. Needless to say, this could create costs of legal action and potential costs in having to shift insurance carriers at an unfavourable time.

Solution: If a company chooses to extend benefits to seasonal employees, they are better off to consider replacing any short- or long-term disability coverage with a solid critical illness policy. The reason is because it is not contingent upon income loss, and is less likely to be abused in this scenario. Regarding health and dental, they should consider offering a plan with maximums on all benefits, especially the paramedical category, to minimize the impact.

If a company further chooses to extend benefits during a layoff, they should offer disability only during the statutory requirement, and always notify the insurer of their intentions before the lay-off begins.

RAPIDLY GROWING START-UP

A rapidly growing employer lands a major contract and decides to hire many of their temp workers full-time from the staffing agency. These workers would not have had benefits coverage with the agency, and have potentially gone many years with no coverage. As soon as they are hired full-time, they are likely to maximize their plan, especially if they are unsure as to whether or not they have secured permanent employment.

Solution: Companies should consider providing a “ramp-up” plan in between having no coverage and full coverage. This can be a middle ground, and can provide a soft speed bump to prevent sudden cost escalations. For example, if the full plan has 100 per cent coverage on dental, the “first-year hire” plan could have 50 or 70 per cent, with a lower maximum. Once they reach one year of full-time employment, they can join the full plan.

Regardless of the reason for the churn, it is always a best practice to provide a tiered coverage system so that permanent, established employees have more coverage than junior or temporary entrants. Ensuring a smooth transition into full coverage will provide a softer inflationary figure than the spikes of a full benefit plan with a revolving door. ■

Yafa Sakkejha is the general manager of The Beneplan Co-operative.





First Responders

WOULD YOU TRUST YOUR LIFE TO A COWORKER?

By Heather Hudson

If you suffered a heart attack or concussion at work, would your colleagues know how to help you?

If you work in Canada, the answer is probably not a resounding yes.

According to a recent Nielsen Consumer Insights survey commissioned by the Canadian Red Cross, most Canadian employees don't feel confident in their ability to help with serious medical emergencies, including:

- Heart attack or cardiac emergency (50 per cent)
- Anaphylaxis shock/severe allergic reaction (48 per cent)
- Concussion (47 per cent)
- Stroke (42 per cent)
- Psychotic episode (33 per cent)

That's because most workers don't receive first aid training. While standards vary among industries and provinces, the

Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations require that, in an office setting, the ratio of basic first aid-certified employees to total employee number is 1:6 to 100-plus.

Compare that to the European model, in which everyone who has a driver's license must also have a first aid certificate.

As national director of first aid programs for the Canadian Red Cross,



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“CANADA IS KNOWN FOR ITS SAFE WORKPLACES GLOBALLY, BUT WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY AS A COUNTRY TO DO BETTER. WE CAN’T SEE A REASON WHY EVERYONE IN THE WORKPLACE CAN’T HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE OR TRAINING WITH FIRST AID.”

— DON MARENTETTE, CANADIAN RED CROSS

Don Marentette wants to see all adult Canadians trained in first aid.

“Canada is known for its safe workplaces globally, but we have an opportunity as a country to do better,” he said. “We can’t see a reason why everyone in the workplace can’t have some experience or training with first aid.”

The Canadian Red Cross is stepping up its efforts to advocate for every employee

in every workplace across the country to be trained in basic first aid and CPR.

It won’t be easy. Challenges like cost and access to high-quality training is a factor, as are regulations that vary by province, industry and workplace. However, Marentette says the cost of not providing first aid training could prove fatal.

“We know that one of the biggest barriers to act is people are afraid to do the

wrong thing or hurt someone,” he said. “We’ve done studies with the University of Manchester in the UK and Canada observing people’s behaviours in the first aid classroom.

“[Participants] are 28 per cent more likely to act in an emergency situation after having first aid training that is relatable to them. Three months later, they were 12 per cent more willing to act in an

Changes to First Aid Training

If you're thinking about refreshing your workplace's first aid training, now is a good time. In February 2016, the Canadian Guidelines Consensus Task Force, which includes organizations like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, St. John Ambulance and the Canadian Red Cross, released new guidelines on first aid and CPR.

The new guidelines reflect the task force's collaborative discussion and interpretation of the new science and best practice recommendations as they relate to first aid and resuscitation training.

Some of the changes include:

- Instead of cleaning a cut with soap and water, skip the soap and rinse the wound for five minutes with clean, running tap water instead. Several studies demonstrated possible toxicity to cells when exposed directly to soap and water.
- Adults experiencing chest pain should chew one adult or two low-dose aspirins while waiting for emergency medical assistance to arrive (unless they have an allergy or bleeding disorder).
- In the case of severe allergic reaction, first aid providers should help administer a second dose of epinephrine if there are no signs of improvement after the first dose. Some studies have shown that it is most effective to administer the second dose within 5-10 minutes of the first if symptoms have not stopped progressing.
- When someone experiences a blow to the head, she should stop activity immediately, whether sport-related or in the workplace, and seek medical aid (even if there aren't signs of a concussion).
- The routine use of cervical collars is no longer recommended as they can cause complications and discomfort for the injured person. Instead, in suspected cervical spine injury, the new guidelines recommend manually supporting the head in position, limiting angular movement, until more advanced care arrives.
- If an adult is experiencing hypoglycemia (low blood sugar, usually as a diabetic), he needs glucose tablets, which provide the needed 15 to 20 grams of sugars or carbohydrates that raise blood glucose levels. If glucose tablets aren't available, other dietary sugars are recommended, including (in order of preference):
 - Glucose candy (Mentos)
 - Sucrose candy (Skittles)
 - Jelly beans
 - Orange juice
 - Fructose (fruit leather)
 - Whole milk

If symptoms persist after 10 minutes, another dose can be administered.

emergency situation. We're using data like this to shape the way we teach first aid."

The Canadian Red Cross advocates for an injury prevention culture in the workplace by working with management and HR in companies to teach them what they need to create a safe space.

In order to better reach all workplaces and employees, they are transitioning to a learner-centered method of delivering training.

"We want facilitators to adapt the content [of first aid training] to the audience's needs. If you have a workplace with a high hazard for slips and falls, the training should focus on that. It's a massive shift for us," said Marentette.

GETTING THE TRAINING

HR professionals can have a role to play in ensuring their workplaces get the right training for their particular environment. Marentette suggests initiating brainstorming as a team, floor or organization about

the kinds of hazards and health risks that are likely to affect your workplace. From there, you could request first aid training from certified professionals that focuses on those risks, as well as other basics, such as CPR.

The Canadian Red Cross and other certified first aid training organizations offer train-the-trainer workshops to make it more cost-effective and convenient for appointed workplace officials to train their colleagues, so that everyone takes on the responsibility.

"It can be as simple as pointing out that someone's shoes are untied, or recognizing wet spots on the floor that could be slippery. Identifying hazard areas is a huge part of reducing injuries and shouldn't just be done by management," said Marentette.

Ideally, first aid skills should be refreshed and practiced quarterly or at least a couple times a year, says Marentette.

Though the most common workplace hazards vary by industry, Marentette

says that slips and falls are number one in most workplaces, followed by sprains and strains and cuts and scrapes.

It's critical that every employee has basic first aid training, knows where the first aid kit is (including what's in it and how to use it) and can spot and do something about hazards in the workplace.

Marentette says the contents of the 36 approved first aid kits in the country will vary, but each kit should contain:

- CPR mask
- Gauze
- Non-latex examining gloves
- Self-adhesive bandages
- Triangular bandages (cravat)

"At the end of the day, regular conversations about first aid and engaging everyone in safety is what's most important. If we can get people to be okay to talk about safety and first aid as part of everyday life, we're pretty convinced it will help prevent injuries," said Marentette. ■



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Bridging the Skills Gap

STUDENTS AND GRADUATES HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR PERFORMANCE THAN PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

By Wendy Cukier



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Jobs without people and people without jobs” is a challenge in many industrialized countries. Unemployment and under-employment rates are high – particularly among youth, immigrants, aboriginal people and people with disabilities – while many businesses report they cannot find the skills they need. For example, a recent survey by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce indicated more than one-third of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ontario have positions they cannot fill. While part of this is a result of a skills mismatch – the jobs available do not match the profile of those seeking employment – it is more complex. The 2012 Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services noted labour market projections are no easy task.

The furor about the “skills gap” isn’t new. In 1997, a *Globe and Mail* article wrote, “Canadian advanced technology businesses (88 per cent) believe they face a skills shortage. Many jobs remain open because of this shortage.” Employers projected a high demand for engineering and computer science graduates and demanded that governments “double the pipeline” to produce them. Post-secondary institutions listened but market conditions changed and the jobs disappeared. The very same employers began calling for more focus on soft skills. Part of the challenge is that, historically, universities have not been very agile in responding to demands – approval processes for new degree programs often mean that it could be at least six years before the first graduates appear.

There is also evidence to suggest that more considered job analysis is warranted – that employers may demand skills or qualifications that are not essential for the task. For example, one study of the information communications technology sector noted a significant difference between the skills demanded in job advertisements versus the skills required to perform the jobs. Often, engineering or computer science degrees were demanded even though graduates in other programs – for example, from information science, information technology management, informatics, digital media or other hybrid degrees – could perform the job. The study found that engineering and computer science tended to want to hire in its own image,

regardless of the skills actually needed. The result was the creation of unintentional barriers, largely for women.

Innovative research and new data mining and analytics techniques are helping us understand these issues in a more nuanced way. Two recent studies show how the expectations of employers and graduates may be very different. Funded by the Ontario Human Capital Research and Innovation Fund (OHCRI), the first study compared employer and job seeker perceptions of their skills and a second study, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, examined the issue of “soft skills” in more detail.

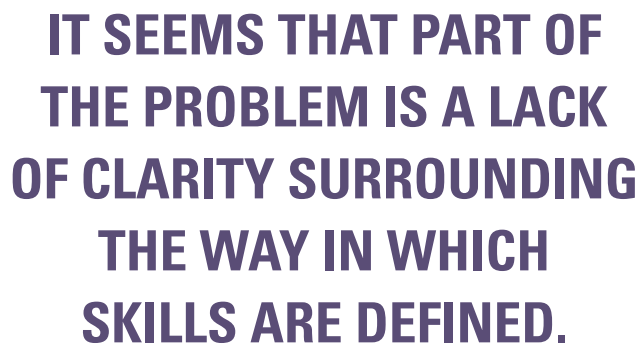
The OHCRI study examined the perspectives of Ontario employers, Ryerson University students and recent graduates to examine their perspectives of the skills needed and skills possessed.

Current students and recent graduates rated their “essential” skills proficiency highly. For example, 85 per cent of students rated their skills proficiency in reading, document use, thinking, writing, working with others and continuous learning above average.

Over 70 per cent of current students and recent graduates believed that they were highly proficient in “thinking skills” (problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, job task planning, significant use of memory and finding information). Both current students and recent graduates were less likely to rate their proficiency above average in numeracy and digital technology, but this varied by discipline.

However, employers painted a very different picture. For example:

- While recent graduates perceived themselves to be highly proficient in oral communication (90.7 per cent) and writing (93.1 per cent) skills, employers perceive recent graduate hires to be less proficient (47.6 per cent and 39.4 per cent).
- Employers perceived few recently hired graduates to be highly proficient in digital tools. For instance, employers found only one-quarter of recently hired graduates to have a high proficiency in Windows or Linux and less than 10 per cent in website design and development.
- There were also gaps in the assessment



IT SEEMS THAT PART OF THE PROBLEM IS A LACK OF CLARITY SURROUNDING THE WAY IN WHICH SKILLS ARE DEFINED.

of ability to learn on the job (93 per cent versus 53.3 per cent); proficiency with Microsoft Office (74 per cent versus 50.3 per cent); proficiency with Microsoft Excel, specifically (61.7 per cent versus 50.3 per cent); and ethics ability (81.3 per cent versus 48.2 per cent).

- After salary expectations, employers reported that the biggest challenge they face when recruiting recent graduates is finding candidates with the necessary technical skills.

Digging in further, it seems that part of the problem is a lack of clarity surrounding the way in which skills are defined. Much attention has been focused on so-called “soft skills” and the critical importance these have for workplace success. But a review of more than 6,000 research studies from around the world showed that there was a lack of clear definition of “soft skills.”

Moreover, it revealed that much of the research on the nature of soft skills has focused on the needs of graduates from science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) or other professional disciplines, such as business. Perhaps this is because it assumed that social sciences and humanities (SSH) degrees develop soft skills through the course of their studies. However, there is evidence that while SSH graduates may have important critical thinking and communications skills, they may also lack the specific soft skills required by employers.

The research from these studies has played a significant role in shaping

innovative internship and training programs being supported by the Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. The boot camp, coupled with paid internships, is designed to provide SSH graduates with a leg up in finding employment, and to explore ways in which their academic training can be augmented with specialized training to improve their success in the workplace. They may have strong writing and communication skills, but can they write a 250-word pitch, can they do a five-minute presentation, do they know how to present themselves in an interview or to network with prospective clients?

The evidence is clear – university graduates, regardless of discipline, over the long term earn more than others. However, by using rigorous research and consulting with employers, we can create innovative programs that enhance our graduates’ job prospects and provide the critical talent to drive economic and social development. University graduates are, of course, only one segment of the job seeker market. The new Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation (OCWI) will help shed light on best practices in training and workforce development. And more importantly, it will help us gain better insight into the skills job seekers have and the skills employers say they want in order to at least bridge the information gap. ■

Wendy Cukier is vice president of research and innovation at Ryerson and founder of the Diversity Institute.



Hiring by the Numbers

TOOLS THAT COMPANIES OF ANY SIZE CAN ACCESS

By Tonya Lanthier

Organizations of all types are becoming more data-driven, using a variety of metrics to gauge their success at sales, productivity, operational efficiency and much more. However, many business leaders and managers still rely on subjective factors, such as a “gut feeling,” to make one of their most consequential decisions: whom to hire. It’s up to HR professionals to give them better tools and make the business case for a more effective hiring strategy.

Leaders of small to mid-sized companies might be concerned about the costs associated with a more data-driven hiring process. But the fact is, excellent metrics

are readily available online and as a component of a hiring platform that can help companies hire more objectively. Here are four tools that companies of any size can access:

PERSONALITY TESTING

One of the most widely used personality tests is the DISC model, which measures productivity, teamwork and communication. “D” stands for “dominance” and measures how well employees overcome opposition to achieve results. “I” stands for “influence,” which measures how employees persuade others to shape their environment. “S” stands for “steadiness”

and measures how well employees cooperate with others. “C” stands for “compliance” and measures employees’ ability related to structure and organization. The DISC model helps employers understand behaviour, temperament and personality – and measures a potential hire’s compatibility with coworkers.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Many hiring platforms offer skills assessment testing that can help companies measure abilities that are relevant to specific positions. The information gathered can help employers generate data that allows them to hire with confidence. For

recruitment

THE INFORMATION GATHERED
CAN HELP EMPLOYERS GENERATE
DATA THAT ALLOWS THEM TO
HIRE WITH CONFIDENCE.



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example, a candidate for a job that requires data entry should be proficient with Microsoft Excel. Skills assessments take the mystery out of the hiring process.

VALUES ASSESSMENT

It's important to make sure employee values are aligned with a prospective employer's. A values assessment tool can give a hiring manager insight into what employees value the most. It can reveal a candidate's interests and aptitude to determine how well an employee will fit with an organization. For example, data on

interests can indicate whether or not the potential staffer shares interests with future colleagues, and an aptitude test can determine whether or not the desired occupation is suitable for the individual. Both are important metrics for predicting new hire success on the job.

CULTURAL TESTING

HR professionals are increasingly using cultural testing to get a read on a candidate's ability to fit into the workplace environment. Cultural tests examine values, beliefs, outlook and behaviour in the

context of the company culture. Cultural tests also frequently explore how candidates view work situations and examine the implications for cultural fit. For example, a cultural test can indicate an employee's capacity for teamwork, which is important for workplaces that value collaboration. A job candidate who shows a preference for solo work might not be a good fit for that particular company, whereas a person who shows a strong preference for working with others might be a poor fit for a job that requires extensive independent work with little human contact.

These four tools can help businesses assess potential new hires' ability to succeed in the role they are pursuing. Each type of assessment tool offers a different view of the candidate, providing insight on personality, skills, values and culture, so it makes sense to use a combination of the tools to generate a set of objective metrics.

Variations of these assessment solutions are available online and on many popular hiring platforms, so it's now possible for companies that currently leave one of their most important business decisions to potentially unreliable methods to take a more data-driven approach instead. Metrics matter, which is why companies are relying heavily on data to drive decision-making across business units. Now it's time to hire by the numbers, too. ■

Tonya Lanthier is CEO of DentalPost.



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Blowing the Whistle

WHISTLEBLOWING SYSTEMS GUIDE HELPS ORGANIZATIONS SET UP ETHICAL INTERNAL REPORTING

By Hilary Davies, MES

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In Canada, whistleblowers often only come to public attention when the reporting is external and a sensational story hits the news. At this point, the reputational damage to an organization is already done and the opportunity to mitigate the effects may have disappeared. External reporting also frequently involves illegal or unethical activity that may have been occurring for a long period of time. The reporting of malfeasance within an organization may be external because the organization does not have an effective internal reporting mechanism.

In February 2016, CSA Group published its first guideline for whistleblowing systems. The guideline is designed to help organizations set up an internal ethical reporting program that encourages reporting of wrongdoing within the organization itself. Some readers may be asking – why

would an organization want to encourage whistleblowing?

“Whistleblowing,” which is the act of reporting suspected wrongdoing, mismanagement and unethical conduct in an organization, is one of the most effective methods for identifying activities that could potentially cause harm to an organization, the public interest or the health

and safety of the environment. The information gained from whistleblowing activities can be invaluable to organizations seeking to prevent the damages that could result from these activities. For these and other reasons, government bodies, corporations and non-profit associations are looking for ways to proactively encourage a “speak-up” culture that enables

EMPLOYEES ARE MORE LIKELY TO PASS ALONG INFORMATION IF THEY HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT BY REPORTING WRONGDOING, THEIR CONCERNS WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND THEIR ACTIONS WILL MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE.

policies & procedures

A WORKPLACE CULTURE THAT PROMOTES “SPEAKING UP” AND REPORTING OF WRONGDOING CAN EMPOWER EMPLOYEES TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR WORKPLACE, IMPROVE SHAREHOLDER CONFIDENCE AND HELP CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE EMPLOYEES FEEL FREE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION.

their employees to voice any concerns, according to the *International Handbook on Whistleblowing Research*, which was published in 2014.

Having an effective ethical reporting system that encourages employees or clients to report wrongdoing is an important component of overall corporate governance. International research, reported in the *Journal of Financial Crime*, has shown that whistleblowing activities are one of the best mechanisms for organizations to detect internal wrongdoing and improve overall organizational effectiveness. A workplace culture that promotes “speaking up” and reporting of wrongdoing can empower employees to take an active role in their workplace, improve shareholder

confidence and help create an environment where employees feel free to contribute to the advancement of the organization.

One of the most important components of a successful system is that the employees believe in its efficacy. Employees are more likely to pass along information if they have confidence that by reporting wrongdoing, their concerns will be taken seriously and their actions will make a positive change. This belief begins at the top – the executives must actively support the program, promote and display ethical behaviour and ensure there is awareness among employees of how the program works, the procedures involved and the protections put in place for any whistleblower.

Another concern for many whistleblowers is the potential for reprisal. As a result, organizations must help ensure that retaliation does not take place and that the system itself is evaluated periodically to give insight into its effectiveness to avoid any potential issues. Offering a confidential method of reporting often alleviates these concerns. It is also important to review each case and help ensure that any negative behaviour toward a whistleblower is addressed immediately.

Whistleblowing Systems – A Guide was developed to help organizations establish and manage an effective mechanism for whistleblowing activities. The guideline provides a background on existing Canadian laws and codes related to whistleblowing as well as a summary of the key performance benefits associated with a whistleblowing system. In order to help organizations develop internal systems specific to their operations, the guideline highlights key planning considerations and identifies the target outcomes of a successful system. It also addresses the most critical issues in developing an effective system, including the challenge of protecting whistleblowers from reprisals that punish and silence them, and discourage others from speaking out.

Although the elements of a whistleblowing system may vary depending on organization size and business, the guideline defines the common critical elements and provides recommendations for an appropriate implementation approach. Whistleblowing systems can become a valuable part of a comprehensive occupational health and safety management strategy that promotes accountability and gives workers a voice and influence within their workplace.

Ultimately, an effective internal reporting system can help both the organization and its employees. It allows the organization to proactively address any behaviour that is contrary to the policies and procedures of the organization, and gives employees confidence that their concerns will be appropriately addressed. ■

Hilary Davies, MES is project manager, Environment and Climate Change at CSA Group.

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Sue Lefebvre
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CONFLICT RESOLUTION COACH

By Kristy Rydz



While most people avoid conflict, Sue Lefebvre knows tackling it head-on is the key to helping individuals and teams develop their interpersonal skills and conflict competence.

Lefebvre's interest in the often cringed-at topic of conflict first sparked in the 1990s when she entered the field of conflict resolution while working as an HR advisor at the House of Commons. She had been tasked with drafting its initial harassment prevention policy and while developing it, Lefebvre took an alternate dispute resolution training course.

"Although I already had a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in social work, when I took this certification, my life changed. I thought, "This is the crossroads of community development, organizational development and developmental psychology," she said.

After certifying as a conflict resolution practitioner, Lefebvre worked in harassment prevention within several federal government departments, subsequently trained as an organizational development practitioner and is now an internationally certified coach.

Her more than 20-year public service HR career focused on conflict resolution, executive development, career transition and organizational wellbeing – all with the goal of guiding individuals and teams to resolve complex and sensitive issues.

Now running her own practice, Lefebvre provides both private and public sector clients with conflict coaching, training and organizational development services based on her expertise in creating trust-based relationships.

HR Professional asked her about the skills she brings – and helps develop in her clients – to problem solve the most difficult situations.

career paths

In your current position, what are your main areas of responsibility?

Sue Lefebvre: I provide private and public sector organizations with the full range of conflict resolution, intervention and prevention services, including: management consultation, coaching, facilitation, mediation, workplace assessment and training. In addition, I coach individual clients through personal and professional change. My clients succeed in those difficult conversations and challenging transitions.

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

SL: I don't really have a "typical" day as my work is focused on client needs and what they bring to me. I have recently been doing a lot of work around mental health, which has become of huge interest to senior public servants and which has a major impact on workplace wellbeing. There is a symbiotic relationship between mental health and workplace conflict. If there is a mental health issue, it can negatively impact the workplace and if there is a negative workplace, it can impact mental health. While my workshops raise awareness about the issue, my coaching circles build skills in recognizing and managing workplace mental health issues.

What do you love about your job?

SL: The thing that I love most about my work is "the shift." Whether coaching an individual, an intact team or a group, I can see when awareness shifts. People often come to me feeling there's no way out; things are such a mess that there is no solution. I love it when the penny drops and they understand, "Wow, there's another way to do or see this, there is a way out!" That shift is what I love the most; it's what drives me.

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

SL: The lack of understanding about my role in supporting transition [can be a challenge]. Clients often look to me for a solution: "We'll give it to Sue and she can fix it." In reality, I don't do any fixing at all. My role is to enable clients to frame their own conversations and find their own solutions. I can't do it for them.

Ultimately, no matter what type of coaching I'm doing, I'm helping people transition from one state of being to another. I have to ask, "What's the transformational piece that needs to happen to free this individual, team or group to move to a more generative state?" So, whether it's conflict resolution or career transition, or simply how to have a conversation with a

family member, there's a transition around letting go of one set of beliefs and taking on a new set.

What skills do you possess that make you a great fit for your position?

SL: I'm curious. Because coaching is a journey of discovery, the coach's job is really to create a safe, trusting space for the client to do the work of moving forward. I use my professional skills to build enough trust with my clients so they'll take some time to think about themselves and what they want to do about a given situation. As I'm working with a client – be it a team or an individual – I ask myself, "What do I need to do to help this person get centered and calm enough to stand back and take a look at the situation?" Because they know the answer, they can figure it out.

What are your ultimate career goals?

SL: I want to become a master certified coach, to become more involved in the professionalization of coaching and promoting it in the Ottawa area. Through coaching, I want to continue to have a positive impact on individuals and workplaces. I want to continue to help support managers to get skilled in having those difficult conversations while simultaneously looking after themselves. ■

“WHETHER IT'S CONFLICT RESOLUTION OR CAREER TRANSITION, OR SIMPLY HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH A FAMILY MEMBER, THERE'S A TRANSITION AROUND LETTING GO OF ONE SET OF BELIEFS AND TAKING ON A NEW SET.”



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MEET THE HR INFLUENCERS:



Ruth Brothers, CHRL, CHRE

PERFORMANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COACH

By Kristy Ryzd

Finding a job you love getting up for each morning can be rare. Almost unheard of is doing it twice over the course of one lifetime.

But that's exactly what Ruth Brothers has accomplished.

In what she describes as her first love affair, Brothers spent more than 20 years as a successful leader and HR vice-president – “There isn't anything in a human resources department that I haven't done,” she said – for major companies like Shell Canada, Nabisco Ltd., General Electric, CAE Inc. and Teva Pharmaceuticals.

After planning to semi-retire five years ago, she is now thriving as a full-time independent performance, leadership and management coach working with top and emerging talent in some of the world's biggest companies.

“Who would have thought that after having a career I was so passionate about

and that I loved so much, that I would end up having a second career that I have the same amount of passion for?” said Brothers.

She told *HR Professional* how her diverse experience, in the boardroom and as a resource for today's talent, keeps her on the top of her game.

What was your first HR job?

Ruth Brothers: I had some testing done to apply for funding for school. When I told them I wanted to be a social worker, they said, “Nope, not sure if that's the right thing. You should probably focus on something called public relations or personnel.” And I thought, “Personnel? What's that?”

I graduated with very strong math marks and I had two job offers – one was with Air Canada and one was with Shell Oil, in the accounting department.

The personnel manager for Shell, who was interviewing me, saw some talent in me. She went to her boss and got the approval to add a person to her department. She called me back six weeks later and asked me to come work for her.

She was my first mentor and I cannot tell you to this day how grateful I am for her. She has, unfortunately, passed away, but when I got my first vice-president job years ago, I called her and I thanked her. I told her, “If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have the career I've had.”

Tell me about your current job. What are your main areas of responsibility?

RB: The kind of coaching I do is helping leaders become better leaders, and in turn, better business people. I also work with high-potential talent. Really progressive organizations understand that in order to retain their brightest and best stars, they

In a Nutshell

First job: I was 14 years old and I worked at a retail department store called Sally's.

Childhood ambition: Believe it or not, I always wanted to run a business.

Best boss and why: My second mentor at Shell. At the time, I thought he was really tough and constantly challenging. But I look back now and realize he was an incredible mentor. Every time he challenged me, it was about making me better.

Current source of inspiration: The people I work with. My commitment to each and every one of them individually and collectively motivates me. It energizes me.

Best piece of advice ever received: Never give input to anyone who doesn't ask for it or who isn't prepared to act on it. That has stood the test of time for me.

Favourite music: I'm very eclectic. I love Motown music, pop music, even opera. I just like music, period, because I love to dance.

Last book read: I'm always reading books on leadership. But I also read books on diverse leaders, like Steve Jobs and Conrad Black. There are lessons to be learned from each and every leader's history.



need to keep these people engaged because they are so marketable and always at risk.

I'm not a consultant. The borderline between a consultant and a coach is blurry sometimes. If you think about an athlete's coach, it's not dissimilar. I draw on my diverse background and coaching experience to help you be a more successful manager or leader, not give you the answers. My role is to help you find different ways of looking at situations, encouraging you to try different approaches, analyzing the merit of those approaches and pointing you in a direction of new leadership ideas.

What do you love about your job?

RB: I love working with talent. I'm fortunate to work at both ends of the spectrum. As they face their challenges and are working to develop solutions, my role, almost like a kaleidoscope, is to turn it one or two notches and help them see it in a different way.

What are the challenges you experience in your job?

RB: The challenges are making sure I truly understand what my clients are dealing with and strategizing, in my own mind, an approach to help influence their thinking to a certain point. Also, being able to identify where I can add the most value.

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

RB: To understand, depending on the business challenge, that you really are the custodian of the culture. It's an incredibly valuable and precious role. And no matter how discouraging the situation is, you can never stop being that champion. It is up to you to help the organization navigate, culturally, intellectually and emotionally, during those difficult times.

What skills are important for success in HR?

RB: If there's one skill that HR professionals must have, it's understanding their role and what is relevant to their business. They must be, first and foremost, business people who come with an expertise in human capital management relevant to their individual organization, industry sector and strategic challenges. They can't do that without understanding their business. Emerging theories and concepts must be seriously considered, but in the end it's a little like a cafeteria. You only put on your plate what your business needs – not because it's the latest and greatest thing to do, not because it's the latest jargon – but because it's relevant.

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

RB: You have to love what you do. The work of HR, the passion I had for what I did, I really think that's what helped me be successful. And secondly, in today's

competitive arena, you have to work as hard as you can. And I'm not just talking about hours. I'm talking about trying to be the very best that you can. Trying to learn as much as you can so that you can be relevant and contribute to the business that you're in. To have an understanding of what your role is and where you can truly contribute. It's actually very simple to understand but hard to do.

The HR field has been evolving. What changes excite you the most?

RB: I'm thrilled about the spotlight that is coming to shine on the profession of HR. I'm incredibly excited about the business role that it's taking on and the recognition it's receiving as a true partner in the business. There's now an understanding that the most valuable assets ride up and down the elevator and walk in the door every day. We have the expertise in managing the most important assets of any organization.

What's the future of HR?

RB: The future of HR is aligned with the challenges of businesses in Canada, North America and globally. Those challenges are around how we can continue to create shareholder value when growth is not apparent. When you are limited in growth, there is tremendous pressure on cost and efficiencies and this requires strategic HR strategies.

Secondly, how do you manage in a difficult economy where there is no growth, especially in resource-based businesses? When a company is continually contracting and stretching, how do you keep the culture healthy? How do you attract, how do you retain and how do you appeal and align the different demographics within the organization?

One of the biggest pressures for businesses is increasing globalization. As a result, businesses are much more complex and HR is, therefore, much more complex.

The role of HR overall is to be deeply seeped in the business they're in and have a profound understanding of the external pressures that are coming to bear on their businesses. HR must balance the human capital management challenges with the business challenges and offer expertise and solutions around organizational issues, which are financial, structural and human. ■

OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRL



WRONGFUL DISMISSAL HANDBOOK, 7TH EDITION

By The Honourable Mr. Justice John R. Sproat
Carswell, 2015

Terminations can be tricky, opening the employer to damages. The principles of law pertaining to wrongful dismissal generally favour of the employee. The parties to an employment contract can agree to whatever contractual terms they see fit. These terms, however, should be carefully documented in an employment contract for employees at all levels. The central question for the courts is: "What did the parties agree to?" Sproat covers types of contracts, causes for dismissal, constructive dismissal, damages, tort liability, termination payments, employee obligations and liability to the employer. Each are covered in detail, citing relevant cases and rulings.

Point of interest

Reading employment law textbooks is a valuable exercise. Books by Justice Sproat and lawyer Stuart Rudner provide insight into the thinking and the case law used by the courts, justices and lawyers.



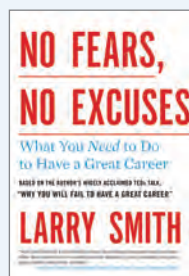
HR MANAGER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSION PLANNING

By Brian Kreissl and Yaseen Hemeda
Carswell, 2016

This guide provides comprehensive information on the theory and practice of succession planning. In addition to outlining the succession planning process, Kreissl and Hemeda flesh out the planning, preparation and implementation work required to ensure your succession plan is aligned with key aspects of your organization's talent management strategies and its overall organizational strategy, vision and mission. Particular attention is given to Canadian legal compliance concerns such as how human rights legislation and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms impacts succession planning.

Point of interest

With the end of mandatory retirement, HR professionals can and should track employee ages, as long as the data is used to forecast and plan for future HR needs. However, employers cannot deny training or promotional opportunities to older employees.



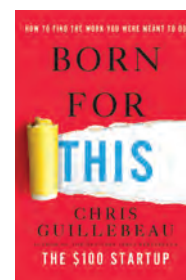
NO FEARS, NO EXCUSES: WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO HAVE A GREAT CAREER

By Larry Smith
Collins, 2016

The grown-up world is where talent goes to die, writes Smith. Many students come to him to share their ideas, insights and plans for their future and seek guidance. Too many, even those with talent, return to discuss their dissatisfaction with their careers. Why are so many dissatisfied? There is an epidemic of lowered expectations, a failure to plan and think analytically. Smith believes a great career is possible but we must find our edge, learn to sell our ideas and, most importantly, execute. He advocates a thorough investigation of our passions and believes that we must combine them to create an integrated career.

Point of interest

Career development matters. Smith has logged over 20,000 conversations about career success over the course of his teaching career.



BORN FOR THIS: HOW TO FIND THE WORK YOU WERE MEANT TO DO

By Chris Guillebeau
Crown Business, 2016

In 1992, Michael Jordan stunned basketball fans when he left the Chicago Bulls to play with the Chicago White Sox. By all accounts, this star basketball player was little more than a marginal baseball player. Jordan recognized this and went back to achieve even more greatness in basketball, his true gift. To win, sometimes you need to quit. In his book, Guillebeau challenges the usual advice to keep trying until you succeed. When a job, career, or business venture isn't working, ditch it and move on. In our culture today, it is becoming more acceptable to have a varied work history.

Point of interest

When individuals are inspired to discover their own talents and learn ways to articulate and demonstrate them, it adds value to the workplace. HR professionals now need to ensure their talent development is flexible enough to allow employees to experiment. ■

WANT A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK? READ EXTENDED BOOK REVIEWS ON WWW.HRPATODAY.CA.

The Five Biggest Teamwork Ills

WHAT'S HOLDING YOUR TEAMS BACK AND HOW TO FIX IT

By Dr. Mario Moussa, Dr. Derek Newberry and Madeline Boyer

Twisting your features into a mask of pain, you dig your heels into the soft grass. A rope tears into your palms. A clear voice speaks to you amid the many confused thoughts swirling in your head: "What am I learning from this experience?"

If you're like many who have done this exercise at a corporate retreat, you should be learning about teamwork. As others join you, the collective rope-pulling effort seems to demonstrate the point. Little by little, the boulder starts moving until it nudges over the 30-foot mark. Cheers erupt.

But you notice something. With each additional person who contributes to the effort, the boulder moves faster, but not as fast as you would have imagined. By the time the tenth person steps up, you feel the group is barely pulling harder than when it was only six, even though everyone seems to be working hard.

This well-documented phenomenon, social loafing, is an issue that plagues any group of individuals working together, but it isn't the only one. Knowing what to look out for can be half the battle.

1. OVEREMPHASIZING ABSTRACT GOALS

People like to talk about transcendent goals for a reason. Steve Jobs was known for his inspiring keynote talks that emphasized changing the world. Such goals are uplifting, and can make work feel more meaningful. But if team members don't understand what's in it for them, it can be hard to commit to working towards team goals.

Teamwork Rx: Make sure that big, collective goals align with small, personal commitments that drive performance.

2. UNDEREMPHASIZING ROLES

Many teams think that merely getting the right talent in play is all that it takes for a team to be successful. Research has shown, though, that you need clear structure and well-defined interdependent roles in order to best leverage the strengths of those on your team.



Teamwork Rx: Well-structured teams generally outperform those with more raw talent – strength, skill or IQ. Take time to find the roles and structure that make sense for your team.

3. MAKING TOO MANY RULES

Human beings are rule-making machines – it is what allows us to interact as social beings. Often the tendency in teams is to try to plan for every possible situation and create rules for all potential contingencies. This is both time-consuming and ineffective.

Teamwork Rx: Focus on the few rules that are likely to have the biggest impact on your team's culture and performance: information-sharing, decision-making and conflict resolution.

4. IGNORING REFLECTION

One of the major cognitive biases recognized by research is outcome bias: if you're successful, you don't really reflect on what went well or could have gone better. However, reflection is as imperative when things are going well as they are when they're not. Too often, teams reserve formal reflection for annual retreats or quarterly reviews, when it needs to be taking place with much more frequency.

Teamwork Rx: Remember that check-ins need not always be huge affairs reserved for

daylong retreats – they can be as simple as a weekly stand-up meeting.

5. FAILING TO SELL THE CHANGE

You can be right, but ultimately still be unsuccessful. Such was the case for Lloyd Braun, the ABC executive who was the champion and driving force behind the television show, *Lost*. Braun was so convinced that his idea would be a hit, he barreled through green-lighting the most expensive television pilot budget to that date. He did not take the time to get others on board with his vision, and even though his intuition was correct, he was fired before the show even premiered.

Teamwork Rx: Strength of will and charisma are not enough to push through change – work hard to get buy-in so that people want to come along with you.

In the end, good teaming is being mindful about working together, and making sure to check in frequently to close the gaps between what you say you want to do and what you're actually doing. ■

Dr. Mario Moussa, Dr. Derek Newberry and Madeline Boyer are the authors of Committed Teams: Three Steps to Inspiring Passion and Performance.

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