THE MAGAZINE OF HUMAN RESOURCES THOUGHT LEADERSHIP | JANUARY 2012

HR PROFESSIONAL

CASTING A WIDER NET:

Finding and Hiring Internationally Trained Workers

Maple Leaf Foods: Building a People Strategy to Align with Business Needs

ALSO: AODA UPDATE | FRONTLINE TRAINING | DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS | NAVIGATING C-SUITE AGENDAS

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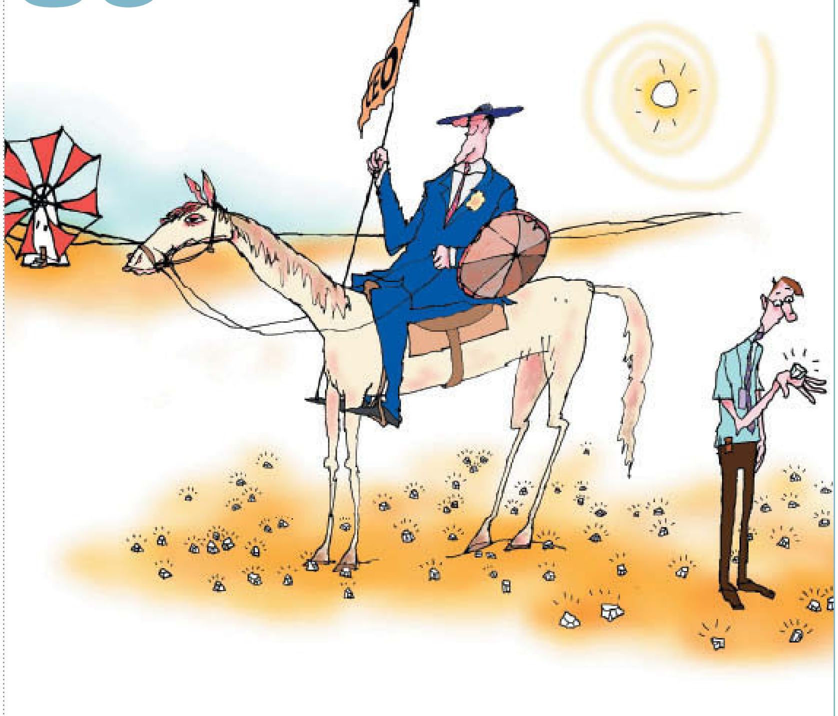

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL EDDENDEN

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JANUARY 2012

JOCELYN BÉRARD

Jocelyn Bérard, VP leadership and business solutions-international, with Global Knowledge, is an experienced executive with extensive Canadian and international experience in the areas of Human Resources and Business management. His interventions focus on talent management, especially related to leadership development, succession management and selection best practices. He advises how to recognize talent and leadership on page 21.

ALISON ADAM

Alison Adam is an associate with Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP. She represents employers in all areas of labour and employment law, including wrongful dismissal litigation, human rights complaints, employee discipline and termination, labour arbitration, fiduciary litigation, employment standards, and drafting employment policies and contracts. In this issue, Alison provides an update on meeting AODA requirements on page 17.

IAN TURNER

Ian Turner is the president of Front Line Performance, which designs and delivers training workshops to frontline employees. Previously, Ian worked as manager, training and education, for both IBM Canada Ltd. and, Celestica Inc. He has also held various management positions within the manufacturing sectors of IBM. Ian served on the board of directors for the Canadian Society for Training and Development, from 1997-2004. He discusses the importance of frontline training on page 39.

ELAINE DUMLER

Elaine Dumler is an author, speaker and "separations expert" who helps military families transition through all phases of deployment. Using techniques and strategies she taught military families, Elaine helps business people improve morale, profits and productivity. Her books, *I'm Already Home…Again* and *The Road Home*, provide resources and connection strategies for maintaining life balance. Learn how to be as resilient as a rubber BAND, on page 54.

PAUL FAIRLIE

Paul Fairlie, Ph.D., is the president & CEO of Paul Fairlie Consulting and a behavioural scientist with a solid foundation in organizational psychology, psychometrics and data analysis. His primary areas of expertise are related to assessment, measurement and research in organizations. Despite this, he warns about the 10 sins of survey benchmarking, on page 51.

ALISON NYIRI

Alyson Nyiri, CHRP, is a freelance writer, researcher and consultant specializing in human resources and career development issues. She lends her expertise and gives readers the real story in Off the Shelf, on page 48.

EDITOR'S LETTER

WELCOME TO OUR NEW EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD!

HR departments and professionals cannot operate effectively without the support of the key knowledge holders they serve. Nor can the magazine dedicated to meeting the information needs of HR professionals.

With this in mind, the *HR Professional* team is pleased to introduce our new board of advisors. With their help, we've developed an exciting editorial plan for 2012, which you can view at www.hrpromag.com. Please join us in welcoming:

- Michael Bach, national director of diversity, equity and inclusion, KPMG in Canada
- Lauren Bernardi, partner, employment lawyer and HR advisor, with the boutique firm Bernardi Human Resource Law
- Les Dakens, senior vice-president and chief human resources officer, Maple Leaf Foods Inc.
- Alim Dhanji, vice-president, human resources, TD Bank Financial Group
- Reid Lewis, vice-president human resources, ConAgra Foods
- Andrew Miller, director of talent management for Sysco Foodservices of Canada
- Anthony Papa, SHRP, principle, AFP Prism Consulting
- Stuart Rudner, partner at Miller Thomson LLP, where his practice is focused on employment law.

Last, but by no means least, Malcolm MacKillop, a partner at Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP, remains onboard as *HR Professional's* legal editor, providing content and contacts for our ongoing Legal column, as well as for our annual November legal issue.

As we usher in the new, we also wanted to take the opportunity to say "thank you" to our previous advisory board members. We appreciate all the professional advice and input received!

Now, putting one of our new board members right to work, check out our feature on page 30 in which Les Dakens and the Maple Leaf Foods team discuss how they updated and relaunched their people strategy.

Cheers,

Laurie J. Blake

HR PROFESSIONAL

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Editor: Laurie J. Blake
Publisher: Robert Phillips
Legal Editor: Malcolm MacKillop, Partner, Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP
Contributors: Daphne FitzGerald, Alison Adam, Jocelyn Bérard, Melissa Campeau, Jennifer Campbell, Scott Bury, Ian Turner, Stephanie Messier, Stephen Murdoch, Alyson Nyiri, Peter Fairlie
Sales Manager Bill McDougall
Project Manager Alana Place
Marketing: Rebecca Wentworth
Art & Design: Emma Law
Publication Director: Wayne Jury
Advertising Sales Representatives: Cheryll Oland, Maria Antonation, Norma Walchuk, Tracy Goltsman

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With more than 19,000 members in 28 chapters in Ontario, and other locations around the world, HRPA connects its membership to an unmatched range of HR information resources, events, professional development and networking opportunities.

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Cadillac Fairview

BY DAPHNE FITZGERALD, CHRP, SHRP

REFLECTIONS ON GOVERNANCE

This fall, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) board of directors signed off on a new strategic plan to guide the direction of the association over the next three years. The plan is the culmination of months of board and committee meetings; and debate, argument and compromise among the 18 members of the HRPA board who have been elected (along with a few appointees) to govern and guide the association.

I'm writing about it here because I think it's a great example of governance in action.

For any organization to be successful it must have a good governance framework in place. So what is governance? It is the art of setting the course of an organization. The need for governance exists any time a group of people come together to accomplish an end. And it requires a very thoughtful, methodical, systematic process.

Good governance ensures an organization's roles, responsibilities and authority are clearly defined; provides clarity about who is responsible for making what decisions; determines how the voices of other stakeholders (e.g., consumers, employees, elected officials, the public, etc.) are heard; clarifies how accountability is demonstrated; and provides a strategic planning process that results in a dynamic, forward-thinking strategic plan.

At the end of the day, it is the board's responsibility for ensuring that good governance is in place and that all of the many stewardship responsibilities are carried out on behalf of the organization.

In HRPA's case, the board is composed of 15 elected members who hold either a CHRP or SHRP designation, plus two or three appointees with specific expertise. (HRPA's current board has three external directors—a lawyer, a chartered accountant and an expert in nonprofit management.)

And although a board speaks with one voice, it is the combination of individual directors that gives each board its special personality. It is the group mind—made up of the unique perspectives, experiences and personalities of its individual members—that combines to accomplish great things.

HR's role on boards

I'm writing about boards and governance for two reasons: to highlight the important role HR professionals can play on boards and to encourage more HR professionals to serve on boards.

Many board responsibilities—defining core values, outlining roles and responsibilities, developing policies for things like conflict of interest or privacy, creating performance metrics—are things HR professionals do all the time. Yet HR is underrepresented on Canadian boards, many of which are made up entirely of industry professionals with little knowledge of organizational policies and procedures. Having more HR professionals on boards brings the expertise necessary to implement proper governance.

And there are big rewards to HR professionals considering serving on a board: working in collaboration with fellow board members who share your commitment while at the same time showing you a different way of looking at each issue; developing new and very transferable skills that can be used both professionally and personally; meeting and networking with a wide array of individuals; and, most important, helping to achieve something meaningful—making a difference.

Canadian organizations are faced with a bewildering array of future challenges, and many of them are human-resources related: retiring baby boomers, integrating internationally educated professionals, immigration, globalization, diversity in the workplace, work/life balance. The boards facing these kinds of pressures require the skills and expertise only HR professionals can provide.

It's time for human resources to step up and provide both the HR and governance know-how to help organizations succeed. **HR**

Daphne FitzGerald is chair of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

5 TIPS FOR BETTER HIRING

DETERMINING A JOB APPLICANT'S SKILLS FIT IS A SKILL IN ITSELF—AND ONE THAT RESEARCH SUGGESTS ISN'T SO EASY TO MASTER.

1. KNOW WHAT YOU WANT. DON'T JUST RECYCLE THE JOB DESCRIPTION YOU USED THE LAST TIME YOU FILLED A POSITION; CHANCES ARE THE ROLE HAS CHANGED. TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT YOUR NEEDS AND THE SKILLS YOU'D LIKE TO ADD TO YOUR TEAM. A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WILL HELP REDUCE THE NUMBER OF RESUMES YOU RECEIVE FROM UNQUALIFIED APPLICANTS.

2. LOOK FOR THE INTANGIBLES. A CANDIDATE'S SKILL SET IS NOT LIMITED TO FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES—IT ALSO INCLUDES HOW WELL HE OR SHE WORKS IN A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT. EMPLOYERS THAT DON'T TAKE SOFT SKILLS SUCH AS LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION INTO ACCOUNT MAY SET THEMSELVES UP FOR A BAD MATCH.

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

Service Canada

LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE ROE

ROE Web—the Record of Employment on the Web—is a secure, easy-to-use online application that allows you to create, submit, retrieve and amend 53-week ROEs on the Internet. ROE Web allows you to submit more than 1,000 ROEs at once with additional efficiencies by using compatible payroll software or your own data interface to exchange data with ROE Web.

An electronic ROE enables automation of EI claims, which results in faster service for your employees when they need it most. Employees with a My Service Canada Account can view and print copies of their ROEs.

Employers need to complete the registration form, which is available on the Service Canada website, and authorize a Primary Officer (PO) to administer ROE Web on behalf of your organization. Your PO must then visit a Service Canada Centre to have his or her identification validated (the PO must show two pieces of identification, one of which must have a photo). Within 20 business days, your PO will receive the activation code needed to log on and will then be able to enrol in ROE Web by accepting the online agreement.

For further information or to register, visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca/roeweb.

Performance Reviews

VIEWED AS CRITICAL IN EMPLOYEE CAREER PATHS

According to a recent survey, 91% of employees surveyed stated their performance reviews either met (79%) or exceeded (12%) their expectations; 66% said their reviews were customized to their position, 64% felt they were provided with valuable feedback, but only 56% were given a clear career path for the future.

Commitments made during a performance review must be fulfilled to maintain long-term employees. Thirty-two per cent of workers who are expecting a salary increase, promotion or bonus within a year said they would look for a new job if they did not receive one within the year—13% will definitely start looking and 19% will probably start looking. This was most prevalent among workers 18-24 years of age, had a household income of $40K or less, and/or had less than two years in their current position.

Source: Ceridian Canada and Harris Decima

Arthritis Costs Economy Billions

Arthritis directly affects the Canadian economy since the disease can result in disabilities that impede an individual's ability to fully participate in the workforce. Today, one in eight workers (11.93 per cent of the Canadian workforce) has Osteoarthritis and one in 136 workers has Rheumatoid Arthritis.

An Arthritis Alliance of Canada's report estimates that OA alone costs the Canadian economy $27.5 billion (in direct and indirect costs). That number is expected to more than double in the next 20 years. Add that to the $5.7 million (in direct and indirect costs) for RA and the total current cost of arthritis to the Canadian economy is $33.2 billion. These numbers will only grow.

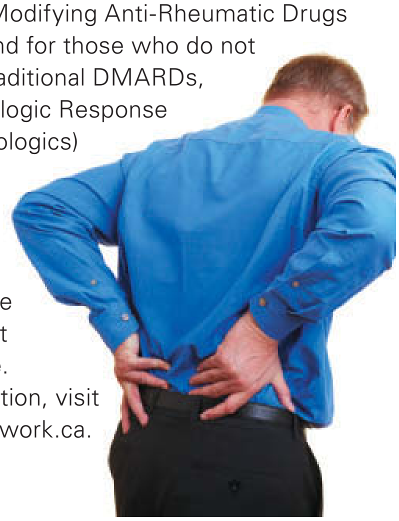
The report also finds that if potential interventions and strategies are implemented, it would not only result in significant direct and indirect cost savings of valuable health-care dollars, but also, and more importantly, reduce the burden and consequences of the disease for Canadians living with arthritis. Four potential targeted interventions are examined in the report: three for OA and one for RA.

Osteoarthritis

- Total Joint Replacement (TJR) intervention.
- Reduction of obesity rates in Canada.
- Adequate pain management strategies.

Rheumatoid arthritis

- Early diagnosis and treatment with cost-effective Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs (DMARDs) and for those who do not respond to traditional DMARDs, access to Biologic Response Modifiers (Biologics) for RA.



The four interventions identified in the report are only the beginning of what needs to be done. For more information, visit www.arthritisnetwork.ca.

HOW TO Make EI Fairer for All Canadians

The federal Employment Insurance (EI) program plays favourites among Canada's regions and sustains costly, long-lasting pockets of high unemployment, say the authors of a new report from the C.D. Howe Institute. In "Mending Canada's Employment Insurance Quilt: The Case for Restoring Equity," senior policy analyst Colin Busby and Professor David Gray say the EI program should be simplified, with nationwide standards for the number of hours of work needed to qualify for benefits, and for how long benefits should be received.

"The last recession made the inequity of the current regime glaringly obvious," according to David Gray, professor of economics at the University of Ottawa, "with the unemployed in Ontario's hard-hit manufacturing sector facing longer qualifying times and getting skimpier benefits than laid-off workers in other regions. Reform is overdue."

Currently, note the authors, laid-off workers in regions with high unemployment rates have easier access to long-lasting EI benefits than laid-off workers in regions with low unemployment rates. One main consequence is the creation and preservation of pockets of high, chronic unemployment in labour markets that are dominated by seasonal employment. The program slows or stops the adjustment process and deters people from moving to better opportunities, hindering cross-country convergence of wages and unemployment rates.

To view the report, visit www.cdhowe.org.

3. MAKE A PERSONAL CONNECTION. HIRING IS MORE THAN JUST IDENTIFYING A STRONG RÉSUMÉ OR PROFILE—IT INVOLVES HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH APPLICANTS TO ESTABLISH A RAPPORT. INTERVIEWS, FOR EXAMPLE, ALLOW YOU TO DELVE DEEPER INTO AN APPLICANT'S QUALIFICATIONS WHILE ALSO ASSESSING WHETHER HE OR SHE IS A FIT FOR YOUR CORPORATE CULTURE.

4. TAP ALL YOUR RESOURCES. THOUGH YOU MAY HAVE THE FINAL SAY, HIRING SHOULD NEVER BE A SOLO EFFORT. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU AT YOUR ORGANIZATION—FOR EXAMPLE, HUMAN RESOURCES CAN HELP WITH THE JOB DESCRIPTION, AND YOUR EMPLOYEES MAY BE ABLE TO OFFER REFERRALS.

5. WOO YOUR TOP CHOICES. IN ANY ECONOMY, PEOPLE IN HIGH-DEMAND SPECIALTIES COMMONLY HAVE MULTIPLE JOB OFFERS. YOU WILL NEED TO SHOW THEM WHY THEY SHOULD CHOOSE YOUR ORGANIZATION. SELL THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH YOUR FIRM, AND OFFER A COMPENSATION PACKAGE IN LINE WITH, OR IDEALLY ABOVE, MARKET RATES.

Source: Robert Half Finance & Accounting

ONTARIO MOL LAUNCHES ESA SPECIAL RULE TOOL

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR'S FIFTH ONLINE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS TOOL DELIVERS QUICK ACCESS TO IMPORTANT COMPLIANCE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT, 2000 (ESA). IF YOUR INDUSTRY OR OCCUPATION IS COVERED BY A SPECIAL RULE THAT ACCOMMODATES THE UNIQUE OR SPECIFIC CONDITIONS OF YOUR JOB OR BUSINESS, OR IF IT'S AN INDUSTRY EXEMPT FROM AN ESA STANDARD, THIS NEW TOOL WILL PROVIDE EASY-TO-ACCESS SUMMARIES TO HELP YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. TRY OUT THE TOOL AT WWW.LABOUR.GOV.ON.CA/ENGLISH.

Canadian Organizations Take Onboarding Beyond New Employee Orientation

A new Conference Board of Canada report, "Bringing New Hires Up to Speed: How Structured Onboarding Can Help," profiles five organizations—Molson Coors, Bayer Canada, Compass Group Canada, Capital Power and the Government of Saskatchewan—that have implemented unique and effective onboarding programs.

The report examines how organizations can make the most of their investment in people through the use of strategic onboarding. The report identifies five objectives for an onboarding program. A successful program should:

1. Acclimate the new hire to the organizational culture—In 2009, Molson Coors launched the Our Brew program, aimed at defining and communicating company values, culture and goals to new employees without using corporate language. It defines what the company is, where it is headed, and the meaning of success at Molson Coors to new employees.

2. Make use of technology where appropriate—At Bayer Canada (Toronto), all new employees receive log-in information for Hello Bayer, the organization's internal onboarding website. The site provides key orientation information and tools in one place, and gives new employees an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Bayer's culture right from the start. On the site, new employees can watch a welcome video, tour Bayer's head office, and obtain information about benefit programs.

3. Involve individuals outside the human resources function as well as those inside it—A key component of Compass Group Canada's onboarding program is a two-day orientation session held at the corporate headquarters. During this session, groups of new associates meet senior management, learn more about the organization and participate in team-building activities. All new employees participate in these sessions regardless of their geographic location.

4. Use metrics to align the onboarding process with business goals—Capital Power's onboarding measures its success against organizational objectives by tracking participant-satisfaction scores. In addition, Capital Power has plans to measure program success through a Learning Management System, post-program survey of new employee and managers, as well as tracking of turnover and time to productivity.

5. Use a phased approach—Onboarding at the Government of Saskatchewan begins before the new individual arrives and continues throughout the first year of employment. The onboarding process includes checklists for the pre-arrival, as well as the two week, three-month, six-month and one-year milestones.

Visit www.conferenceboard.ca to access the report.

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BY ALISON ADAM

AODA UPDATE
WHAT'S NEXT FOR ONTARIO EMPLOYERS

Over the past decade, concern about accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities has grown, culminating in the passage of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* ("AODA"). The goal of AODA is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in a number of key areas including customer service, employment, transportation and communication.

While AODA itself is not a new law, regulations made under AODA—the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (the "Customer Service Standard") and the new Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (the "Integrated Standard")—are ramping up employers' obligations to individuals with disabilities.

What to watch for now: Customer Service Standard

The Customer Service Standard was the first accessibility standard to come into effect under AODA. Compliance is required for private sector employers as of January 1, 2012.

> "**Compliance** deadlines under the **Integrated Standard** are staggered over the coming years and **vary** depending on the area and type of **organization**."

The Customer Service Standard applies to provincially regulated employers, with at least one employee in Ontario, that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties. The Customer Service Standard requirements apply not only to paid employees, but to every volunteer, agent, contractor or other person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the employer.

The major requirements of the Customer Service Standard include:

- establishing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities that are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity;
- ensuring that persons with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal or support person while accessing goods or services;

- providing notice to the public when experiencing a temporary disruption in service;
- establishing a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities; and
- providing training about providing goods and services to persons with a disability to every person who deals with the public or other third parties.

The Customer Service Standard also includes additional requirements, primarily relating to documentation, for employers with more than 20 employees. In addition, Section 14 of AODA requires those subject to an accessibility standard to file an annual compliance report with the government.

Employers not in compliance with the Customer Service Standard may face penalties, including an order requiring compliance within a specific period of time and financial penalties.

What's coming up next: Integrated Standard

The Integrated Standard, combining accessibility standards in three areas—information and communication, employment and transportation—came into force on July 1, 2011. Compliance deadlines under the Integrated Standard are staggered over the coming years and vary depending on the area and the type of organization.

The Integrated Standard sets out certain general standards that include requirements that employers develop, implement and maintain policies on how they will achieve accessibility in accordance with the regulation, and that employers prepare a multi-year accessibility plan addressing how they intend to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. Compliance timelines for these general standards range from January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2016 depending on the specific standard and the type of employer.

Of particular interest in the Integrated Accessibility Standard are the standards relating to employment. Interestingly, unlike the Customer Service Standard, the employment standards apply only to the employment of individuals and not to volunteers or other "non-paid" individuals. However, "employee" is not defined in the Integrated Accessibility Standard and it is unclear whether it will be interpreted broadly to include dependent and independent contractors.

The employment standards include extensive new requirements that include the following obligations for employers:

- Accommodating persons with disabilities during the recruitment process.
- Informing employees about the employer's policies on accommodation of employees with a disability.
- Providing individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation.
- Developing documented individual accommodation plans for disabled employees.
- Taking into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities during performance management, and career development and advancement.

The deadlines for compliance with the employment standards range from January 1, 2014 for large designated public sector organizations to January 1, 2017 for small private and not-for-profit organizations. The Ontario government has indicated that it plans to work with employers and provide resources, including online tools and resources, to assist employers in the implementation of AODA and the regulations.

As private sector employers were required to comply with the Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2012, employers should ensure that they have met their obligations. Going forward, employers will need to determine which standards and compliance deadlines contained in the Integrated Standard apply to them and consider how they intend to implement their obligations. **HR**

Alison Adam is an associate with Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP where she represents employers in all areas of labour and employment law.

BY JOCELYN BÉRARD

DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

The pace of baby boomers retiring from organizations has not been the expected tsunami-like mass exodus—but more of a slower undercurrent. Consequently, many organizations have been addressing succession management only sporadically, perhaps as an occasional topic on the agenda of an executive group meeting. As today's leaders gradually turn into tomorrow's retirees, many companies may find themselves completely unprepared; like the frog who didn't notice the water in which it was swimming in was slowly heating to a boil. In the not too far future, the need for "ready leaders" will be at a steady boiling point.

Though the applied practices of succession management are fairly new and underdeveloped, by employing them, talent management professionals can take advantage of great opportunities to impact the future supply of leaders. As retirement rates accelerate, we need to invest in our succession management practices now to truly and properly develop future leaders.

High-Potential Leaders: Pinpointing the Factors

A key part of the succession management process (Figure 1) is identifying high-potential leaders, though doing so can raise many challenging questions. What is potential, exactly, and what is the difference between potential and performance? How can leaders consistently determine potential? Surely the criteria for measuring leadership potential would vary among those rating it.

Figure 1

SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

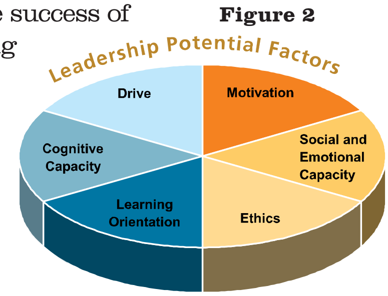
Create Succession Blueprint → Document Success Profile → Identify High-Potential Candidates → Diagnose Development Needs → Prescribe Development Solutions → Ensure and Review Development

To ensure your succession management process has value, the raters of leadership potential must agree on what they are measuring and how to measure it. Consistency, or inter-rater reliability, is key.

To predict and rate leadership potential objectively and consistently, leaders need to assess their candidates against a standardized, reliable set of leadership potential factors—the qualities, traits, or personal characteristics that underlie demonstration of leadership competence and success. You must be able to compare and contrast various high-potential leaders based on the same set of factors.

Global Knowledge researched the concept of high potential, not only to define it more specifically, but also to develop solid and rigorous practices and tools to better identify high-potential leaders. Our research, experience with clients and discussions with practitioners led us to isolate six factors (see Figure 2) that predict the success of future leaders. By keeping the number of factors to six, we streamline the process and make it easier for the leaders to assess high potentials.

Figure 2



Create Personalized Development Plans

Identifying the best high-potential athletes does not make them ready for the Olympics. Similarly, identifying your organization's high-potential leaders is only one of the steps needed to set your company in the right direction. You must define activities that will accelerate their development and get them ready to lead.

To do that effectively, you must identify what each high-potential leader is missing. A "Success Profile" must be developed—that is, determine what it takes to be successful in the targeted positions. Consider the competencies, knowledge, work experience/job challenges, personal attributes and motivation required for success. Work experience/job challenges are defined as the kinds of situations that a leader should have experienced. Knowledge is the degree of understanding that a director or executive must have about how the organization operates, including functions, processes, systems and services.

Once you've defined and documented the Success Profile, perform a comprehensive diagnostic to determine the strengths and development needs of the high-potential candidates in each category. Such an assessment allows a personalized and effective development plan.

How do you accelerate the development of people who are already too busy? A simple methodology encompasses two key principles: focus on a few critical and unique development needs and leverage learning-by-experience as much as possible. Since the diagnostic allows you to find out what is critical and missing for high-potential leader X, which is probably quite different than for high-potential leader Y, limit the one-size-fits-all solutions. Focused development means less wasted time, maximizing effort and investment.

Formal training is helpful and necessary. Still, if we assume that we learn 10 per cent from formal education, 20 per cent from others, and 70 per cent by doing, using work experience and job challenges as a way to grow the high-potential leaders makes a huge difference. Select appropriate projects, assignments, tasks, committee memberships, then pair your high-potential leaders with key stakeholders.

From Confusion to Acceleration

Though executives discuss the notion of leadership high potential, it is still a fairly young concept that can be confusing, leading to little consensus and output. Some rigour in its definition and improved consistency in its utilization yield better results. Using leadership potential factors also brings better predictability.

The work is far from being complete after high-potential leaders are identified. Accelerating their development is the most valuable contribution to preparing them for succession. The ultimate measure of a succession management process is not simply a list of names—it is a pool of ready leaders who have the competencies, experience, knowledge and personal attributes required to achieve today's and tomorrow's organizational business objectives. HR

Jocelyn Bérard, M.Ps. MBA, is vice-president, leadership and business solutions-international, with Global Knowledge. Contact him at Jocelyn.Berard@globalknowledge.com or 416-964-8688, ext. 2323. Global Knowledge is a worldwide leader in IT, business and leadership skills advancement. Global maintains offices in 23 countries, servicing over 250,000 clients globally. With over 25 years of experience in corporate training and talent management solutions, Global Knowledge is proud to be recognized as an industry leader.

CASTING A WIDER NET: HIRING INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED WORKERS

The considerations and benefits of adding skilled foreign workers to your team

BY MELISSA CAMPEAU

Imagine your organization needs to hire a skilled professional to fill a vacancy. Now imagine you've spent months hunting for the right candidate and you're still missing that one essential employee. With an aging Canadian population, this isn't an unusual situation at all. In many sectors, hiring managers are finding it increasingly difficult to secure qualified candidates for vacant positions, so they're casting a net beyond the traditional talent pool to include internationally educated professionals (newly arrived immigrants and foreigners recruited into specific jobs).

The majority of new immigrants to this country are well educated. Some 23 per cent of Canadians are foreign born, but when it comes to post-graduate degrees, 49 per cent of doctorate holders and 40 per cent of those with a master's degree were born outside Canada. Despite this, internationally trained workers face significant barriers to entry, including cultural differences, challenges communicating, a lack of networking opportunities and a lack of Canadian work experience. Employers who understand these challenges and work to resolve them during recruiting and retention activities are better poised to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce.

THE BUSINESS CASE

Whether a company hires a permanent resident into a long-term position or a skilled foreign worker with a temporary work visa into a short-term position, there are tangible benefits.

"We've been working with employers for the last eight years and trying to understand, deeply, the business case," says Elizabeth McIsaac, executive director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). In principal, she says, it's understood that hiring internationally trained workers leads to innovation and greater creativity, and those can result in greater prosperity. "On a much more practical, tangible level," says McIsaac, "immigrants are very often positioned to be able to open doors to global markets and in a diverse city like Toronto, they're able to open doors to local markets."

In the spring of 2011, a TRIEC-commissioned survey asked a random sampling of 462 employers about their experiences with recently hired skilled immigrants. Of those who said they had hired a skilled immigrant to help open up new local markets, 84 per cent felt it had been effective. Of those who had hired a skilled immigrant to help open up global markets, a whopping 94 per cent said it had been effective. Clearly, this is a business strategy that can work.

TEMPORARY WORKERS AND PERMANENT RESIDENTS

When a company has a vacancy, there are two ways a skilled foreign worker might land the job. He or she may have been granted entry into Canada as a permanent resident and can therefore apply alongside Canadian candidates. In this case, the potential technical challenges of hiring an international worker are next to nil, although cultural challenges may still arise. The second situation involves a person born somewhere other than Canada, in possession of a temporary work permit, granted by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Service Canada.

In the second scenario, an employer must apply to HRSDC for a Labour Market Opinion (LMO), demonstrating that an effort was made to locate a qualified Canadian candidate and none was found (*see box at left*). If the employer receives a governmental green light, the potential employee must then go to a Canadian consulate and apply for a temporary work permit.

"The whole process [of getting a favourable LMO] has tightened up over the last few years, largely due to economic circumstances in North America," says lawyer Paul Brace, partner at Miller Thomson's Markham, ON office. For many job categories, favourable LMOs are hard to come by. "It has to be a position that is truly unique, that requires a high level of skill, and where there is a shortage in Canada."

He adds that it's not guaranteed a foreign worker can get his hands on a work permit quickly. "There are long delays in processing these applications for people from certain countries," says Brace. In some cities in India, for example, Canadian consulates are so backlogged with applications that potential workers can expect to wait upwards of two years to get a work permit.

TECHNICAL HAZARDS

When applying for an LMO, an employer should ensure the recruited foreign workers are not being paid less than the typical wage for that job in that area. "The government is very concerned about employers hiring 'cheap foreign labour,'" says Helen Park, a lawyer at Vancouver office of Ackah Business Immigration. "That's one of the factors Service Canada looks at closely when evaluating Labour Market Opinions, to ensure foreign workers are not undercutting the wages of local Canadians and permanent residents."

It's also important to work with good, reputable recruitment agencies. "There are numerous horror stories of foreign nationals who pay hefty recruitment fees to agencies abroad to get placements for positions in Canada," says Park. Since employment laws prevent workers for paying for recruitment fees, this could lead to trouble for all parties.

WHEN TEMPORARY BECOMES PERMANENT

If an employer wants a temporary foreign worker to become a

ABCS OF LMOS

Getting a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Service Canada is a must for an employer wanting to hire a temporary foreign worker. There are four major steps to completing the process:

1. Submit an application for a Labour Market Opinion to the Service Canada centre responsible for processing applications.
2. Employers using a third-party representative must complete the Annex to the Appointment of Representative form and send it with the LMO application.
3. Once HRSDC/Service Canada approves the job offer, send a copy of the HRSDC/Service Canada LMO confirmation letter to the foreign worker.
4. Inform the foreign worker to apply for a work permit from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Learn more by visiting www.hrsdc.gc.ca/ and clicking on the "Temporary foreign worker program" link.

permanent employee+, and the employee wants to stay in Canada, the employee can then apply for permanent residence in Canada in something called the Canadian Experience Class. "That is the optimal route for someone who comes here on a work permit and hopes to stay here," says Brace.

While the chances of acquiring permanent residence status under this category are better than under many others, "employers need to consider the costs and the timing for permanent residence applications," notes Park. "Processing time frames can range from under one year to more than two or even three years in certain categories."

It's worth remembering government authorities can request employers provide proof of compliance with any and all regulations when it comes to employing foreign workers. Because of this, it's wise to keep diligent records of payroll details, letters of offers, hours worked, medical or health benefit payments and receipts for payment of expenses (including travel expenses to come to Canada).

FOR THE NEWLY HIRED FOREIGN WORKER

When international workers come on board, a broad orientation—one that goes beyond job expectations and covers organizational cultural norms—can help ease a difficult transition. Managers are advised to explain not only the written rules, but the unwritten rules, says Renée Bazile-Jones, president of Unparalled Inc., a Toronto-based HR consulting firm specializing in diversity issues.

"If you think about your own experience as a new employee, the difference between written and unwritten rules can make you feel inept for the first few months of your employment and can make others question your abilities simply because no one took the time to bridge the gap," says Bazile-Jones. These might include expectations about behaviour in a Canadian context, gender equality the definition of harassment, and so on—any cultural workplace norms that are assumptions for Canadian-born employees.

In addition, if skilled foreign workers have close family members in Canada, it's important to remember that these individuals represent most—or all—of the worker's social network. Bazile-Jones suggests offering orientation for the entire family, to ensure they can find essential services in their own community.

To foster further support from co-workers and help acclimatization, Bazile-Jones suggests encouraging the employee to share as much as possible with colleagues. This might include social discussions or professional information sharing including new ways of doing things. Sparking workplace dialogue will help foster a team dynamic. "Two-way communication will lessen the potential for outsider versus insider feelings, which could have a negative impact on performance and engagement," says Bazile-Jones.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

While effective communication can be a challenge for many internationally trained workers, it's often in an employer's best interest to assist with communication and language skill development. "I was in a meeting with a company that hires a lot of engineers," says TRIEC's McIsaac, "and they told me about a fantastic employee with amazing skills, who had a really difficult time being understood by people." The company decided to invest in communications training for him. "Now he's one of their leaders," says McIsaac.

It all comes down to an employer's willingness to take a chance and offer someone their first Canadian job. While there's some element of risk to this, admits McIsaac, she contends there's a much greater value proposition at stake.

"When you're looking to add people to your team that are going to add value, that are going to be risk takers, immigrants have already taken that big risk [by coming to Canada]," says McIsaac. "They've demonstrated courage and an ability to rise to challenges. That's someone you want to take a look at." **HR**

ALTERNATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

Employers may be wary of hiring someone whose training and experience is unfamiliar. But relatively risk-free, win-win engagements are possible between employers and recently arrived permanent residents, thanks to a growing number of mentoring and internship programs.

Organizations such as Career Edge help place internationally trained permanent residents in internship programs, providing a first Canadian work experience (something many employers require before they will hire). Rather than a typical junior internship, these are mid-career level internships and in many cases lead to permanent employment with the involved company.

TRIEC and similar organizations across the country offer mentoring programs for permanent residents in search of first Canadian work experiences. Recognizing that those new to Canada may not have a network in place to help with the job search, the TRIEC program matches the immigrant with a professional peer. Over four months, the matched pair meet to help the immigrant with such challenges as navigating a job search, learning to market themselves in Canada, and developing a network of contacts. Immigrants get a leg-up on breaking into the labour market and volunteers broaden their understanding of international experiences and perspectives. "HR Managers see it as a leadership development opportunity for their high potential staff to develop cross-cultural competence," says TRIEC's McIsaac.

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MAPLE LEAF FOODS: BUILDING A PEOPLE STRATEGY TO ALIGN WITH BUSINESS NEEDS

BY JENNIFER CAMPBELL

The headlines in late October 2011 read: "Maple Leaf Foods closes plants, cuts 1,550 jobs," the *Toronto Star* wrote. "460 jobs to be cut at Moncton Maple Leaf Foods," CBC.ca announced. The *Globe and Mail* summed it up this way: "Maple Leaf to cut jobs, close plants in sweeping overhaul."

It's an announcement no company likes to make. Yet, sometimes corporate repositioning and the accompanying job losses such as those announced by Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) herald plans to move the organization into a more secure and competitive future.

This was the future president and CEO Michael McCain envisioned when he said at the time of the announcement that the company was creating "a highly efficient, world-class production and distribution network that will markedly increase our competitiveness and close the cost gap with our U.S. peers."

Even so, these distribution network changes represent just one element of what MLF calls its "comprehensive value-creation business strategy." The other elements of the strategy focus on driving market share through strong brands and innovation. As a marketing organization that manufactures its own products, Maple Leaf is setting a path to excel on both sides of the equation.

ALIGNING PEOPLE STRATEGY WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

Clearly, one of the keys to ensuring the success of MLF's business strategy will be how the company uses and develops one of its critical assets: its people.

In January 2011, the company coaxed one of Canada's top HR professionals out of retirement to take on the task of aligning the restructuring plan with a people plan. Les Dakens, who was previously senior vice-president in charge of "people" at CN Rail, and before that worked with companies such as Cadbury Beverages, H.J. Heinz and Nortel, became MLF's senior vice-president and chief human resources officer. Right out of the gate, he identified the need to design and implement a new people strategy and began working with Cheryl Fullerton, the company's director of HR transformation, to tackle the project.

Fullerton and Dakens began the project some 11 years after the company's previous people strategy came into force. That plan had created an enduring foundation —the Maple Leaf Leadership Edge defined a strong, values-based culture with some industry leading practices, such as its performance assessment and development process.

"It was a well thought-through strategy and one that was well executed," Fullerton says. "But it had been a long time since it was launched and we were ready for a refocusing. With this new business strategy, it was time to refresh it."

The project began in earnest. A team scoped it out in February and hit the ground running in March. Between March and June, they did an enormous amount of research, Fullerton says, to figure out the areas on which to focus and how to answer key questions.

LES DAKENS

CHERYL FULLERTON

"What people strategies will have the biggest impact in driving business success? What initiatives are we going to implement in order to drive that strategy?" Fullerton explains. "How do we sequence that over the next couple of years? What resources will it take, what will it cost the organization? That's when we had to really drill down deep."

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The team undertaking the revamp included members of the HR Council, which is made up of HR leaders from the half-dozen business units, along with the corporate HR leaders. Fullerton, as the lead, identified a small working group to provide counsel and decisions on key elements. To be inclusive, the full HR Council was regularly updated on progress, and involved in providing input on behalf of their business units all along the way.

In other words, HR has a seat on many of the company's key groups. For instance, Fullerton is a member of the MLF Marketing Council, providing input on the people resources needed to implement the marketing plans. Or, taking away from the meetings what HR needs to do to help marketing fulfill its mandate.

Direction and coaching was provided throughout the project from the company's corporate strategy group, which is made up of a small, talented set of visionaries who are responsible for developing the company's business strategy as a whole.

"They're the internal consulting group for strategic projects," Fullerton says. "They have great strategic-thinking capabilities that they bring to any area of the business going through a strategy planning exercise."

The deep-drilling Fullerton mentioned above took place when her team started consulting staff about what they wanted from the new strategy. Dakens met with a full three-quarters of the senior leaders, while Fullerton had one-on-one conversations with all executives. She also surveyed and got feedback from the entire HR team. They also incorporated information from employee engagement surveys from the salaried group and those paid by the hour.

"We have a standing process to collect feedback through engagement surveys," Fullerton notes. "From those, we got a lot of information about the drivers of engagement and strong messages about how important alignment to the overall business is to them—and how important leadership is."

External research was also conducted, including in-depth interviews with a number of other organizations, to gain perspective on their integration of people and business strategy, and their best-practices.

Getting alignment between the overall business strategy, the HR strategy and the various business units and functional strategies was the biggest challenge in the project, Fullerton says. "It is a complex situation, and involved a lot of conversations with a lot of people," she notes.

"Think of six or seven different businesses and trying to get them all aligned," Dakens adds. "That requires some finesse. What was most valuable there was spending time answering questions and talking about what we were trying to accomplish and what impact it would have on the organization."

Final approval on the strategy came in September, though Dakens notes that they could have completed it a month earlier but were delayed somewhat over the summer months due to vacations.

Getting buy-in from the C-suite leaders wasn't a problem, Fullerton says, because the nature of the MLF approval process meant that group was involved, or at least informed, every step of the way.

When it comes to employee buy-in to the new people strategy, it's hard to assess but, Fullerton feels they would approve. Dakens agrees.

"We know what they're looking for and I think over time, they'll say that things have changed, have gotten better," Dakens says. "That's the mark."

ENGAGING PLANT EMPLOYEES

In the past, Maple Leaf's HR efforts have placed a heavy emphasis on developing leadership in the company, Fullerton says, but not necessarily touching the people in the plants. The new people strategy has a strong emphasis on increasing engagement for this group of employees. The distribution network changes driven by the business strategy highlighted this need.

"We have good leaders in our plants, and we will be helping them get even better by improving their ability to communicate with and motivate employees on the plant floor," Dakens says. "A big part of the strategy is engaging the 75 per cent of employees who work in our plants."

The people strategy includes training on behaviour-based leadership with ongoing coaching on this learning for managers in the plants. This is more than a training program, since the managers will immediately apply the concepts to business improvement projects. Success of the learning will be measured directly by success of the improvement projects.

Fullerton says the new plan also has a much greater emphasis on communication with the plant employees—communication about the business, how it operates and how they fit into it. This communication effort is targeted to secure alignment with the organization as a whole, and to strengthen the leadership of those who are managing plant workers on a daily basis. In short, the people-management strategy has to drive the growth outlined in the business strategy. "It's the leadership style that's going to drive us to that commercial success," she says.

Dakens referred to the project as that of a $5-billion company that's ratcheting itself up on both the commercial and manufacturing sides over three to four years. "So that's a lot of change," he says.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Implementation of the strategy will be phased in over three years. There are 25 key initiatives to implement, with another 15 or so sub-initiatives. The team has defined individuals within HR and among executives outside HR to co-champion the initiatives, along with dedicated project leaders who will be accountable for implementing change.

When it comes to evaluating the plan's success, they will track progress for each initiative with performance metrics directly tied to the strategy. One example is to measure the "management internal fill rate." Today, one in every two management position openings is filled from outside the organization. In the future, they want to fill these positions internally 70 per cent of the time.

"If you do a good job of developing your talent, it's a deeper supply talent stream you have to play with. But if you don't, you're always going to be [limited] in people's ability and flexibility to move to new positions in the company," says Fullerton. Similarly, retention rates for high-performing employees will be tracked and the goal is a 95 per cent retention rate with the brightest.

After all that work, Fullerton and her colleagues are keen to get started. "The HR team is extremely energized by having a plan and having a vision," she says. "For anybody, it's very engaging to understand how you fit into the organization and how you can have the biggest impact." **HR**


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BY SCOTT BURY

ATS: CAN YOU RELY ON SOFTWARE TO FIND THE PERFECT JOB CANDIDATE?

YOUR APPLICANT TRACKING SOFTWARE MAY BE KEEPING THE BEST EMPLOYEES OUT OF YOUR FIRM

Applicant tracking systems, or ATS, have become popular among large organizations with thousands of employees, and with smaller firms that may only have one or two HR professionals for all the HR tasks, in addition to screening job applications. But they tend to screen out groups of potentially valuable applicants who don't know how to prepare an application that will get through the ATS filters.

"Applicant tracking systems have an unintended impact on immigrants—when a person first arrives in Canada, they often don't understand how recruitment works in Canada, and don't understand that the way to apply for jobs online is to put keywords from the posting itself into your application letter and résumé," explains Michael Bach, director of diversity, equity and inclusion at KPMG Management Services in Toronto. "They often don't understand that there is not another person at the other end of the application process."

Aboriginal Canadians and people in remote and northern towns, who have limited access to computers and the Internet, are also disadvantaged by an ATS, Bach says. Also, "a lack of Canadian experience often excludes some groups of applications from being considered for jobs."

An employer that relies only on its ATS may miss an applicant who has great job skills, but doesn't know how modern recruiting and screening systems are based on keyword searches. An ATS is also only as good as the job descriptions in the database and the keywords that the system searches for.

ATS: looking for hidden gems

But, according to ATS suppliers and supporters, applicant training systems *can* look for unusual skill sets, or experience gained outside Canada. For instance, Hireground's Corporate Solution ATS compares applications to a matrix of job skills, selected by the employer/software user. The company provides templates for these matrices, which the user can adapt. In addition to résumés that arrive by email or webpage, the system can also handle hard-copy and faxed applications. It scores applications and delivers the top matches to the user.

"It uses a semantic search, similar to Google," explains Hireground's marketing coordinator Todd Palmer. "It weeds out people who apply to every job."

CVManager is a web-based talent management as well as applicant tracking system. It's a database system that integrates into enterprise systems and websites, and the company claims it's able to uncover "rare gems"—even among passive job applicants. It posts open job descriptions on the user's own website or portal, and automatically posts them on more than 300 external employment and educational job posting sites.

Reaching out to a wider world

"That's not really a new problem or different from manually sorting job applications," says Palmer of Hireground. "If someone puts together a poor résumé or doesn't know how to show his skills or experience, that application will get screened out."

Michael Bach agrees that the software is not the problem. "A lot of work went into developing and installing ATS, and it's not a matter of tweaking them." The solution, he says, is not to depend only on computerized systems to find the employees that you need.

Bach recommends that employers reach out to underrepresented groups: working with community organizations, for example, they can show applicants how to prepare cover letters and résumés that contain keywords that will be recognized by an ATS.

"Every employer has their own avenue for recruiting talent: career fairs, open houses, campus recruiting events. These can be particularly challenging for smaller organizations, but employers are not just waiting for good people to come to them," says Bach. "This kind of personal touch goes beyond the capabilities of an ATS." **HR**

Scott Bury is an Ottawa-based freelance writer who can be contacted at www.writtenword.ca.


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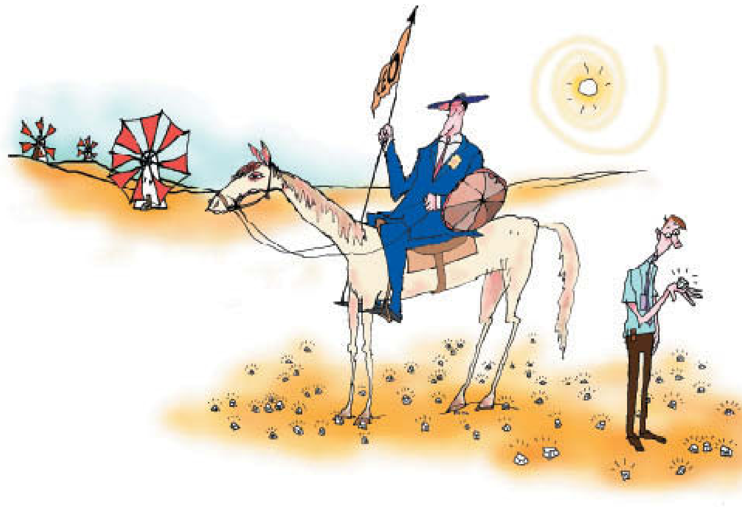
 BY IAN TURNER

IMPROVE THE BOTTOM LINE BY DEVELOPING THE FRONT LINE



In our fast-changing business world, many companies are downsizing, right-sizing and in some cases even capsizing. The impact on the bottom line has never been more focused. Our customers want better quality products or services, they want them now and they want them for a very low cost—or they'll go to some other provider who WILL meet their needs.

Adapting to change has always been a difficult thing for us to comprehend. Some people love change, others hate it. In our present world, technology has been rocketing along at such breakneck speeds, people and companies struggle to keep up. Roles in the home and workplace are changing quickly too, time (or lack of it) is becoming a major issue for many. People are commuting for longer periods and their frustration comes bubbling to the surface in many situations. Stress levels have never been higher. People are trying to juggle too many activities in too little time.

Because everyone is so busy, making time for front-line employee training is not usually one of the top priorities of management. Note I say *making* time: we have to *make* the time or it won't get done. The training doesn't have to be periods of long duration. In fact, the best training is done in small chunks or modules and should have some method of testing for comprehension and transfer of knowledge built in to each training session.

Developing front-line employees links back to one of the most basic laws of business management: the law of sowing and reaping. In the words of consultant/coach Brian Tracy, *Everything happens for a reason, for every effect, there is a specific cause.* It is also important to be careful what seeds we plant—if we plant the wrong ones we may not be too happy with the results.

None of your staff ever arrives at work and says, "I'm going to have a bad day" or, "today I'm going to make mistakes." Mistakes and errors happen with all of us; however, with some basic training, repeated errors can be reduced or eliminated (if they are not, then you have another problem). As supervisors and managers, we must take ALL of the responsibility to ensure training is being done.

Mining the "diamonds in the rough"

If you want to know what needs to be changed in your organization, don't ask the employee, ask their spouse. Isn't it strange that most of the front-line employees in your company have no trouble telling their spouses, friends or parents what is wrong in their workplace? They make statements like, "If it was my company, I'd do things differently". The truth is, they're probably right, they *would* do things differently.

So, why don't they just tell their boss what the problems are? That seems like the quick and easy fix. For some that may be okay. For others though, it may seem like they're "rocking the boat" and don't want any backlash for challenging the established system.

We shouldn't ignore this valuable resource. In 1898, author and lecturer, Russell H. Conwell wrote the inspirational lecture, "Acres of Diamonds." It is the story of a man who wanted to find diamonds so badly that he sold his property and went off in futile search for them; the new owner of his home discovered that a rich diamond mine was located right there on the property.

Front-line employees are our diamonds in the rough, and we do have many of them. If only we could learn to recognize, harness and direct this power. Front-line employees know when things are going off track, they are typically closest to the customer and hear the likes and dislikes first-hand. Front-line employees also know where the organization is wasting money. Yet, back to what I said previously, this is the sort of information they will tell their spouse. You'll never get the opportunity to ask their spouse and you just know the spouse will never call to tell you. However, front-line employees are more than willing to tell you exactly what all of these things are if you ask them the right way. Tapping into this valuable resource is not a difficult thing to do; it just needs a little time on your part and some real follow-through on the issues identified or discussed.

Simple, easy-to-use tool

When Conwell was delivering one of his "Acres of Diamonds" lectures or speeches, he always planned to arrive in the town or city a day or two early. During this time, he met with the postmaster, the barber, the keeper of the hotel, the principals of the schools and the ministers of some of the churches. Then he would go to some of the factories and stores and talk with the managers and workers. This gave him a brief, but good understanding of the local conditions and issues. With every individual and group, he asked the same questions, what opportunities they had, and what they had failed to do. Every town fails to do something, so later when he delivered his lecture or speech, he could talk about local conditions and issues.

We can learn from this approach by using a common and easy-to-use tool, the SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). This easy exercise can be done with almost any size of group. Try it with your front-line employees. On the first pass, each category is listed without discussion or criticism.

1 First list the Strengths:

What are we good at?

What do clients see as our strengths?

What are our competitive advantages?

2 Then list the Weaknesses:

What do we do badly?

What needs to be changed or improved?

What do we lack?

3 For the Opportunities list:

What positive results could be achieved if we improved some of those weaknesses?

What demographic changes are happening that we could take advantage of?

Are we leveraging technology?

4 Finally, list the Threats:

What has changed in our marketplace?

What are our competitors doing?

What could happen if we DON'T make those changes?

Once the lists are complete, a second round of discussion helps narrow-down the items to be worked on. Small group discussions can follow with the four categories. If you don't currently do any of this, you'll be amazed at how much data is mined from this type of activity in such a short time.

One of the secrets to the success of a SWOT analysis is timely feedback. Reviewing the lists of items a few weeks later and hearing the status of the ones requiring action encourages even more feedback. It also provides an opportunity to clarify and change corrective actions. One of the most important and least used aspects of the feedback sessions is providing an opportunity to celebrate and recognize individual and group contributions and successes. The SWOT should be conducted periodically and the progress tracked.

Many of the experts you seek to run your business already work for your organization, they are your front-line employees. You already have "Acres of Diamonds" just waiting to be discovered, coached and trained. HR

Ian Turner is the principal of Courtice, ON-based Front Line Performance, which designs and delivers training workshops to improve the performance and personal productivity of front line employees. For more information, visit www.frontlineperformance.com.

 BY STEPHANIE MESSIER

SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING DIFFERENT C-SUITE AGENDAS

If you've had the opportunity to lead the HR function for an organization, the following scenarios will sound familiar:

- Your Audit Committee has mandated that you implement a specific compliance policy but your president won't endorse it because he simply doesn't see the fit with his organization.
- Your Canadian CEO does not agree with an HR program your dotted-line, U.S.-based SVP of HR is requesting you to implement for global consistency.
- Finance told you to cut back on training and development expenses, while your president is promoting employee development at your next all-employees' meeting.

As HR practitioners, we know that HR needs to be strategically aligned with the organization because it's where we can provide the most value. However, navigating through the various agendas and having to mediate our way through them is a time-consuming task that HR leaders often overlook when they craft their HR strategy.

While navigating the nebulous needs and wants of the other functions, the rest of the organization often wonders, where is HR and what do they do? The time spent in matching different philosophies is valuable time injected into a never-ending negotiation. Being successful at it is a valuable skill. Some call it being politically astute. Others call it personality conflicts. I call it the reality of being an HR leader.

You often dread the next meeting or conference call because you will be the messenger telling the other party that the idea wasn't accepted, or there is a delay in the implementation of a U.S.-driven program because the Canadian leadership team is not buying into it.

Corina Sibley, former NBC Universal HR leader at GE Canada, lived this reality with her Canadian team and the two (NBC in New York and Universal Studios in Los Angeles) south of the border. Managing the various agendas in a complex post-acquisition environment proved to be a critical part of her role.

"A lot of my time was spent being the liaison between them, and understanding the various agendas of, the leadership team in Canada, the GE Canada HR team and the HR departments at both NBC and Universal," Sibley says. "When a new program or policy needed to be rolled out, regardless of its origin, it was really a change management effort from start to finish. And that's not work that is tangible to many employees, or even to the leadership teams themselves."

How do you get this seemingly neverending vicious cycle resolved?

- Get all the parties in the same meeting room or on a conference call and facilitate the meeting. The facilitation will give you great power to mediate the resolution of the conflict and by doing so, will also increase your visibility as a leader. As simple as this solution is, it is often the last thing on our minds because of the multiple priorities and other conflicts that an HR leader must deal with.
- Remove yourself from the conflict for some time to get better clarity regarding the issues. When we are too close to a situation, we can easily lose sight of what needs to be resolved.
- Revisit your HR plan. Is the initiative in question being debated as part of your strategy? If not, and you ensured that the key stakeholders originally had a say in your finalized strategy, perhaps asking them the question of where this fits in that strategy may be useful. If not, inquiring about the need of the initiative at this point in time may resolve the conflict.
- Ask questions to understand the resistance from one party and the push from the other one. The pull and push may occur because of something as intricate as a strong belief or ego, or as simple as a miscommunication. Getting to the root cause of it by asking the right questions will help resolve the problem.
- Bounce your ideas off a trusted senior mentor to make sure you are not the one potentially causing the issue yourself.

In the end, there may still be resistance but at least you will be at the front end of it, not in the middle, and you can bring more clarity to it and hopefully find a simple solution. **HR**

Stephanie Messier, CHRP, is the managing director of HR à la carte, www.hralacarte.ca.

INTERVIEW WITH AN HR HERO

BY STEPHEN MURDOCH

SANDI HORNER: PURSUING HER PASSION FOR HR … AND HOCKEY

For many Canadians, the sport of hockey runs deep through their veins. For Sandi Horner it is not only her passion, but also her livelihood. For 19 years, the human resources veteran has been walking the hallowed halls of the Scotiabank Place in Ottawa plying her skills to advance the interests of the hockey club off the ice. As director of people dpartment at Senators Sports & Entertainment, Horner gets to live out her childhood dream of working for a National Hockey League (NHL) team. Although her dreams of playing on the ice may not have come to fruition, Horner's excitement for the sport led to another opportunity with one of Canada's most storied sports franchises.

HRP: How did you become involved with a hockey team?

SH: Since I was a little girl, I have always been excited about the game of hockey. From a young

"I **encourage** those **individuals** to find a position that they are **passionate** about and an **organization** that supports their own **ideals**."

IN A NUTSHELL

First Job: Worked as a bookkeeper at an automotive garage in Toronto.

Childhood ambition: To be a goalie in the National Hockey League.

Next move/book/job/goal/ambition: My next goal is to do a half marathon in under two hours and a 10k in 50 minutes.

Favourite book: My most recent favorite book for entertainment reading would be *Sarah's Key*. It was a compelling book, teaching history from perspective of a child.

Source of current inspiration/motivation: The quest for the Stanley Cup.

Best piece of advice I ever received: How to cook a turkey. Honestly, I was hosting a family Christmas dinner three years ago for 32 people, and didn't know how to cook a turkey. One of the chefs at Scotiabank Place provided me with invaluable knowledge. That being, always brine and cook the turkey upside-down. I have managed to cook great turkeys over the last three years by following his advice.

age, I vowed to be a goaltender in the NHL. I was fortunate to join the team in 1992 and have held several positions in both payroll and human resources. I am still involved in the game of hockey, but on the other side of the boards.

HRP: Was the move into human resources a natural transition?

SH: For me, the move to a dedicated human resources role made sense. Being with the Senators in the capacity of payroll supervisor since the first season, I was well aware of the challenges and opportunities facing the team from a human resources perspective. At the time I stepped into the role, the department was still in its infancy. Without an official human resources department in place, there was a learning curve for the entire team. It was imperative to provide consistency, direction and ensure equality across several departments.

HRP: What are your main areas of responsibility?

SH: During a regular day, my main focus is to strengthen the role of human resources as a partner to the other business leaders. I also work to develop and implement strategic business plans for the human resources areas. On a broader level, I feel my role is to create an experience for fans of the team. Our ultimate goals is to create raving fans. From the moment they walk into the Scotiabank Place to the time they make their way to the exits, we want our fans to feel like they spent their entertainment dollars wisely.

HRP: You still seem excited about going into work.

SH: The best part of my job is that no two days are ever the same, as there is always a demand to complete different deliverables. Constantly changing priorities keep my work exciting and challenging. As a human resources professional, I love being busy and enjoy creating new programs that support a culture of continuous learning, innovation and development.

HRP: Tell us about the club's internship program.

SH: Each year, our internship program attracts 10 to 15 students. My specific department has at least one or two students at any given time. As an organization, we could not function without them as they bring a whole new level of enthusiasm and knowledge with them. The internships allow us to stay connected with the younger labour generation, and from the organization's perspective, we are provided with an opportunity to evaluate talent prior to formal job offers.

HRP: Why is the opportunity to give back to an industry that has provided you with so much so important to you?

SH: As senior human resource practitioners, I believe we must invest and offer our services to those that will lead our field in the coming years. A small commitment today pays great dividends tomorrow. I have been fortunate to work alongside several great managers while employed with Senator Sports & Entertainment. My current boss, Cyril Leeder, has been very supportive, yet holds me accountable for my success and near successes. His vision and passion for the game of hockey is second to none.

HRP: What's next?

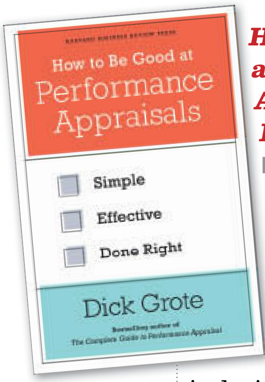
SH: I have been fortunate to be involved with several exciting projects through the years; however, there is still room to grow. I feel that I have only scratched the surface in the industry. Although the department was established 11 years ago, I still consider it a work in progress. I truly hope the department never stops evolving. I also hope that the efforts of the off ice team will equate to winning on the ice.

You would be hard pressed to find a more supportive group of staff when it comes to cheering on our Senators. Like our fans, we hope that the Stanley Cup makes its way to Ottawa in the near future. It would be a testament to the dedication of all those that have a vested interest in growing hockey in the Greater Ottawa Area.

HRP: What's your advice for those that are new to the industry?

SH: I encourage those individuals to find a position that they are passionate about and an organization that supports their own ideals. Strive to work with an organization that aligns with your morals and work habits. Although you may have to move around a little during the initial years of your career to achieve this, it is imperative to find a company that engages your talents each and every day. **HR**

WHAT'S WORTH READING



How to be Good at Performance Appraisals: Simple, Effective, Done Right

Harvard Business Review Press, 2011

By Dick Grote

Dick Grote is president of Grote Consulting Corporation and has been specializing exclusively in performance management over the past 30 years. He is the author of *The Complete Guide to Performance Appraisal, Discipline Without Punishment*, and *Forced Ranking: Making Performance Management Work;* and *The Performance Appraisal Question and Answer Book.*

How to be Good at Performance Appraisals is written for anyone who supervises people. In it, Grote tells managers up front that performance appraisals will always be difficult. No form, policy, training or skills will make performance appraisals comfortable and routine. Managers, when conducting appraisals, must do something they are told not to do, be judgmental of others. The appraisal process demands that the manager judge each member on his or her team and evaluate how well or how poorly they have performed and provide this feedback face-to-face. The performance appraisal must then answer two questions for the employee: "what do you expect of me?" and "how am I doing at meeting your expectations?"

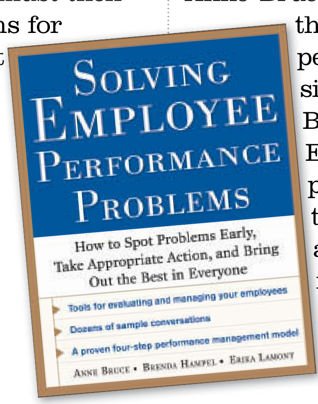
Grote, in his usual iconoclastic style, reviews the purpose of setting goals. He cautions against setting too many goals, assigning percentage weights, and using balanced scorecard and cascading goals. Goals should be specific, difficult and have tight timelines. When determining key job responsibilities, Grote advises managers to think about these areas as "big rocks" in order to keep employees and managers focused on those activities with the biggest payoff.

He offers a succinct chapter on competencies that simply outlines how a manager can work with an employee to generate a small number of important behaviours that will make a significant difference in the quality of the performance. Additional chapters include how to: prepare for the appraisal discussion; conduct the appraisal; and handle hot button issues, such as compensation and termination. If you have to select one book to give to your managers, *How to be Good at Performance Appraisals* is highly recommended.

Solving Employee Performance Problems: How to Spot Problems Early, Take Appropriate Action, and Bring out the Best in Everyone

McGraw-Hill, 2011

By Anne Bruce, Brenda Hampel, Erika Lamont



Anne Bruce has written more than 16 books on both personal and professional development. Brenda Hampel and Erika Lamont are partners with Connect the Dots Consulting and have worked with numerous companies on operational and human resources issues.

At the outset, the authors state that in order to achieve best-in-class results in employee performance, business leaders must be able to draw links between individuals and the growth goals of the organization. Throughout the entire talent management process consistent and regularly scheduled one-on-one contact between managers and employees about performance is critical in developing organizational talent.

Set up as a workbook, *Solving Employee Performance Problems* offers speaking points, checklists and work performance templates to help a manager build performance management skills. The 10 chapters can be used as standalone resources to target specific performance issues or as training guides for new or experienced managers. The authors use a four-step performance management model: Assess, Set Expectations, Coach and Correct, and Measure Results.

A variety of behaviour and conduct problems are presented with clear, step-by-step templates to remedy these issues. Another chapter offers 30 starters for tough performance conversations and includes a typical scenario, a performance objective and a sample conversation. Similar to Grote, the authors do not recommend a numerical rating system, favouring instead face-to-face conversations about behaviours and actual development.

Solving Employee Performance Problems is a straightforward and useful guide to managing performance issues. HR

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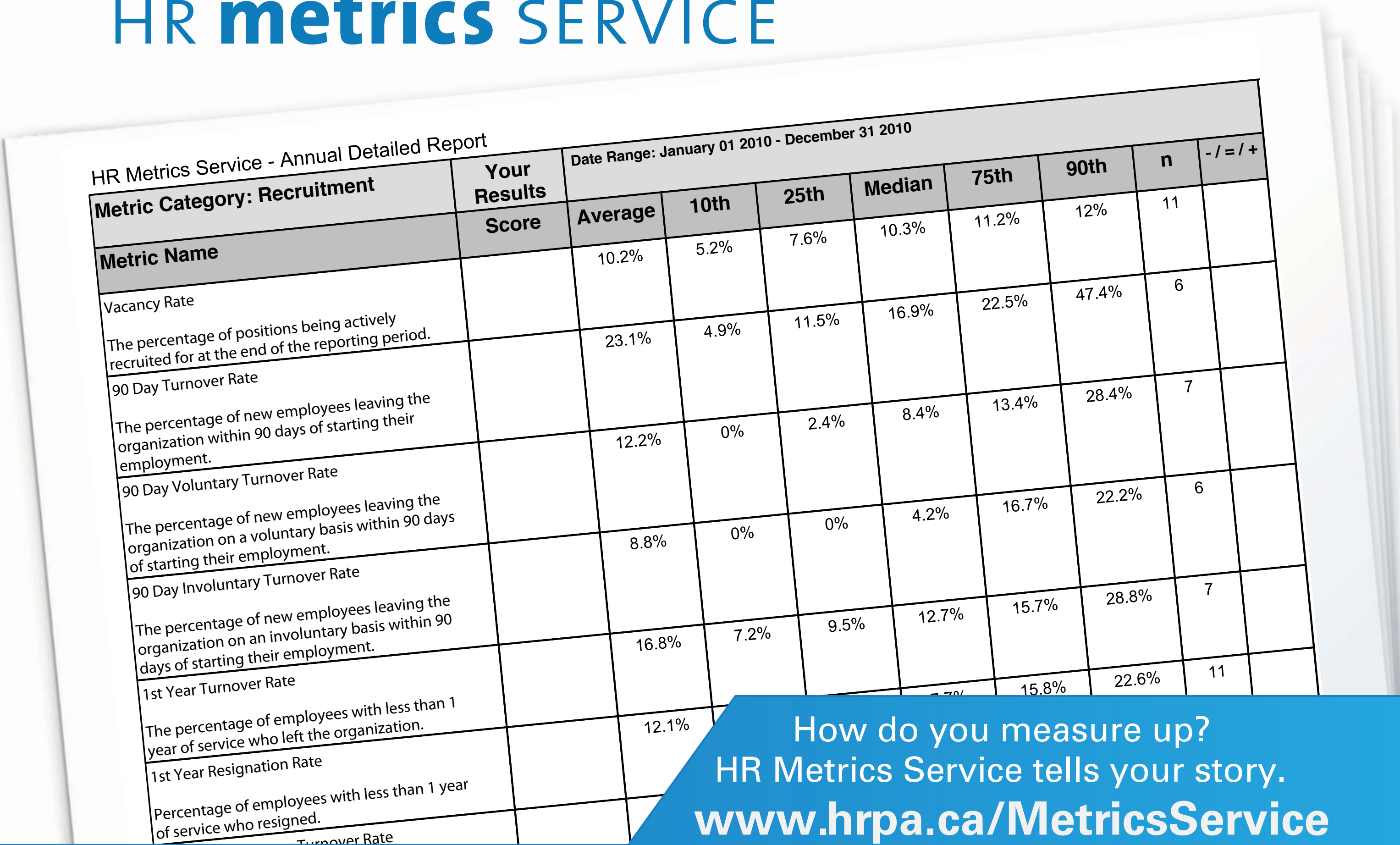

HR Metrics Service - Annual Detailed Report

Metric Category: Recruitment

Date Range: January 01 2010 - December 31 2010

Metric Name	Your Results Score	Average	10th	25th	Median	75th	90th	n	- / = / +
Vacancy Rate The percentage of positions being actively recruited for at the end of the reporting period.		10.2%	5.2%	7.6%	10.3%	11.2%	12%	11	
90 Day Turnover Rate The percentage of new employees leaving the organization within 90 days of starting their employment.		23.1%	4.9%	11.5%	16.9%	22.5%	47.4%	6	
90 Day Voluntary Turnover Rate The percentage of new employees leaving the organization on a voluntary basis within 90 days of starting their employment.		12.2%	0%	2.4%	8.4%	13.4%	28.4%	7	
90 Day Involuntary Turnover Rate The percentage of new employees leaving the organization on an involuntary basis within 90 days of starting their employment.		8.8%	0%	0%	4.2%	16.7%	22.2%	6	
1st Year Turnover Rate The percentage of employees with less than 1 year of service who left the organization.		16.8%	7.2%	9.5%	12.7%	15.7%	28.8%	7	
1st Year Resignation Rate Percentage of employees with less than 1 year of service who resigned.		12.1%				15.8%	22.6%	11	

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PAUL FAIRLIE, PH.D.

THE 10 DEADLY SINS OF SURVEY BENCHMARKING

Employers want to know what their employees are thinking and feeling, and they often conduct employee surveys to find out. But they also want to know how they're doing relative to other employers. Hence, the need for survey benchmarks.

No doubt, benchmarks are a valuable source of contextual information. But they're not without limitations, and should never be solely relied upon for decision-making. Following are 10 deadly sins of survey benchmarking and some remedial best practices.

1. Bad questions, bad benchmarks. Benchmarks should be based on survey questions that are psychometrically sound. If the questions don't measure anything very well, then the associated benchmarks are meaningless. Ask your survey vendor about the reliability and validity of their questions (i.e., get the technical manual).

2. Aiming for mediocrity. Benchmarks are often computed from both high and low performing organizations. Focusing on these can lead to average performance as an end goal for your organization. Ask for benchmarks that are trimmed of lower performing organizations. This gives you something challenging to shoot for.

3. Assuming the industry is the industry. You wish to be benchmarked against your industry. However, your vendor's sample may be unrepresentative and consist only of clients that they've done business with in your industry. This can lead to invalid comparisons, and perhaps, identifying the wrong priorities.

4. Comparing apples to oranges. Organizations differ widely in terms of design, maturity, size, employee characteristics and culture, even *within* industries. This can lead to a great deal of variance around the average. The more variance, the less meaningful the benchmark. Work with your survey vendor to select a subset of relevant organizations to derive more relevant benchmarks.

5. Aging benchmarks like wine and cheese. Benchmarks are sometimes computed from many years of survey data, which makes them moving targets in a sea of hidden trends. This is not remedied by simply adding more years, especially when past trends were significant. Ask your vendor how old the oldest data are, and how many years are represented.

6. Trying to improve something that's unimportant. Benchmarks can lead to misplaced priorities. For example, pay is often one of the lowest-ranked issues in organizations. Yet, pay doesn't move the meter very much on key employee attitudes and behaviour. If you focus on pay in your post-survey follow through, you may be throwing resources at a weak driver.

7. Getting hung up on single metrics. All metrics are somewhat arbitrary. A 7.1 out of 10 on employee recognition does not correspond to any specific amount of recognition in your organization. Rather than lose sleep over your 7.1 (when the benchmark is 7.3), focus on your lowest-rated dimensions and use other survey questions to find out what may be driving those issues (e.g., correlation, regression).

8. Assuming that everything in the survey is important. Some organizations try to meet the benchmarks for all areas of the survey. However, they're not all important. Find the survey questions that were linked to key outcomes in your *own* organization's data. Specifically, look for survey questions with both 1) low ratings, and 2) high correlations with (for example) engagement, commitment, and stay intentions. Trying to meet external benchmarks on things without knowing their impact on your workforce could lead to changes that are actually *harmful* your organization.

9. Focusing on benchmarks instead of excellence. Meeting benchmarks can make an organization complacent. As long as you got a D+ on employee benefits, like everyone else, it's back to business, right? What would be more courageous is trying to exceed benchmarks and become the best in your industry. A low benchmark is an opportunity for competitive advantage.

10. You don't know what you don't know. So you've met or exceeded most of the benchmarks. But what if your vendor's survey didn't measure the things that are known to have the *strongest* impacts on employee outcomes? This is a blindspot. Ask your vendor for published, peer-reviewed research on the work characteristics that they measure to ensure that their benchmarks are based on the right things.

11. [Bonus!] Comparing yourself to only your industry. What happens if you don't meet your industry's benchmarks? If you're concerned about attracting or losing talent, bear in mind that a good deal of worker mobility occurs between industries. Good accounting and IT staff, for example, can move almost anywhere. Therefore, you should also consider benchmarks that are derived from all industries. You never know where your future talent will come from.

One more word of advice. Ask your vendor to provide more than just your organization's averages, percentages and gaps against benchmarks. These can tell you the 'what', but not the 'why' of what's going on in your organization (i.e., what's driving what). Other analytics are helpful for answering these kinds of questions. HR

Paul Fairlie, an organizational psychologist, helps employers to create meaningful and effective workplaces (www.paulfairlieconsulting.com). He currently has survey benchmarks based on 50 U.S. states and 20 industry codes, and strongly advises you not to use them.

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

BY ELAINE DUMLER

BE AS RESILIENT AS A RUBBER BAND

Seldom does anyone have a perfect day. On the manufacturing floor employees discover that a vital part doesn't fit or a customer calls at the last minute with a design change. A financial planner faces a market crash leading to panicky investor calls, while a writer faces a computer crash, losing a week's work. So how does one person breeze through the same problems as another, but come out on top in the end? Two words: resiliency and sustainability. Both involve the realization that it's not what happens to you, but rather how you handle it that matters. This is when problem solving becomes a critical life skill.

Resiliency is the ability to recognize, recover from and adjust to misfortune or change. Sustainability says that you've figured out how to get through a situation effectively and have come out the other end better for it. Resiliency and sustainability function together to identify stressors that work against you and begin to set the path that brings you through them. It's just like a rubber band – a crisis stretches you to the limit and when you've solved it, you return to where you were before.

With the application of four simple tools, that form the acronym BAND, you can solve most problems:

BREATHE. As stressors appear, begin by stepping back (physically, mentally or both) and taking a deep breath. Just this action alone helps you to clear your head, which allows better processing of information. Breathing helps relax your muscles and lets your mind begin to work with the situation at hand. This is also the time to try to diffuse and remove emotions that might be present especially if you're dealing with angry people. It's hard to help a customer if they're still venting about their problem. Can you call on the help of others to help you put things into perspective?

ASSESS. Now that you have a clearer head and removed emotion from the equation, start to prioritize what steps to take to make a solution as close to a win-win as possible. Ask yourself, "What's the specific problem? Who's affected by these circumstances? What is the most critical piece to be handled first?" In this step, you are only identifying and prioritizing your steps, not acting on them.

NAVIGATE. You know the problem and have designed solution steps. Now it's time to act on your plan. Look ahead and determine exactly what you want to have happen when a good solution is reached. What will the "perfect solution" look like? Implement your plan based on this desired outcome. As you execute each step, occasionally pause to look at what's happening. Are you on the way to your desired outcome? Make whatever adjustments are needed along the way. Are you positively involving the people who need to be included in the solution? Doing this helps them feel you are working *with* them and not *against* them.

DETER. You did it! You dealt with circumstances and came out on the other end. This is the time to put steps in play that can deter the situation from happening again. What did you learn from this to help you set up parameters to avoid future issues like the one you just experienced? Step one: Think of a problem as a paper chain. Problem "links" can develop into hazardous situations. Identify the good and bad links (people, experiences, outside forces) in the chain. Sometimes removing a link can make the chain stronger when put back together. Step two: In order to prevent problems from happening again, you need to truthfully determine the level of control you have over each circumstance and problem factor. Eliminate or adjust what you have control over, and "let go" of those areas beyond your immediate control. Step three: Establish your safety net, which consists of your current contacts and any new ones you've built over the course of solving this problem. You learned things about yourself and those around you. Who stepped up when they were needed? Keep the information for those support personnel close at hand so it's there when you need it…*next time*!

Now before you think that going through this process will take too much time, remember that as you get comfortable with the steps, BAND can happen in a matter of seconds. **HR**

Elaine Dumler is an author, speaker and "separations expert" who helps military families transition through all phases of deployment. For more information call (303) 430-0592 or visit www.ImAlreadyHome.com.


Announcement
Kabam is pleased to welcome
Derek Sidebottom, MBA, to the role of
Chief People Officer. In his new role, he will
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creative talent to the exciting, emerging social
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