INSIDE: PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING | INNOVATING THE HIRING PROCESS | TRACKING SOCIAL FEEDBACK

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THE MAGAZINE OF HUMAN RESOURCES THOUGHT LEADERSHIP | MAY/JUNE 2014

MAKING DOLLARS MAKE SENSE

FINANCIAL SKILLS EVERY HR PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO KNOW

2014
HR SUPPLIERS GUIDE
INSIDE


Finding Candidates
Finding Potential
PROMOTIONS
MARKETING
PR
EVENTS

contents

VOLUME 31 / NUMBER 4 MAY/JUNE 2014

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

SPECIAL SECTION: 2014 HR SUPPLIERS GUIDE STARTING ON PAGE 33

IN THIS ISSUE

Familiarizing yourself with financial terms and basic know-how is critical for HR professionals to effectively communicate with other members of the senior executive team. Find out how to begin bridging the knowledge gap by reading through this issue of *HR Professional*.

Cover photo by Iaroslav Neliubov/Shutterstock

contributors

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Jordan Deering is practice group leader for the litigation group in Dentons Canada's Calgary office. In addition, she is a national leader of the Dentons Canada Fraud, Corruption and Asset Recovery group. She has practiced for over 10 years, after clerking at the Alberta Court of Appeal and Court of Queen's Bench.

Deering has appeared before all levels of courts in Alberta, representing clients on a variety of commercial disputes. She has developed expertise concerning fraud and asset recovery, and assists clients in tracing assets, securing evidence and recovering property where fraudulent activities occur. Her expertise assists clients in implementing strategies for the prevention of fraud and defalcation; read her article on that subject, starting on page 26.

CARMEN KLEIN

Carmen Klein is director of leadership and learning at Maple Leaf Foods, with responsibility for the organization's leadership programs and talent processes. With a unique background in engineering, Six Sigma/Lean and human resources, Klein loves exploring new ways to effectively support all leaders in their growth and development. She holds Master's degrees in both engineering and business administration and certificates in adult education and coaching. Read the article she co-authored about Maple Leaf Foods' innovative peer-to-peer mentoring program, starting on page 30.

GLAIN ROBERTS-MCCABE

Glain Roberts-McCabe is the founder and president of The Executive Roundtable and is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. With more than 20 years of direct leadership and management experience, Roberts-McCabe has launched innovative coaching and development programs at both the provincial and national levels. She has completed extensive programs in adult education, training and coaching. Read the article she co-authored about Maple Leaf Foods' innovative peer-to-peer mentoring program, starting on page 30.

ZUT-YING (SUE) DEL VALLE, CHRP

Zut-Ying (Sue) Del Valle, CHRP is a human development project coordinator at Golder Associates, where she supports human resources and talent acquisition leaders across the globe. She spends most of her time actively involved in the development and implementation of global programs that enhance organizational progress, including global recruiting systems and processes, internal career development, talent mobility and the global employer referral program. Del Valle has been a speaker on "Going Global" at the iCIMS HR Hero event series for her role in the expansion of the applicant tracking system iCIMS, which helped Golder Associates become the recipient of the 2012 iCIMS Excellence Awards for Best Company Expansion. She holds a Bachelor's in administrative studies from York University and obtained CHRP certification. Read her article on the importance of social feedback to HR departments, starting on page 53.

letter from the editor

MONEY MATTERS

If you're like me, talking finances has always had the tendency to make you a little bit nervous. I've never been a "numbers" person, but understanding money has been an essential skill that I've longed to possess, in both personal and professional capacities. I will openly admit to feeling sparks of jealousy toward those who can manipulate numbers and dollar signs without even breaking a sweat.

As writer Melissa Campeau discovered, many HR professionals are in the same boat, and as a result, may get lost in translation when sitting with the senior executive team. HR needs to bridge that communications gap and improve its own financial fluency. If this is a task that seems daunting, don't fret; there are a number of resources where professionals can pick up a little Accounting 101. All you need to learn are basic finance skills to jump into conversations with colleagues. Adding that facet to your skillset will allow you to better translate how HR fits into financial statements, which can benefit you and your department overall. After putting together this issue of *HR Professional*, both Melissa and I were feeling inspired to sign up for some extracurricular courses to brush up on our own skills. To read Melissa's article and find out what HR professionals should know in particular about dollars and cents, turn to page 20.

This May/June issue of *HR Professional* marks my fourth issue as editor within a few short months. I sincerely hope you find the contents informative, engaging and interesting, and that you will continue to do so in the future. Thank you to all members of the editorial advisory board as well as to sources and writers who have participated in the pages.

Be sure to visit www.hrpatoday.ca to check out the digital edition of this issue of *HR Professional*, as well as archived issues and web exclusives. As always, feel free to reach out anytime if you have thoughts, suggestions or are interested in contributing to the magazine. I hope that Spring 2014 treats you well. ■

Thanks for reading,

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As the premier HR association in Canada, HRPA is internationally recognized and sought out for its knowledge, innovation and leadership. With more than 20,000 members in 28 chapters in Ontario, HRPA connects its membership to an unmatched range of HR information resources, events, professional development and networking opportunities.

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Some Advice on Starting an HR Career

By Phil Wilson, CHRP, SHRP

On June 7, scores of Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) candidate hopefuls will be sitting down to write the National Knowledge Exam – a crucial first step in earning the CHRP designation.

These days, the CHRP is becoming "table stakes" to entering the human resources profession. In fact, according to last year's PayScale survey (*Fuel for HR Careers*), among employers listing jobs on the Hire Authority HR job board, demand for the CHRP has jumped 94 per cent between 2007 and 2013. Seventy per cent of HR jobs now require the designation.

Earning the CHRP will get your foot in the door, but it's what you do once you land that first HR job that will set you apart.

A very important decision is to determine whether there's any particular area of human resources you want to specialize in. Once you attain an entry-level position – whether it is in recruiting, compensation, employee relations, payroll, etc. – it is critical to learn that discipline in depth and seek out client interactions to help you gain a better understanding into how the role fulfills client needs.

Once you have gained three or four different experiences in various HR disciplines, it will help you decide if you would prefer to become a specialist in an area that you are passionate about or if you would prefer to become a generalist. You can have a great career with either choice.

Whether you choose to specialize or be a generalist, how far you go will depend on how well you know the business you're in.

In 2010, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) and Knightsbridge Human Capital partnered on *The Role and Future of HR: The CEO's Perspective*, a whitepaper examining how Canadian chief executives perceive the role of senior HR executives.

While all agreed that senior HR executives are valued contributors and trusted advisors on equal footing with executives from other business areas, CEOs also expressed how important it is for the senior HR executive to have a thorough understanding of the business. As one CEO said, "The senior HR executive [needs to be] a business person first and an HR leader second."

I agree: a good HR professional's job is to maximize the effectiveness of people to deliver results, and to do that you need to be fully integrated with the business you support – and that requires full understanding of how the organization generates revenue as well as its challenges, opportunities and competitors.

{ A GOOD HR PROFESSIONAL'S JOB IS TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEOPLE TO DELIVER RESULTS, AND TO DO THAT YOU NEED TO BE FULLY INTEGRATED WITH THE BUSINESS YOU SUPPORT. }

Photo by Ollyy / Shutterstock

Learn as much as you can about the business, learn the jargon, understand the acronyms, seek out mentors and build your network – it will all be critical to your success and lead you to a fulfilling and rewarding career.

There are no ideal or mapped out paths from a career perspective. Be open to learning all that you can about the business and the human resources profession.

And to those of you writing your NKE in June, I wish you the very best on your exam and in your career. ■

Phil Wilson, CHRP, SHRP is chair of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

UPFRONT

2014 HRPA BOARD ELECTION RESULTS

The following members of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) were recently elected (or re-elected) to serve on HRPA's Board of Directors for the next three years. They include:

MICHELLE COLLIER, CHRP

Michelle is a veteran HR professional with over 20 years of HR leadership experience in a variety of industries – including health care, hospitality and transportation – providing human resources expertise in start-ups, and re-establishing and leading HR departments within organizations.

ALICE KUBICEK, CHRP, SHRP

Currently managing director of akpsGlobal, Alice has extensive HR experience in both consulting (specializing in leadership, performance dynamics and non-profit board governance) and academics (adjunct professor in MBA and eMBA programs at University of Ottawa and Graduate School of Business at University of Grenoble in France).

JENNIFER LAIDLAW, CHRP, SHRP

Currently chief human resources officer with the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC), Jennifer has more than 15 years' experience in a variety of strategic human resources leadership roles, including: managing large-scale change projects; creating and executing people strategies; leading significant corporate restructuring initiatives; and implementing enterprise and functional talent strategies.

KAREN STONE, SHRP

Karen began her HR career with St. Joseph's Health Care London in 1990. She is currently the hospital's chief human resources officer and oversees a portfolio encompassing human resources, organizational development and occupational health and safety, providing services to over 4,200 employees.

These new board members will officially start their terms after HRPA's annual general meeting on May 14, 2014.

CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS SPENDING MORE ON STAFF TRAINING

Between 2010 and 2012, Canadian organizations increased funding for training, learning and development, according to the 12th edition of The Conference Board of Canada's *Learning and Development Outlook*. Spending was up $17 per employee, a modest reversal of the downward trend of the past two decades.

The Canadian organizations surveyed in the *Learning and Development Outlook* spent an average of $705 per employee compared $688 per employee in 2010. Despite this modest increase, overall learning and development spending is down nearly 40 per cent from its historic high of $1,207 in 1993. Over the past 20

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news

Photo by Santiago Cornejo / Shutterstock

years, spending has declined in both the public and private sectors and in organizations of all sizes.

"Although we are observing slightly higher increases in spending in the most recent survey, it is unlikely that expenditures on learning and development will rise to levels seen in the past without a stronger organizational commitment to enhancing learning environments," said Donna Burnett-Vachon, associate director, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada. "This is a significant issue because we know that organizations with strong learning cultures tend to realize better business results. Those who invest more in learning and development are the organizations that are being rewarded with higher levels of employee performance, customer satisfaction and quality products and services compared to their competition."

The report shows, for the first time, the alignment of leadership development practices and overall organizational learning cultures. Organizations with strong learning cultures provide leadership development practices that are far more effective than organizations having moderate or weak learning cultures.

> **"THOSE WHO INVEST MORE IN LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE BEING REWARDED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND QUALITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES COMPARED TO THEIR COMPETITION."**
>
> – DONNA BURNETT-VACHON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH, THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA

CIPD LAUNCHES EMPLOYER GUIDE TO HELP YOUNG WORKERS THRIVE

Acas, the CIPD and Unionlearn have joined forces to launch new guidance aimed at helping more employers make the most of the young people they employ.

"Managing Future Talent – a guide for employers" is part of the CIPD's Learning to Work campaign and is a collection of best practice tips from firms about how line managers in particular can make the workplace less daunting for young recruits.

It aims to give employers the knowledge they need to better support their young workforce. The report urges employers to be clear about the expectations they have, but also remember that young people need time to settle into the culture of work, and that some take longer to do this than others.

"Creating roles is only one-half of the equation," said Katerina Rudiger, head of skills and policy campaigns at the CIPD. "It is also crucial that when a young worker enters the workplace, the experience they get sets them up for a long and successful career."

The guide re-emphasises the old-fashioned process of giving people time to "learn the ropes" by giving good inductions, making sure new starters are comfortable with the basics of a role and providing them with opportunities to discuss everyday issues. It also argues that development and support are crucial.

"Our own research published last year showed that when inexperienced workers were welcomed and supported by employers, it had a really positive impact for both the individual and the business," said Gill Dix, head of strategy at Acas.

"We've had instances where a young person has been particularly strong academically but lacked confidence about workplace etiquette, such as shaking hands and looking colleagues in the eye," said Nadine Crowe, head of corporate citizenship at Accenture. "Then, there are others who have fantastic interpersonal skills, but who need more help in another area such as written English or language skills. My advice is not to treat all young people the same and generalize about what their needs might be. You won't effectively develop talent this way."

Access the report at http://bit.ly/1fYw5Ni.

ONTARIO SIGNS AGREEMENT ON THE CANADA JOB GRANT

Photo by Social Innovation Generation / Flickr

Jason Kenney, Canada's Minister of Employment and Social Development

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Employment and Social Development, announced in early March that Ontario was the first province to sign an agreement in principle on the Canada Job Grant.

Announced in Economic Action Plan 2013, the Canada Job Grant is an innovative way of delivering training that will lead to a guaranteed job. It involves employers in training decisions so that Canadians will be equipped with the skills and training they need to fill available jobs. It is designed to be flexible enough to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes, in all industries and regions.

The Canada Job Grant is part of the Government of Canada's commitment to address the paradox of too many Canadians without jobs in an economy of too many jobs without Canadians. According to The Conference Board of Canada, Ontario is losing out on as much as $24.3 billion in economic activity and $3.7 billion in provincial tax revenues annually because employers cannot find people with the skills they need.

"Our government's top priorities are creating jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity. The Canada Job Grant will ensure that employers put more 'skin in the game' and that skills training leads to a guaranteed job," said Minister Kenney.

"This is good news for Ontarians who will have better access to training that leads to real, guaranteed jobs and who will get better bang for their buck on funding for skills training. It is also good news for the Ontario economy because the Canada Job Grant will increase employer investment in skills training and help employers train Canadians for jobs that need to be filled so their businesses can grow and succeed."

DIVERSITY GROUPS JOIN FORCES

The Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (CIDI) and the Canadian Centre for Diversity (CCD) are pleased to announce that they have entered into joint operating relationships that will see the CCD continue operations. The CCD announced in September 2013 that they were ceasing operations due to funding constraints.

"The CCD's student educational programs couple nicely with CIDI's focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace," said Michael Bach, founder of CIDI and newly appointed CEO of the CCD. "When I learned that the CCD was ceasing operations, I knew we needed to explore how to continue their great work. I'm thrilled that we've been able to bring this to fruition."

Established in 1947, the CCD has been widely recognized as a premier authority on diversity education. Their vision to create a Canadian society without prejudice and discrimination, one that values diversity, difference and inclusion is also shared by CIDI.

CIDI has begun a consultation process with former CCD volunteers, students, donors and others that have been engaged with the CCD to help shape the future mandate and priorities of the organization moving forward. ■

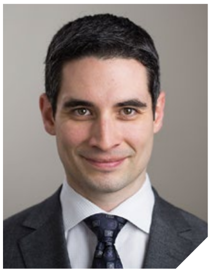
If you have news to be featured in Upfront, email Jill Harris, editor of *HR Professional*, at jharris@lesterpublications.com. Note: Not all submissions will be published, and submissions may be edited for grammar and style consistency.

CORRECTION

In the March/April 2014 issue of *HR Professional*, the pull quote appearing on page 17 was mistakenly credited to Alim Dhanji; please note that the pull quote credit should read Joseph (Val) D'Sa, a senior HR professional at York Region District School Board.

Pension Income not Equated to Severance Pay

EMPLOYEE PENSION INCOME DOES NOT REDUCE EMPLOYERS' OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE SEVERANCE FOR TERMINATED EMPLOYEES



By R. Mark Fletcher and Jeff C. Hopkins

When the Supreme Court of Canada speaks, the entire country listens. Although employment law cases rarely reach Canada's highest court, every few years or so, an employment law case will reach the Supreme Court and the case will have national implications for decades to come. This was true in the 1990s, with landmark employment law cases such as *Machtinger v. HOJ Industries Ltd.* (1992) and *Wallace v. United Grain Growers Ltd* (1997) and in the 2000s with cases such as the 2008 decision of *Honda Canada Inc. v. Keays* and, most recently, in *IBM Canada Limited v. Waterman* ("*Waterman*") which was released by the court on December 14, 2013.

In particular, this article will address what happened in *Waterman* and describe how a majority of the Supreme Court determined that pension benefits received by employees following the termination of employment do not constitute alternate employment income that can be deducted from an employers' liability to pay wrongful dismissal damages. There are some practical implications that *Waterman* will have on employers both now and

Photo by Edwin Verin/Shutterstock

{ EMPLOYERS CANNOT RELY ON AN EMPLOYEE'S ENTITLEMENT TO RECEIVE PENSION BENEFITS FOLLOWING TERMINATION AS A BASIS TO REDUCE ITS COMMON LAW LEGAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE SEVERANCE PAY IN LIEU OF REASONABLE NOTICE. }

into the future, given that Canada's workforce is aging and therefore more and more terminated employees will start collecting pension benefits following the termination of their employment.

THE FACTS IN *WATERMAN*

Mr. Waterman was a long-term IBM employee. He worked at IBM for more than 42 years and IBM terminated him without cause with only two months' notice of termination. At the time IBM terminated his employment, Mr. Waterman was 65 years old. Mr. Waterman retained legal counsel and commenced a wrongful dismissal lawsuit against IBM, seeking damages for lost salary and benefits. It must also be understood that after his wrongful dismissal by IBM, Mr. Waterman also started to receive his pension benefits from his IBM pension plan.

The fact that Mr. Waterman collected pension benefits from IBM following the termination of his employment became the focal point of IBM's defense. In a nutshell, IBM argued that any pension income that Mr. Waterman received following his termination from IBM should be deducted in the same way that new employment income is normally set off against or deducted from wrongful dismissal damages. The trial judge determined that the appropriate notice period for Mr. Waterman was 20 months. Critically, the trial judge rejected IBM's defense that the $2,124 per month received by Mr. Waterman in pension benefits should be deducted from the 20 months' damages. IBM appealed the trial decision to the British Columbia Court of Appeal. IBM's appeal was dismissed.

THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA'S DECISION IN *WATERMAN*

IBM ultimately appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, who also rejected IBM's set off or mitigation of damages for pension benefits received argument. Mr. Justice Cromwell, speaking for the Supreme Court, explained the Supreme Court's reason for rejecting IBM's argument as follows:

> In my view, employee pension payments, including payments from a defined benefits plan as in this case, are a type of benefit that should generally not reduce the damages otherwise payable for wrongful dismissal. Both the nature of the benefit and the intention of the parties support this conclusion. Pension benefits are a form of deferred compensation for the employee's service and constitute a type of retirement savings. They are not intended to be an indemnity for wage loss due to unemployment. The parties could not have intended that the employee's retirement savings would be used to subsidize his or her wrongful dismissal. There is no decision of this Court in which a non-indemnity benefit to which the plaintiff has contributed, such as the pension benefits in issue here, has ever been deducted from a damages award.

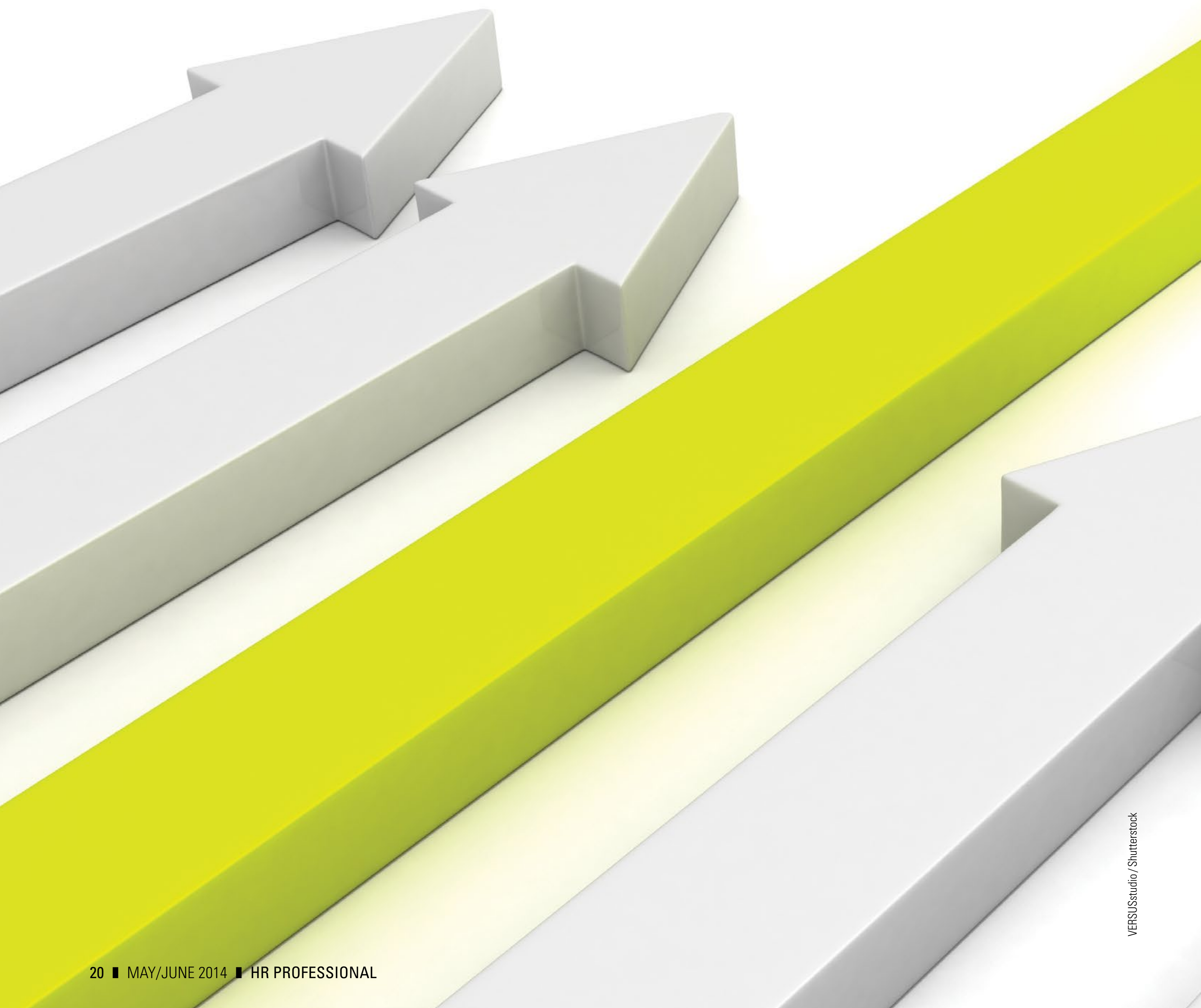
So even though Mr. Waterman received the benefit of both wrongful dismissal damages and pension benefits income, which arguably puts him in a better place than he would have been had he been provided with reasonable notice of his termination by IBM, the Supreme Court decided to draw a clear distinction in the case of pension benefits intended to provide income for an employee's retirement. In this case, the pension benefits were treated as deferred compensation that is earned during employment. Pension benefits are therefore not the same as alternate employment income.

WATERMAN'S IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Employers cannot rely on an employee's entitlement to receive pension benefits following termination as a basis to reduce its common law legal obligation to provide severance pay in lieu of reasonable notice. Practically, employers will have less leverage in negotiating a reduced severance package because the employee is also entitled to start collecting pension benefits. Before *Waterman*, some employers may have acted under the misapprehension that pension benefits could be set off against severance and attempted to use this as leverage to negotiate for a reduced severance package. *Waterman* removes any doubt that may have existed in the law and plaintiff's legal counsel will be well positioned to reject employer severance offers that have been discounted due to pension benefits entitlement. Accordingly, in view of Canada's aging workforce, severance costs will likely be higher for employers and it is clear that there will be no reduction in these costs where the terminated employee is in receipt of employer pension benefits. ■

Mark Fletcher and Jeff Hopkins are partners with the boutique employment law firm Grosman, Grosman & Gale LLP, Toronto, Ont.

Making Dollars Make Sense



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FINANCIAL SKILLS EVERY HR PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO KNOW

By Melissa Campeau

Former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca once said, "You can have brilliant ideas but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere."

As HR pros increasingly sit shoulder to shoulder with other senior executives on leadership teams, many face a communication barrier. For better or worse, finance is still the primary language of business. HR pros, though, speak the language of human capital, with a value that's often tough to quantify. To bridge the communication gap, it's critical for HR pros to understand the intricacies of the financial conversation and be able to position HR initiatives in a way that makes sense to those with dollars and cents backgrounds.

"I think it's fair to say a lot of people in HR are uncomfortable with the financial side of business," said Tony Dimnik, a professor at Queen's School of Business Executive Education and president of Vednost Inc., a company that teaches finance and accounting fundamentals.

It's a missing puzzle piece that can hamper an HR professional's ability to be influential and contribute fully to the decision-making process.

BEWARE THE (KNOWLEDGE) GAP

"The trouble with not speaking the finance language is that numbers can lie, or at least appear to," said Michelle Causton, professor with the accounting department of Canadore College in North Bay, Ont. Understanding a little about how numbers find their way into reports can let a human resource professional contribute more fully to strategic discussions.

"[For starters,] you have to feel confident enough in your understanding of something to challenge it when it doesn't make sense," said Causton. "That's why it's important for people to build their financial muscles a bit."

What's more, a lack of conversational financial knowledge can mean missing the chance to claim funding for HR initiatives.

"Because people don't have comfort with the numbers, they abdicate the opportunity to speak up," said Dimnik. "If there are 10 places for a company to put its money, for example, and the HR people are abdicating from the process, they can't promote and support their projects and claim one of those places."

HR initiatives can seem vague and fuzzy to numbers-minded members of the organization.

"Instinctually we understand that happy employees and well-trained employees are good for business, but at some point you have to make the effort to quantify things to help clarify the case for the rest of the executive team," said Causton. "If you devise some metrics to support your argument, then everyone at the table can see there's something behind it."

NO ACCOUNTING DEGREE NECESSARY

Getting a handle on basic finances doesn't mean HR pros need to engage in seven-year accounting programs. Instead, a little targeted financial knowledge, the kind that can be picked up in an intensive weekend or by studying for an hour or two each week, can make all the difference. (See sidebar for options.)

Think of it in terms of your own engagement.

"If you don't understand finances well, financial discussions and financial language just float by," said Dimnik. "Imagine how much better it would be to work in an organization where financial information makes sense to you."

For many, a dislike of numbers can make the task seem daunting, but the math component of finance is actually fairly basic.

"Quite frankly, if you can add, multiply, subtract and divide, you can understand strategic accounting and finance," said Dimnik.

"You don't need to become an expert," added Causton. "You just have to become conversational in the topic."

If you can sling the lingo with colleagues – while understanding everything you're saying, of course – there's potential to become much more effective and influential.

"You can then pick up the phone and talk to a person in finance and talk to a person in operations about nearly anything and you can build a level of trust and respect between you," said Nick Shepherd, founder of Eduvision, a company offering management consulting and professional development. "At the end of the day, business is all about building relationships."

FINANCE 101

"Many HR pros have some knowledge of finances," said Causton, "but in today's business, it's not enough."

Financial Fitness Training

The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) has several upcoming professional development courses to help you brush up on your finance and accounting skills:

Finance and Accounting Essentials for HR Professionals
This upcoming course teaches the basic accounting terminology and an understanding of the financial statements used to provide information about the organization's financial position and performance: income statements, cash financial statements, P&L statement, balance sheet, cash flow and productivity metrics.
When: June 26 & 27, 2014 + October 20 & 21, 2014

Accounting and Financial Management Course Evening/ Online Academic Program
HRPA's Evening Academic Program Accounting and Financial Management Course — one of nine academic course requirements for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation — provides a general understanding of the nature of financial and managerial accounting, and their relationship to business decisions generally and the work of HR professionals in particular. Courses offered in the fall (September to December), winter (January to April) and spring (May to August). Learn more: bit.ly/1dgSBke

Payroll Essentials for HR Professionals
March 6, 2014 + October 2, 2014. Learn more: bit.ly/1fD6Dwx

Year-end and New Year Requirements for Payroll
November 25, 2014. Learn more: bit.ly/1fD6IAs

The Accredited Executive Compensation Program
May 7, 8 & 9, 2014. Learn more: bit.ly/aecp2014

Mentoring with a financial or accounting expert within your own organization is another ideal way to accumulate hands-on experience immediately applicable to your organization and relevant to your role. You might meet for an hour or two each week to study a particular topic, and then move on to another once you reach a comfort level. You might even want to establish two-way learning, offering some HR basics to your financial mentor in return.

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> **"IMAGINE HOW MUCH BETTER IT WOULD BE TO WORK IN AN ORGANIZATION WHERE FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAKES SENSE TO YOU."**
>
> – TONY DIMNIK, PROFESSOR, QUEEN'S SCHOOL OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVE EDUCATION, AND PRESIDENT, VEDNOST INC.

For starters, understanding the components of an accounting cycle, meaning the steps involved in collecting and recording an organization's financial transactions, is an important basic.

"You have to find out how what you do fits into the financial statements," said Dimnik. "For that, you need an understanding of the complete financial cycle."

Core financial statements should all make sense, as well. Being able to read income statements and understand what goes into revenue and expenditures is an important building block, says Shepherd, as is the ability to read balance sheets and understand assets and liabilities.

Everyone should understand how to calculate an after tax net present value – or discounted cash flow – too. In English, this is the long-term strategic worth of an investment, based on projected future cash flow.

"For most medium and large business, discounted cash flow is the major decision-making tool," said Dimnik.

Cost allocation should be another fundamental area of study.

"People should understand how cost allocations are calculated because that will impact nearly any decision at the table," said Causton. For example, numbers on a page might initially point to cutting a particular cost centre to improve profits. "If you understand how the numbers found their way onto that report, you have a better sense of whether it's really a good idea to go ahead with the cut."

These and other basic building blocks can help an HR pro measure impact in accounting terms and develop more influential business cases, even when the subject matter appears difficult to quantify. For example, it might seem nearly impossible, at first, to quantify how a new training program will positively impact business. But if you take a look at the documented excess costs of poorly managed projects in the past, and how the new program will help avoid those, a stronger business case will start to take shape.

GIVE INVESTORS MORE CONFIDENCE

An HR pro with a good handle on finances can impact investor relations, too.

"A savvy investor is looking towards not only earnings capability in the short term but protection of capital in the long term," said Shepherd. A lot of that protection of capital is about the organization's ability to attract, retain and develop its talent pool to maintain or grow those earnings.

A business with effective, strategic HR initiatives in place is only compelling to investors if those plans can be articulated in the language of finance.

"[To give investors confidence,] an organization's HR people have to be able to communicate how what they do and the systems they have contribute to value," said Dimnik.

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ADVANCEMENT

Learning a new skill set never hurt anyone's career trajectory.

"In terms of personal promotability, being a person who knows accounting and finance means you're a person who can learn other things and take your knowledge into other areas," said Dimnik. "I can't see how anybody could get promoted to the top position in the organization if they didn't have a basic understanding of finances."

Photo by Pressmaster/Shutterstock

"THE MORE MEMBERS OF A LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT UNDERSTAND EACH OTHERS' PERSPECTIVES, THE MORE EFFECTIVE THEY CAN BE."

– NICK SHEPHERD, FOUNDER, EDUVISION

CROSS TRAIN FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE

In sports, cross training is commonplace because it's effective. NFL players take ballet classes and runners frequent yoga studios to round out training programs and elevate performances. Flexing our intellectual muscles beyond departmental lines can have the same sort of impact on professional performance.

After all, every aspect of business is ultimately interconnected.

"To be a fully functioning member of the senior team, you've got to have an understanding of not only finance but also operations, sales and marketing and all the things that go into how an organization works," said Shepherd.

When professionals cross train and become knowledgeable – not expert, just knowledgeable – in an area outside of their own, they become extremely valuable to any organization because now they can translate.

"They can take accounting speak and explain it to the HR people and take HR speak and explain it to the accounting people," said Causton. "This opens up dialogues that would be impossible if everyone was busy speaking their own language."

Freer communication and collaboration lead to more reasoned business decisions, since issues can be seen from all sides. For example, an organization looking to cut hiring costs might consider eliminating multiple interviews and some levels of testing. Intuitively, an HR person might know that the step would save money in the short term, but cost the organization dearly in the long term. By collaborating with a finance person to help quantify the argument, the pair could develop a strong business case and help steer the organization to a better decision.

A MORE EFFECTIVE SENIOR TEAM

As part of the senior decision-making team, HR pros who can see a story from the financial side of the fence as well as their own have more to work with when it comes to contributing.

"Simply put," said Shepherd, "the more members of a leadership team that understand each others' perspectives, the more effective they can be." ■

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DECEPTION

PREVENTING, DETECTING AND RECOVERING EMPLOYEE FRAUD

By Jordan Deering

Year after year, fraud becomes more prevalent in Canadian workplaces. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners Report to the Nations on Occupational Fraud and Abuse (2012) estimates that a typical organization loses five per cent of its annual revenues to fraud. In many instances, a company's employees are the biggest fraud risks to the business' bottom line.

Employees may have several key motivators that lead to fraud. The predominant motivators are financial pressures, addictions, lifestyle demands or other personal problems. They lead employees to seek additional funds to ease such pressures. To the detriment of the employer, employees might take opportunities to exploit weaknesses in their employer's systems and controls to their own personal gain. Whether it is the trusted bookkeeper, with access to pre-signed cheques or corporate bank accounts, or the salesman with inflated expense reports, the profile of a fraudster is an ordinary person, often an excellent and trusted employee.

What can an employer do to address employee fraud? Properly managing the risks involves a three-stage approach: prevention, detection and recovery. To give an employer the best chance of reducing both the incidence and magnitude of employee fraud, these three dimensions need to operate in tandem.

THE FRAUD TRIANGLE

Prevention of fraud involves the employer managing what is often referred to as the Fraud Triangle: pressure, opportunity and tone. The risk of employee fraud is highest when an employee feels pressure for funds, when the opportunity for fraud exists and when the tone of the organization allows the employee to justify their fraudulent actions. Conversely, if the employer tackles each element of the Fraud Triangle, the probability of fraud is significantly decreased. Therefore, strategies to address each element of the Fraud Triangle are the most effective way to prevent fraud.

SECRECY, STEALTH AND SPEED ARE THE BEST WEAPONS AVAILABLE TO AN EMPLOYER FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF FRAUD.

DECREASE THE OPPORTUNITY

In many instances, employers simply rely on audits or technology to detect fraud after it has occurred, rather than proactively addressing the opportunity. It is much better to prevent fraud in the first place. Anti-fraud controls and procedures are the first step for any employer seeking to decrease fraud risk. Employers have the most control over the opportunity portion of the Fraud Triangle and, therefore, can create the most impact in fraud prevention through managing opportunity for employee fraud.

There are a number of ways to decrease opportunity. For example, mandatory holidays will mean an employee in a financially sensitive position cannot maintain exclusive control of books and records. In a larger organization, the same can be accomplished with mandatory task rotation. In addition, employers should consider controls during hiring, such as appropriate criminal or civil background checks, credit checks or reference checks. These controls are particularly important in accounting and other financially sensitive roles, although proper fraud controls should not be limited to these types of employees.

GIVE YOUR EMPLOYEES SUPPORT

Personal pressures, such as financial hardships, addictions and mental health issues, are the motivation behind most employment-related fraud. These pressures are often external to the workplace, but manifest themselves within the workplace environment.

Employers should offer programs to support and assist employees with the management of these external pressures to lower the risk of the employee committing fraud. Employee assistance programs, internal training programs and careful monitoring by HR professionals serve as important support tools to manage the various external pressures facing employees.

SET THE RIGHT TONE

The message needs to come from the top of the organization: this employer does not tolerate fraud or theft. Management needs to actively support and endorse anti-fraud training, controls and audits to reinforce this message. The employer should make fraud awareness training part of its regular employee-training program.

DETECTION

Even the best-planned and implemented fraud prevention strategies will not prevent all employee fraud. Therefore, proactive employers must develop effective policies and procedures to detect employee fraud when it happens. HR professionals can take an active role in two critical fraud detection mechanisms:

CONSIDER A WHISTLEBLOWER LINE

Employees are often the first to notice something out of place or concerning, which leads to the discovery of a fraud.

Photo by Mikute/Shutterstock

Employee tips are one of the most effective means of detecting employee fraud. HR professionals can keep the lines of communication open with all staff so that employees feel comfortable to identify their concerns to management in a safe and confidential way. In addition, an employer should consider a whistleblower policy to clearly define the channel of disclosure, the protection of anonymity for the reporting employee and the expeditious handling of the disclosure. In a large organization, a whistleblower hotline – available to internal employees, external customers and vendors – can best detect employee fraud. In a smaller organization, employee education and reminders to employees can be equally effective.

WATCH FOR BEHAVIOURAL RED FLAGS

Employers cannot ignore the obvious signs. It may be an employee living beyond their salary, taking extravagant vacations or making large purchases. Conversely, an employee that never takes a vacation and resists sharing their duties with others may also be a fraud risk. In addition, HR professionals should monitor an employee's unusually close relationships with a vendor or customer. HR professionals must take care to watch for the red flags and investigate, as appropriate.

RECOVERY

If a fraud is detected, care must be taken in order to maximize recovery. Since appropriate and comprehensive investigations are required, the best advice is to immediately retain legal counsel and coordinate a detailed investigation.

HR professionals should take care to avoid common mistakes in fraud recovery:

- Do not notify the employee that the fraud has been detected. In particular, do not immediately terminate or suspend the employee. This will allow the employee time to hide assets or leave the jurisdiction.
- Do not search the employee's computer, tablet, smartphone or office phone. There are significant privacy concerns regarding searches of computer devices, and these searches should only be conducted following legal advice and using appropriate forensic experts who can maintain the evidence.
- Do not notify other employees. The fraudulent employee is entitled to confidentiality and other employees should only be interviewed, when necessary, during the investigation phase.

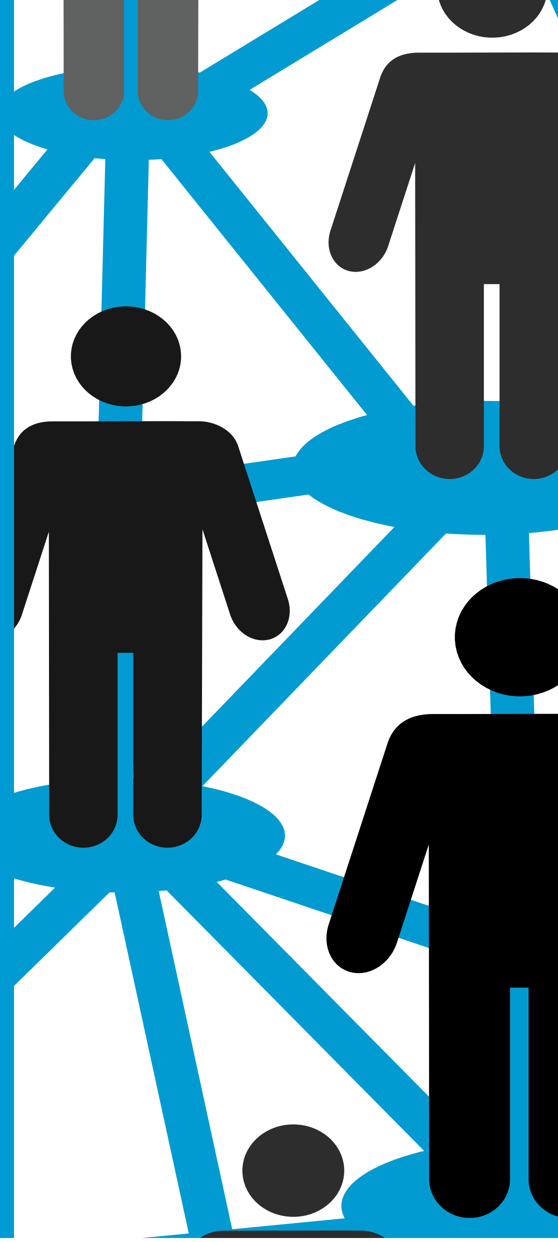
Secrecy, stealth and speed are the best weapons available to an employer following the discovery of fraud. Recovery is only realistically available if an employer can get ahead of the fraudulent employee in the asset recovery efforts.

Various legal remedies are available to a defrauded employer to aid in the civil recovery of stolen assets:

- **Anton Piller Orders:** These court orders are often referred to as Civil Search Warrants. They permit a surprise search of a fraudulent employee's home and other locations in order to find the stolen funds or evidence that support the employer's legal case. The court will only grant these orders where there is a legitimate fear that the employee will destroy evidence. HR professionals can assist by having information relating to the employee's residence and other particulars.
- **Norwich Pharmacal Order:** These court orders direct financial institutions and other third parties to provide information necessary to trace assets of the fraudulent employee, without notifying the employee that such information is being provided. HR professionals can identify bank accounts of employees used for payroll to assist in this type of investigation.
- **Preservation Orders or Mareva Injunctions:** These court orders freeze assets, either within the jurisdiction or worldwide, so that a fraudulent employee cannot take any steps to sell, dissipate or otherwise dispose of assets. This can include land, property, vehicles, stocks, bank accounts or other assets.

There is no single solution to managing the significant risk of employee fraud. HR professionals need to constantly assess numerous areas to properly prevent, detect and maximize recovery in cases of employee fraud. Properly implementing preventative measures will pay dividends in the reduced incidence of this problem. Timely detection of fraud reduces the quantum of the fraud, and also reinforces the organizational tone of non-tolerance. Finally, HR professionals play a key role in assisting an organization to maximize recovery in civil cases. ■

Jordan Deering is partner and national leader of Dentons Canada's Fraud, Corruption and Asset Recovery group.



Maximizing High Potential

GROWING LEADERS THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER CONNECTIONS

By Carmen Klein and Glain Roberts-McCabe

We know those who feel connected to others within their workplace are more engaged and are more likely to stay with a company. Connecting with others is also one of the best ways to learn and grow…through watching, listening, sharing, asking and debating.

At Maple Leaf Foods (MLF), we focus on learning and growing through real work experiences, supported by feedback and coaching. We also continually look for ways to build and support connections as a way to provide on-the-job support.

In 2013, MLF piloted a peer mentoring program to explore a structured, yet organic and flexible, way of building peer-to-peer connections.

THE PILOT GROUP

MLF's Leadership Track is a well-established leadership development program for early talent. High potential graduates are recruited from great universities and are provided accelerated development over the first three years of their career. The lion's share of development occurs through challenging job rotations that align to the career aspirations of each Leadership Trainee (LT). To date, this has been supplemented with executive mentoring, workshops and webinars.

The program has a fantastic track record for developing leaders for the organization. The LTs are in high demand by the business, and some of MLF's most senior leaders are program alumni.

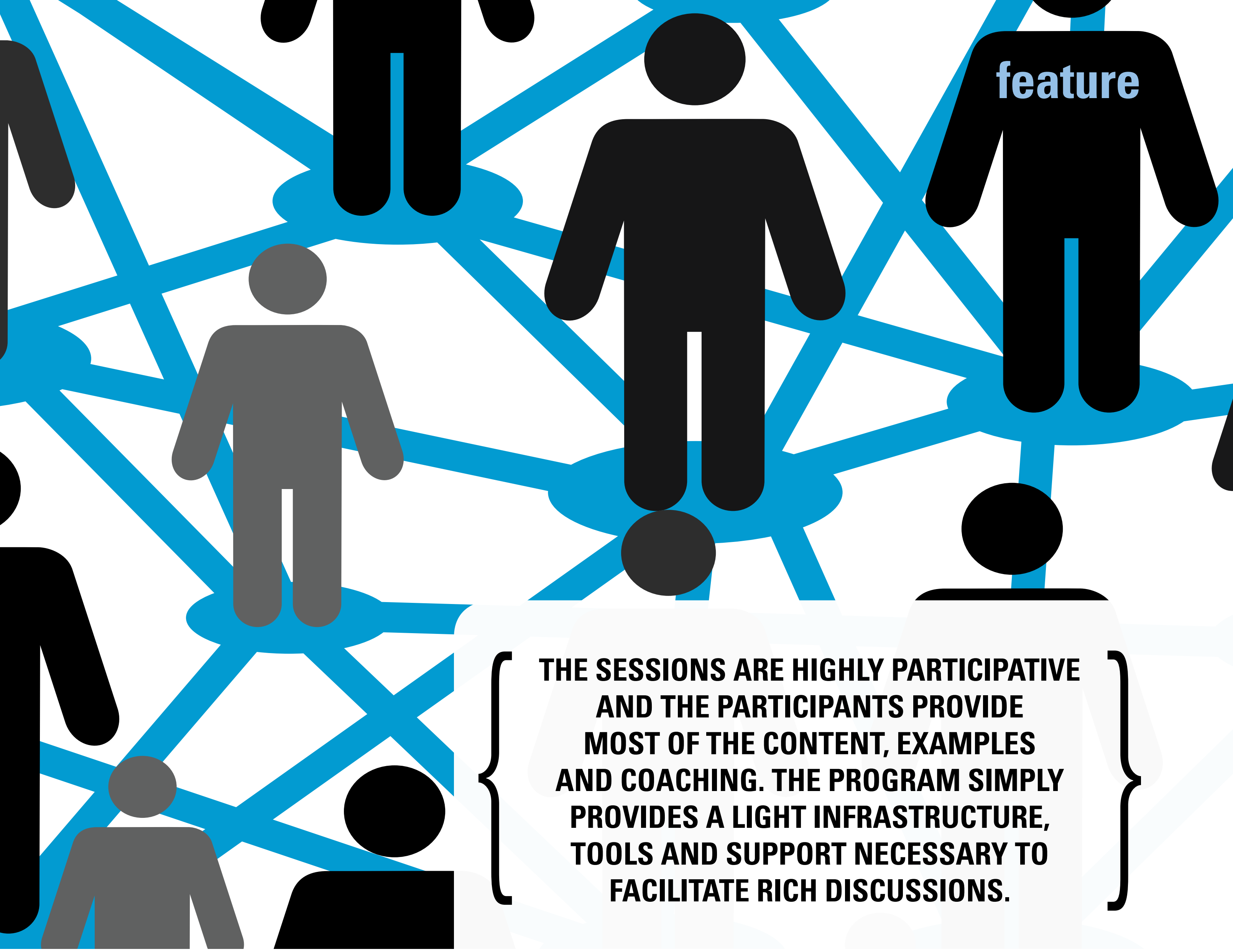
Even with this, there was opportunity to be better.

The LTs knew what it would take to get there. It was just a matter of listening to them.

IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITY

It was felt that there was opportunity to improve the development support to the LTs, so they were asked what they thought. Over the course of many conversations, three core needs emerged:

1. I need support on issues and development areas that matter most to me. This will help me be the best at what I do.
2. I need to connect with others. I enjoy sharing and learning from other LTs at our workshops. I would love more opportunity to do this.
3. I need development that fits my



THE SESSIONS ARE HIGHLY PARTICIPATIVE AND THE PARTICIPANTS PROVIDE MOST OF THE CONTENT, EXAMPLES AND COACHING. THE PROGRAM SIMPLY PROVIDES A LIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE, TOOLS AND SUPPORT NECESSARY TO FACILITATE RICH DISCUSSIONS.

> schedule. I am not always able to attend workshops due to business demands. Smaller increments that do not require travel would make it easier for me to participate.

Current development support provided by the program was missing the bar. What was the best way to build connections that deliver timely support where it is needed most?

After some benchmarking, the program identified its solution. Most of the existing workshops were retired and a peer mentoring solution was piloted in their place.

PEER MENTORING AT MLF

In partnership with Glain Roberts-McCabe of The Executive Round Table, the peer mentoring sessions were designed as collaborative learning forums where LTs share their knowledge, experiences and perspectives with the objective of providing targeted, timely support for their individual development and workplace challenges.

The sessions are highly participative and the participants provide most of the content, examples and coaching. The program simply provides a light infrastructure, tools and support necessary to facilitate rich discussions.

So how do they work?

They start with the creation of cross-functional peer groups consisting of eight to 10 LTs, the optimum size for this format. The peer groups meet for a few hours every two months, with the option for either in-person or virtual participation. The calendar is owned by the respective peer group; this provides flexibility to schedule around business demands.

Each session follows a light agenda that aligns to the objectives for the program. This includes:

- **Leadership & Learning Lab:** Each session starts with a deep dive on a leadership skill based on the development needs of the group. These are designed to provide a little bit of content and generate a lot of conversation in the form of examples, questions and ideas from the group.
- **Development Action Plan Spotlight:** Each LT has a personal development action plan. They reflect on their progress on these plans, sharing wins, learning and struggles. They also receive peer support in achieving their personal development goals.

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feature

- **Peer Coaching:** LTs volunteer a pressing business issue and are coached by their peers through a problem-solving process using insightful questions, active listening and powerful suggestions. The output is a rich list of ideas and suggestions to put into action.

A trusted and capable MLF leader, typically at the director level, facilitates these sessions. This role is critical to the peer mentoring process, and the facilitators are selected carefully. Note that the emphasis is on facilitation; these leaders are not at the table as experts, but to guide the group through the learning process.

THE MOST CRUCIAL INGREDIENT

Many factors come together to create a great peer mentoring experience – the most crucial of these is trust. People need this to feel safe to share, without judgment. The entire experience quickly deteriorates if they do not feel comfortable contributing.

Building and sustaining trust is highly dependent on three group behaviours. These are referred to as the "Three Cs":

- **Candor:** Respectfully share experiences, thoughts and opinions and be receptive to these from others.
- **Commitment:** Attend every scheduled session and complete follow-up.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain conversations and comments inside the immediate group.

{ MANY FACTORS COME TOGETHER TO CREATE A GREAT PEER MENTORING EXPERIENCE – THE MOST CRUCIAL OF THESE IS TRUST. }

These behaviours are considered so important to the quality of the sessions that the group commits to them in writing and participants may be removed from the group if they break them. Many LTs indicated that this going-in commitment accelerated their trust with the group.

Trust is monitored during each session for each group; most groups require three to four sessions to establish healthy trust levels.

THE WINS

In the first year since its launch, peer mentoring is exceeding expectations.

Feedback is extremely positive. The collaborative peer-to-peer approach to learning is providing relevant, just-in-time support that is individualized, meaningful and engaging. A stronger community is being nurtured. Workplace issues are being resolved.

Over and above these results, additional wins have been realized:

LTs are building coaching proficiency before they manage a team. At MLF, this core skill is required of all people managers to build a high-performance organization.

Senior leaders facilitating these sessions are also honing their coaching skills. They find their role to be engaging and rewarding; it is considered a great return on the personal time investment.

The collaborative format yields more creative solutions to workplace challenges. And given that the LTs quickly discover their challenges are very similar despite very different roles, these wins are replicated across the group.

The cross-functional groups introduce LTs to other parts of the business through those who live it every day.

Strong cross-functional relationships are being built that will continue beyond the program.

Most important, the LTs love this format. They feel empowered to drive their own development and are excited to support that of their peers.

MAKING US STRONGER

We are now in the process of exploring opportunities to expand the peer mentoring approach to other groups across the organization.

For a relatively light investment in time, and virtually no cost to the business, these groups are achieving exactly what the organization was looking for: strong, supportive bonds with peers across the company which in turn strengthen personal leadership skills and provide timely support where they need it most.

This will have tremendous payoff for both the individual and for MLF, in the form of greater engagement, stronger performance and continued career growth.

Together, we are growing and getting stronger, person by person, and connection by connection. ■

Carmen Klein is director of leadership & learning at MLF, with responsibility for the organization's leadership programs and talent processes.

Glain Roberts-McCabe is the founder and president of The Executive Roundtable and is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders.

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ADVERTISER INDEX ON PAGE 48

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ADVERTISER INDEX

Changing the Conversation

MOVE WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS FORWARD

By Darlene Chrissley, B.A., M.L.S., MCC and Rick Russell, B.A., LL.B

How do things get done in organizations?

If you think about it, work tends to move forward conversation by conversation. The quality determines what happens next, and may have lasting consequences for the relationship between the parties.

There are three conversation types that typically take place in organizations:

- Conversations that blow off steam
- Conversations that blow up
- Conversations that go around in circles

However, there is a fourth alternative. Interest-based conversations (ICAs) move work and relationships forward together. The ICA has a logical flow, creating a path of least resistance from issue to intention; choice to commitment; and action to accountability.

THE ICA CONVERSATION

ICA is a mnemonic, based on the nine steps of the following path.

1. ISSUE: WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The first step of the conversation is to frame the issue you're talking about. Frame too narrowly and you exclude possibilities. Too broadly, and you lack focus. Inaccurately, and you end up solving the wrong problem. Frame as blame and trust is broken before you begin.

Powerful framing sets up a mutual problem statement, where both parties share a common interest in resolving the issue.

Effective framing:

How can we manage our purchasing process to get the best pricing and reduce time and effort?

Illustration by Click Bestsellers/Shutterstock

Ineffective framing:

How do we get your people to do what they need to in order to comply with our purchasing process?

2. INSIGHT: WHAT'S IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT?

It's important that each party communicate their important needs, wants, concerns and fears, and demonstrate that they are trying to understand the problem from *the other* perspective as well.

Ask not only about results, but *how* the solution should be arrived at and what the issue has come to represent for you. Listen carefully to how each of you define respectfulness, legitimacy and acceptance.

3. INTENTION: WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

Explore what it is you each hope to achieve in this conversation. Once each gains an appreciation of the others' interests, you may uncover new and innovative ways to get there.

4. CHOICE: WHAT ARE OUR CHOICES?

How do you each view your options? Sharing your thinking allows you to reframe the situation based on this new information and may even open new possibilities. It also gives the opportunity to learn at an emotional/psychological level where the "good reason" lies for the resistance we may be experiencing from the other.

5. CRITERIA: HOW WILL WE CHOOSE?

What are the relevant *criteria* by which the choices will be evaluated? Are your criteria all subjective (your interests)? Consider whether objective criteria exists (organizational policy, statutory or industry standards) that ought to guide any decision, and whether you are taking into account the interests of others involved (*their* subjective criteria).

An effective problem-solver pays close attention to the criteria that the other person finds persuasive.

6. COMMITMENT: WHAT ARE WE COMMITTED TO?

Even when the attendees *believe* they have arrived at an understanding, very few people are rigorous in setting out what each has agreed to do, how and when. You want to address any reservations upfront and not leave the meeting with false hope that will later cause resentment or distrust.

Ask, "On a scale of one to 10, how committed are you?" Anything less than 10 is not a commitment. It is an opportunity to identify the "yeah, buts" lurking under the surface waiting to torpedo your agreement. Ask, "What are you willing to commit to?"

7. ACTION: WHAT WILL WE DO?

This is where the conversation moves from, "Well, we *could* do this or we *could* do that," toward the purposeful, "I *will* take this step within this timeframe and I *expect* to find that you *will* have done that."

Within organizations, we are inter-dependent. We rely on others to help create the conditions that will allow *both* our plans to succeed. Asking, "What help do you need?" invites your partner to tell you how you can help them to help you.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY: HOW WILL WE TRACK PROGRESS AND MEASURE RESULTS?

A good accountability structure gives both parties confidence that what has been agreed will be enacted. It should include a timeline, a process for tracking and reporting progress and the objective criteria by which success will be evaluated.

A relationship that is accountable and has procedures that demonstrate fairness is inherently stable and demonstrates to outside stakeholders the value of the work.

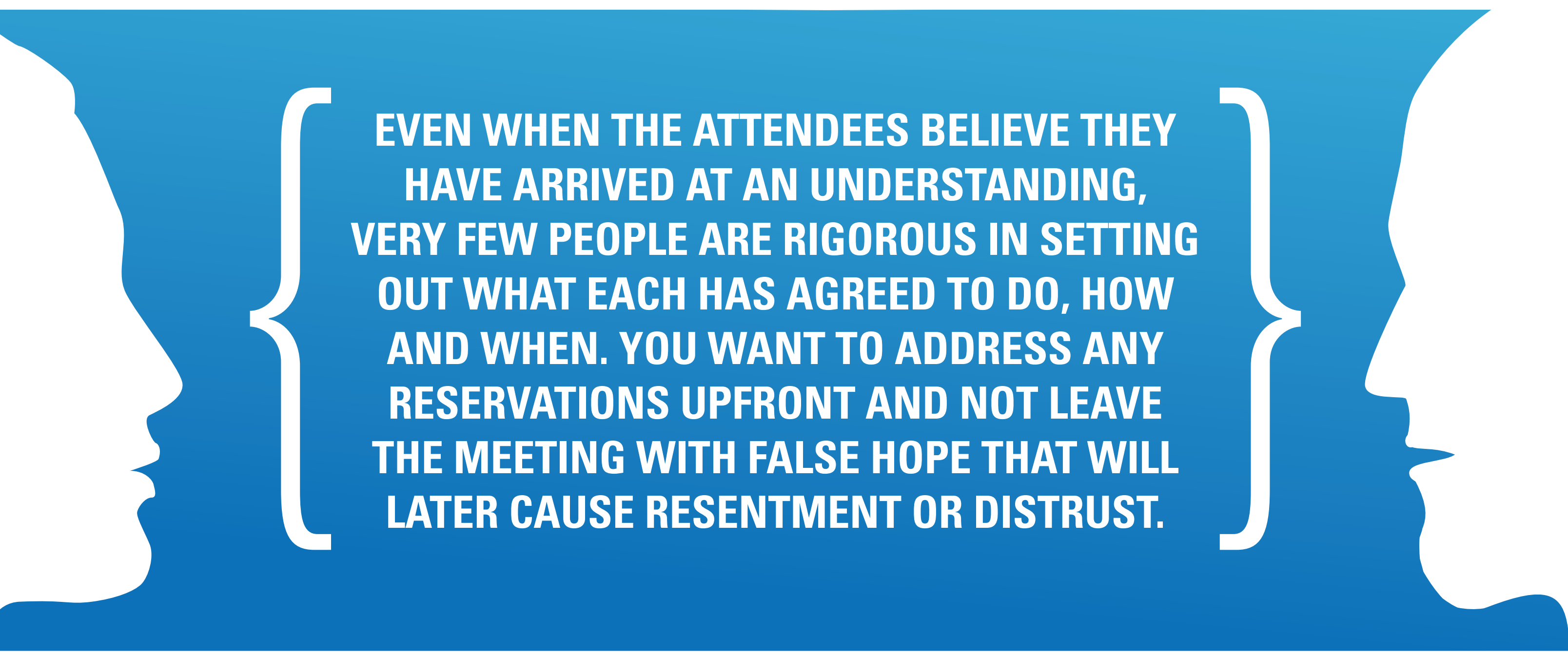


Illustration by Merkushev Vasiliy /Shutterstock

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENT: WHOM DID WE HAVE TO BE TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Relationships are hard work. Too often, the leverage we gain through relationships goes unrecognized and unrewarded.

Noticing matters. When we are genuinely seen and acknowledged, we experience this in a visceral way. In noticing one another's strengths, and remarking upon who we need to be together, we develop the heart, the courage that allows us to take risks together and to become greater than the sum of our parts.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTING ICA IN ORGANIZATIONS

ICA has an excellent track record for moving work and relationship forward together. It shifts the thinking and capabilities of those who use it over time. However, success is highly contingent on the way it is implemented.

ICA should be introduced with a clear purpose and measures for success. It should be sponsored, modeled and reinforced by a respected leader. Training should give equal attention to the framework and the assumptions that underlie it. Sufficient practice must be included to achieve competence and confidence in its use. ■

Darlene Chrissley is an executive coach and organizational development specialist.

Rick Russell is a conflict management professional who conducts workplace assessments and remediation and offers a range of conflict management services.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT EACH PARTY COMMUNICATE THEIR IMPORTANT NEEDS, WANTS, CONCERNS AND FEARS, AND DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM FROM THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE AS WELL.

Socially Acceptable

HOW IMPORTANT IS SOCIAL FEEDBACK TO HR DEPARTMENTS?

By Zut-Ying (Sue) Del Valle, CHRP

UNDERNEATH THE SURFACE

Every year, companies spend thousands of dollars on recruitment strategies and programs aimed at attracting the best talent, reaching passive candidates and broadening the employment brand recognition in the minds of potential candidates. After much research and ever-lasting management meetings, the sales pitch is always the same regardless of the industry – the employment value proposition, or in the candidate's mind, a story of how wonderful the company is and the things the company is willing to do for them in return for their service. Unfortunately, all of this information that we provide candidates has been passed through the legal and marketing department, edited and re-written several times and carefully reviewed by human resources executives before it is made accessible to candidates.

The truth is that candidates are not overly interested in the well printed documents; they want to go underneath the surface, and hear what existing employees really have to say about the company – they want the real story without the edits. The 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer, which surveys more than 30,000 people, found that "rank-and-file employees have more credibility than chief executives." In fact, the report goes to show that there was a 75 per cent increase from 2011 in the amount of respondents that trust social media as a place where they might find information about a company. This is the end of the "employment brand" as we know it, and the beginning of a new reality.

{ THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION THAT EXECUTIVES CAN TAKE WHEN THEY FEEL THAT THEIR EMPLOYMENT BRAND IS BEING MISREPRESENTED IS TO SIMPLY ASK THEIR PEOPLE. }

THE POWER OF A NEGATIVE REVIEW

We do it all the time when making an investment or purchasing a product. We like the product, we've seen the commercials and read the labels, but we want to see what others are saying first. As part of our due diligence, we ask our friends, colleagues and read the reviews before making our way to the store. And yet, after reading several consistent negative reviews, we feel hesitant to buy the product or make the investment, thinking to ourselves, "What if I end up having a bad experience, too?" or we quickly decide not to buy. We simply do not feel that we're ready to take

Photo by Gonzalo Aragon/Shutterstock

THE INTERNET HAS CHANGED THE WAY THAT CANDIDATES OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPANY.

that risk, and so we base our decision on what others have to say, and on their experiences.

A company's employment brand is not much different than that product. Candidates have seen the website, heard the pre-recorded "testimonials" and followed you on social media, yet nothing speaks to them more clearly than what current or former employees have to say about the organization. The Internet has changed the way that candidates obtain information about the company; websites like Indeed.com, Glassdoor.com, Ratemyemployer.ca and social networks (amongst others) allow current and former employees to anonymously share their experiences and rate their companies as an employer of choice. By simply searching the words "company reviews" they find themselves in front of comments that will begin to shape their perception before making a decision. It is true that not all candidates will base their decision solely on the negative comments (although some will), but if the work experience turns out to be consistent with those comments, they too will become unwanted advocates to your employment brand. The issue is not whether your employment brand is being affected or not, but rather if those reviews are a true representation of your culture. This would mean that you do not just have a talent acquisition problem, but also a retention and engagement problem.

COULD WE BE AFRAID OF THE TRUTH?

For many executives, the validity of social data is questionable and viewed as inaccurate information, perhaps in fear that the feedback received may be true. Executives opt to take a reactive approach to the external feedback, and continue to build on their existing efforts driving engagement. Unfortunately, without understanding what is really affecting our culture, we often invest in the wrong programs, and continue to head down in the wrong direction. It is true that we have little control on what gets posted over the Internet, and organizations cannot be changing gears every time a negative comment is posted, but embracing social data (rather than running from it) and using the information to review our internal processes and employment value proposition can be extremely beneficial to the organization (both externally and internally). The best course of action that executives can take when they feel that their employment brand is being misrepresented is to simply ask their people. This will (i) confirm if the external feedback is correlated with internal sentiments; (ii) help determine if they are investing in the right "people" programs; and (iii) provide an opportunity to change direction before it becomes too late.

BEYOND THE PRETTY PICTURES

Companies are constantly on the lookout for the best talent (especially if they come from a competitor). They want the "engine" of the organization to be driven by the most innovative, experienced and motivated employees. In the same manner, people are looking for the best company. They are interested in working for a reputable organization where their service and experience will be valued and supported. They will compare your organization to others in the industry, review all the comments, compile their learnings and make a final decision based on where they feel they will have the most positive experience. As mentioned earlier, candidates are more interested in what is found beneath the surface, rather than the pretty pictures and words displayed on your careers page. To be successful, executives must pay attention to what is being said about the company and take proactive measures to remain competitive in the market. ■

Zut-Ying (Sue) Del Valle, CHRP is a human development project coordinator at Golder Associates, where she supports human resources and talent acquisition leaders across the globe.

Illustration by VKA/Shutterstock

Revolutionizing the Hiring Process

CULTURE AND EFFICIENCY PREVAIL WITH SPEED GROUP INTERVIEWS

By Lisa Kopochinski

Santhosh Kumar/Shutterstock

For decades, the traditional process of interviewing for a position has largely been structural and interrogative in nature. The candidate sits opposite the interviewer (or panel of interviewers) who generally fires off a list of questions while writing notes. The candidate tries to sell themself as the best person for the job in a meeting that can often take an hour or more.

Search Engine People (SEP) – a full-service digital marketing agency that provides inbound marketing services to more than 1,000 clients worldwide – opted to "buck the system" and revolutionalize the hiring process with a system it created known as "speed group interviews."

Allison McKay, Director of Human Resources, SEP

"We were inundated with resumes when we posted for an entry-level or junior position," said Allison McKay, SEP's director of human resources. "The time it took to review, phone screen and then interview was not efficient nor did it reflect our culture. We took a step back and looked at ways we could make the process more efficient and decided on a group interview format. From this brainstorming session, the 'speed interview' idea was born."

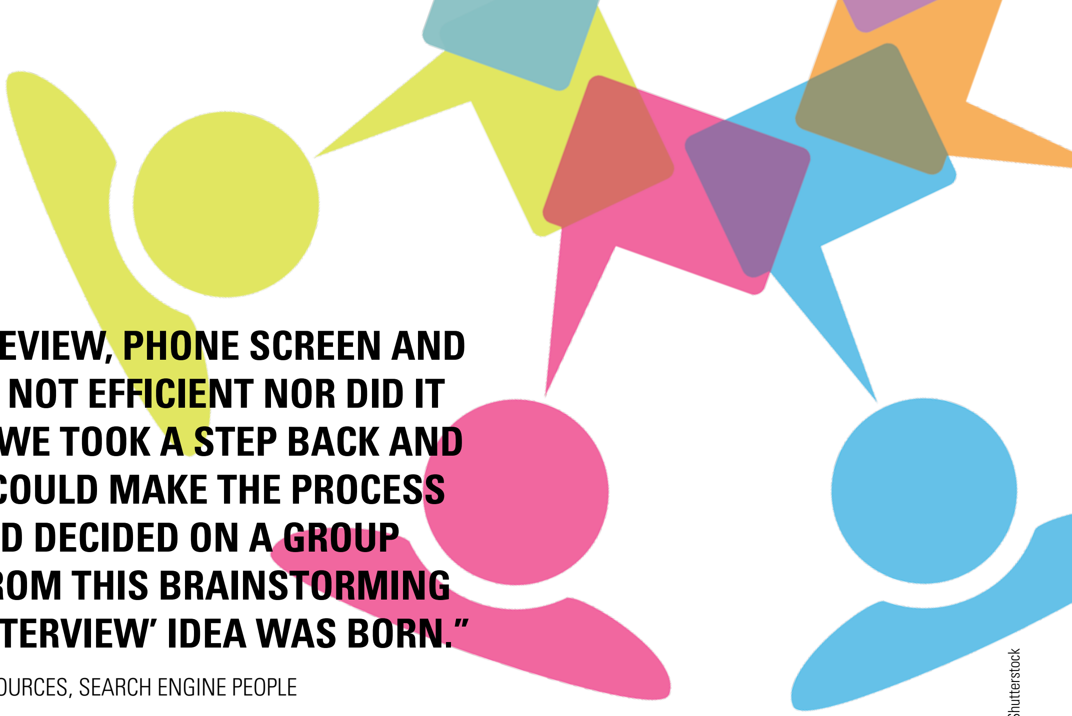
The Pickering, Ont.-based firm (situated 30 minutes from downtown Toronto) is in the midst of a massive hiring phase. The company expects to grow from its current 100 employees to approximately 350 employees over the next five years.

McKay says the speed format is geared more towards entry level or junior positions. Once initial candidates were eliminated – due to spelling or grammatical errors on their resumes – the remaining individuals essentially had the same background, education and experience. For instance, all had graduated from university or college, had work experience in a retail or office environment and an interest in marketing.

"We knew we could spend hours interviewing candidates one on one, or we could meet five at one time and have more than one opinion in our decision-making process," said McKay. "Our ultimate goal was to find the best candidate that met our requirements."

GETTING TO THE POINT QUICKLY

The speed interview process is unique in that it involves behavioural interviewing techniques in a more efficient and succinct manner. McKay says it is easy for a candidate to ramble on to



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"THE TIME IT TOOK TO REVIEW, PHONE SCREEN AND THEN INTERVIEW WAS NOT EFFICIENT NOR DID IT REFLECT OUR CULTURE. WE TOOK A STEP BACK AND LOOKED AT WAYS WE COULD MAKE THE PROCESS MORE EFFICIENT AND DECIDED ON A GROUP INTERVIEW FORMAT. FROM THIS BRAINSTORMING SESSION, THE 'SPEED INTERVIEW' IDEA WAS BORN."

– ALLISON MCKAY, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SEARCH ENGINE PEOPLE

INTERVIEW PROCESS WHITTLES DOWN CANDIDATES FAST

In the speed group interview, five candidates are interviewed by five or six different interviewers in eight-minute segments. This forces candidates to think quickly and prioritize their responses. Having numerous interviewers involved allows for a truly collaborative team environment, one that Search Engine People (SEP), creator of this innovative process, will continue to utilize even after it hires its estimated 350 employees over the next few years.

Sample questions that candidates are often asked include:

Suppose you are a diehard iPhone user and you now have to use an Android?

(SEP uses this question to assess the candidate's ability to deal with things on the fly.)

Sooner or later everyone gets overwhelmed by their workload. Tell us about the last time you were unable to finish a project or work assignment in the time allotted?

(This question is meant to gauge a candidate's ability to manage their time.)

explain their point, but in this format, this is not possible. They would have run out of time and not answered all of SEP's questions.

"The candidates needed to think quickly and prioritize their answers," she said. "We also found that the candidates who were really passionate and enthusiastic about marketing were able to tell and demonstrate this to us in a short period of time. Additionally, the process provided the candidates with a better insight into the SEP culture and what it is like to work here."

One of those candidates was Laura Blaker, whom SEP hired in October 2013 as an account coordinator. In her role, Blaker supports numerous account managers, helps them meet their project objectives, provides SEO recommendations and assists with content development. She says she really enjoyed the speed interview process and found the atmosphere to be light and fun.

"It loosened everybody up," she said. "You forget it's an interview when you're flying from seat to seat. SEP had chosen interviewers from different departments and positions, offering a variety of personalities to speak with. I felt that the process offered me a clean slate, because with each new person came a new opportunity to speak about my strengths and accomplishments."

Blaker adds that speed interviews also offer a chance at redemption for those candidates whose nerves may take over.

"It gives you the feeling that you really did give the best impression possible. Honestly, it really threw the traditional interview process out the window. Other interviews I've attended involved sitting in a room for an hour, incessantly speaking to one person and wondering what they're scribbling on their notepads. The speed interview offered me the opportunity to speak with a number of people on the fly – a very refreshing approach."

Laura Blaker, Account Coordinator, SEP, who was hired through the speed interview process in October 2013

BENEFITS FOR ALL

Essentially, the speed interview consists of mini interviews by five different interviewers during a set time frame of eight minutes each. Designed to augment the traditional process, candidates are asked questions that garner the best insight into their skills.

"We asked questions to assess organizational skills, customer relationship skills, problem solving and critical thinking and working within a team," said McKay. "We did ask a few thought-provoking questions to assess the candidates' ability to think on their feet. All of this was part of reaching our goal to find the best qualified candidates for our openings."

SEP's company culture is fast paced and innovative. Because of this, the speed interview process encompasses these two facets.

"In addition, we have a very strong collaborative team culture and having more people involved in the process and decision-making supports this," said McKay.

The benefits to the company from this new hiring process have been swift and immediate with efficiency topping the list.

"We are able to interview more candidates in the same amount of time and gain other perspectives," said McKay. "We could determine which candidates could prioritize, had critical thinking skills and were able to adapt on the fly. We also wanted our collaborative team environment to shine through and ensure the candidates were a 'fit' for the role, company and our culture."

"WE ALSO WANTED OUR COLLABORATIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT TO SHINE THROUGH AND ENSURE THE CANDIDATES WERE A 'FIT' FOR THE ROLE, COMPANY AND OUR CULTURE."

– ALLISON MCKAY, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SEARCH ENGINE PEOPLE

At the conclusion of the speed interview, the interviewers individually ranked the candidates based on their responses and SEP's desired answers. Candidates were evaluated one by one and given a ranking. Interviewers must defend why they ranked the candidate as they did.

"Surprisingly, each person ranked the same top candidates," said McKay. "We then invited the top candidates back to our office a few days later to meet with a senior person on the team and the department head in a more traditional interview format."

Feedback from interviewees on the speed interview process has been very positive. For some, this was their first chance to interview and, for others, they like that they were not on the spot for a 45-minute meeting with one person, but could share their experience with a number of interviewers in the same amount of time.

Photos courtesy of SEP

A speed group interview being conducted at SEP's offices

"Most of the questions I received were scenario-based," said Blaker. "Anyone can ramble on about the skills and strengths they possess – but can they prove it? I think scenario-based questions get the candidate to dig a little deeper and draw from past experiences, enabling the interviewer to gain insight on their work ethic. At the end of each interview, I was also given the chance to say anything I thought they needed to know about me and leave a lasting impression – this was amazing."

Think back to the last time you had to work on several tasks at once. Tell us how you kept track of the details so that things didn't get confused or "fall through the cracks?" (This shows organizational skills.)

Pretend for a second that you have never heard of SEP. Please tell us what we do. (This question was used to measure the candidate's interest and knowledge of the company.)

If other companies are going to adopt this, they should consider if it's a process that fits with their culture," said Allison McKay, SEP's director of human resources. "There is a lot of planning and scheduling that happens behind the scenes, but the effort brings great outcomes." ■

Follow the Leader

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE CHANGE COMES FROM THE TOP DOWN

By Brian Wasyliw and Matthew Badrov

HR professionals deal with myriad workplace issues on a regular basis, including chronic absenteeism, poor performance, persistent employee complaints, allegations of harassment or a "poisoned work environment." While no workplace is immune, more often than not these issues stem, at least in part, from a weakness in the organization's culture.

Just as a poor organizational culture can harm a business, a strong and healthy one can yield great dividends. By minimizing workplace discontent, and enhancing positive employee relations, a strong organizational culture is almost certain to increase employee retention and engagement and, ultimately, productivity.

Organizational culture is made up of its members' shared values, beliefs and behaviours; it also guides individual decisions and actions at the unconscious level. As a result, it can have a potent effect on a company's well-being and success.

Mert Toker/Shutterstock

HOW IS AN ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE CREATED?

There is a common misconception that an organization's culture is defined by its policies. While it is true that a workplace policy can guide behaviour and impact organizational culture, the much more important impact is made by the organization's leadership team. An effective leader will engender employee trust and engagement, whereas an ineffective leader will almost always provoke the opposite response.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT LEADER?

The following is an interactive exercise (originally created by Kenneth Blanchard) we have conducted with clients seeking to effect a change in their organizational culture. It illustrates the magnitude of a leadership's influence on organizational culture and highlights the qualities that make a leader great.

Begin by writing down the name of the best boss you have ever had. This is the person for whom you most enjoyed working.

Now think about why you chose this person. What makes this person the best boss you ever had? Was she a good listener? Did she care? Was she compassionate? Did your best boss motivate and stand up for you? Did she have a great sense of humour?

Next, think about how you felt about your job when you were working for this person. What impact did those feelings have on your work performance and overall experience in the workplace?

Our guess is that you felt inspired, motivated, excited, happy, challenged, engaged or all of the above. You may have even enjoyed going to work or felt like you were a part of something special.

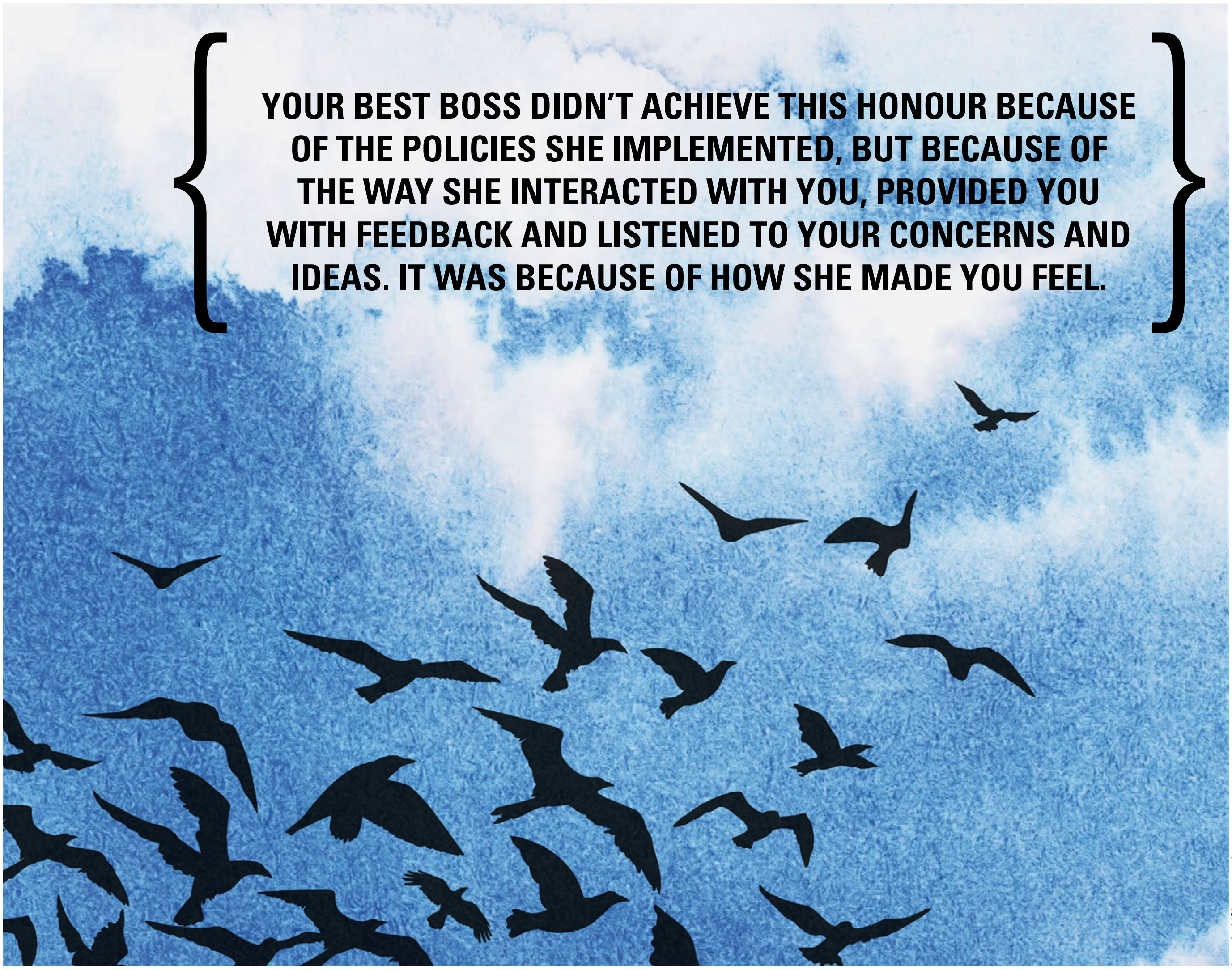
Now consider how each employee in your current workplace would respond if asked to participate in this exercise. How many of them would write down the name of a "boss" in your workplace? How many would name you?

BEING THE BEST BOSS

The "best boss" exercise is powerful because it illustrates the impact of leadership on workplace morale, but also the pivotal role leadership plays in creating an organization's culture. Your best boss didn't achieve this honour because of the

Bplanet/Shutterstock

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IS MADE UP OF ITS MEMBERS' SHARED VALUES, BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS; IT ALSO GUIDES INDIVIDUAL DECISIONS AND ACTIONS AT THE UNCONSCIOUS LEVEL.



kururiuri/Shutterstock

policies she implemented, but because of the way she interacted with you, provided you with feedback and listened to your concerns and ideas. It was because of how she made you feel.

So, how can you and the rest of your leadership team achieve the status of best boss?

While every workplace is different and managerial styles vary, incorporating the following practices into your organization's managerial approach will go a long way toward helping you and your team become the best bosses:

Build relationships: Demonstrate you care about employees as individuals, not merely commodities, by inquiring about their families and remembering personal details they share with you. Instead of asking, "How was your weekend," which generally leads to a one-word reply, start a conversation by asking open-ended questions like, "What did you do over the weekend?" You'll be surprised about how much you can learn.

Be transparent: Communicate with employees about decisions that affect them and explain the reasons for those decisions. They may still be upset about a particular decision but their response will almost certainly be more negative if they feel the decision was made arbitrarily or without any regard for its impact on them.

Empower employees: Ask employees for suggestions about how to resolve operational problems, increase efficiencies and respond to new market demands, etc. Soliciting ideas from employees will not only improve engagement by making employees feel part of the team, but invariably will yield creative ideas based on the employees' experience.

Be receptive: Listen to concerns raised by employees and, where you can, do your best to address them. A concern may seem trivial to you but it likely isn't to the employee who raised it. This doesn't mean you must cater to an employee's every request. However, a good manager sincerely listens to employees and considers options to address their concerns.

Be consistent and fair: Treat employees fairly. Nothing builds resentment like disciplining one employee for arriving five minutes late for a shift while giving another employee a ten-minute grace period. While it can be difficult to separate personal feelings from management decisions, it is critical to do so.

WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO POINT OUT HOW EMPOYEEES CAN IMPROVE, AND SOMETIMES FORGET TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THEY ARE DOING WELL.

Address issues promptly: The annual (or semi-annual) performance review should not be the first time an employee learns about an ongoing performance issue. While conversations about performance can be awkward and unpleasant, nothing undermines trust like failing to raise serious and ongoing concerns until the employee's formal performance review.

Recognize achievements: Celebrate successes! We have a tendency to point out how employees can improve, and sometimes forget to acknowledge what they are doing well.

COMMIT TO CHANGE

Creating a strong and healthy organizational culture is a laudable goal and when achieved, is almost certain to benefit the organization. However, changing an organization's culture is not easy, nor will it happen overnight. Meaningful and sustained change for the better requires commitment, unequivocal buy-in and modeling of good behaviour from the leadership team.

In today's competitive market, it can be difficult to complete even the most essential operational tasks, let alone nurture organizational culture. However, if you and your management team commit yourselves to effect positive organizational change your business and employees will thank you. ■

Brian Wasyliw and Matthew Badrov are lawyers with Sherrard Kuzz LLP, one of Canada's leading employment and labour law firms representing the interests of management. To learn more and/or for assistance enhancing employee engagement in your workplace, contact 416-603-0700 (main) or visit www.sherrardkuzz.com.

Matching Mentors

THE NEW WAY TO CONNECT MENTORS AND PROTÉGÉS

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP

Chuchka/Shutterstock

In the dating world, finding a compatible mate can be hit or miss. There are plenty of websites boasting their method results in better matches and possibly true love. For those looking to find an ideal mentor, however, true love isn't the goal but a better match certainly is. MentorCity is an online mentoring matching solution, connecting people to meaningful mentoring relationships.

MENTORCITY'S EARLY BEGINNINGS

Shawn Mintz is the creator and president of MentorCity. Before launching MentorCity in 2011, he spent 13 years in the career and employment services sector. As the senior manager of marketing and communications for ACCESS

Shawn Mintz, Creator and President, MentorCity

> **"THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE AND CAREER, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM THE ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF A MENTOR. THERE ARE ALSO TIMES WHEN YOU CAN SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCES TO GUIDE MENTEES IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION."**
>
> – SHAWN MINTZ, CREATOR AND PRESIDENT, MENTORCITY

Employment in Toronto, he worked with new Canadians to link them to employers. During his tenure at ACCESS, he was impressed by the energy and excitement generated by mentee and mentor conversations and became inspired about the many possibilities of mentoring.

"Throughout your life and career, there are times when you can benefit from the advice, guidance and support of a mentor," said Mintz. "There are also times when you can share your expertise and experiences to guide mentees in the right direction. MentorCity creates a mentoring community that enables you to engage in a series of give-and-take relationships."

SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

For both mentees and mentors, the mentorship program is easy and straightforward; simply create a profile in the automated profile builder. A user's LinkedIn profile can be uploaded to the system. The criteria are the same as for LinkedIn: industry, job function, experience, gender, location and language. Soft skills are matched using algorithms in the background and are not displayed to potential mentors or mentees.

Once complete, the system provides a list of possible matches based on the criteria entered in the profile, giving a compatibility rating with potential mentors. Mentees can send a request directly if the self-serve option is available or have the administrator make the match. An initial conversation and evaluation is set up where both parties determine the type of relationship they want.

The program eases the administrative burden by automating initial meetings, progress updates and evaluations with data easily exported into Excel. The reporting features of the platform are simple and customizable, allowing administrators to pull data they want from information uploaded on training or recognition and incentives, for example. An administrator dashboard tracks the number of hours completed, the status of the relationship and the number of searches and invitations sent out by users.

HOW IS MENTORING BEING REVOLUTIONIZED?

MentorCity can be used across the entire organization, regardless of geographical location, for member engagement, succession planning, leadership development and diversity and inclusion strategies. An organization can develop and use its own training tools or speaker series, better utilizing in-house expertise.

"MentorCity was launched in September 2013 to our global employee base; re-affirming our value proposition to provide meaningful and impactful development, tailored to meet each employees individual needs," said Rebecca Nemaric, senior director of Global Talent Management, Development and Strategic Acquisition at Celestica, one of the program's largest clients, having successfully implemented the platform across the entire global organization of over 30,000. "The MentorCity rollout was synchronized across the company to capitalize on cross business and cross geographical knowledge sharing and enterprise-wide collaboration."

For Celestica, choosing MentorCity complemented their existing mentoring strategy.

"Mentoring has always been a key part of Celestica's talent strategy and critical for the development of our employees. Given the global nature of our business, MentorCity is an integral component to rounding out our well established mentoring program – providing the flexibility to match our employees across the 13 countries in which we operate," said Nemaric.

Employees can seek their own mentors through a structured and guided communications process that matches people based on mentor strengths and mentee development needs.

BENEFITS FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) decided to standardize the MentorCity platform in the fall of 2013, making it available to all 28 chapters across Ontario. The previous mentoring platform, Mentor Scout, will be phased out by August 2014. HRPA, in its 2010 annual member survey, discovered that soft skills were a common concern among its membership. With the introduction of Mentor Scout, and now MentorCity, the number of HRPA members enrolled in chapter-based mentoring programs has increased from less than 300 in 2011 to over 1,400 by the end of 2013, according to Chris Larsen, HRPA's vice president of Marketing, Membership & Professional Development.

HRPA members also expressed a need for help advancing their careers, and access to senior professionals with experience and skills to offer is crucial for a junior HR professional. Mentors, Larsen says, can help junior professionals accelerate their "promotability" and get the necessary experience faster. Mentees can search for mentors specializing in their own areas of practice, such as health and safety, recruitment, compensation or training and development, allowing mentees access to members who can help advance their careers.

"Mentorship is a way to stay passionate about the amazing work you're doing with your company," said Mintz. ■

Keeping Up with the Joneses in the HR Tech

WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

By Raj Sheth

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Recruiters and HR professionals alike find that their technology quickly becomes outdated. According to a research report published by Bersin earlier this year, about 57 per cent of companies are planning to make a big HR software purchase in the next year and a half, but the already booming HR technology industry is only going to get bigger – and for good reason.

The recent developments in HR tech proved extremely efficient and cost-effective. As technology improves, the standards in HR change, and yet, the average HR management system (HRMS) in large companies is over five years old (according to the same research report by Bersin). When considering all that occurred in HR technology in the last five years, it's easy to see why everyone feels ready for an upgrade. This HR technology boom makes it difficult to keep up with the others in the HR tech arms race, especially when the pressure to upgrade gets tougher with every new technology.

THE BUDGET CRISIS

Of course, the matter of new technology in any department often comes back to budget issues. Pricing and cost can be a roadblock; whether an organization feels stuck with outdated or subpar software or if it simply wants to implement some type of HR technology, budget becomes a cause for concern.

Approaching management for anything new seems intimidating, and the word "software" instantly evokes the image of dollar signs. Budgets always err to the tight side, but budgets get implemented for future use. When it comes to HR technology, a budget may or may not work, but if management remains unaware of issues or restrictions, nothing happens. If the funding cannot occur, planting the seed of the need may help future efforts.

WORKING WITH WHAT AN ORGANIZATION HAS

Some companies feel dissatisfied with software that may only be a few years old. Regardless of budget, certain improvements can take place. By working with the current software provider and the internal team, an organization may find surprising opportunities. A few steps to get the process going:

Gather information from the internal team and find out exactly what they feel is missing or could improve in the current software

See if technical support can help with these issues. The provider knows the system best, and asking cannot hurt.

Find out if the software can tailor to the team's needs and seek instruction on how to do this

Discover costs associated with upgrades and updates and decide if the cost justifies the benefits

SLOW AND STEADY CAN WIN THIS RACE

Overall, new software might not fit in the budget immediately, so it's important to understand what the team actually needs and where current systems can improve or get tweaked. With the current rate at which HR technologies advance, the sense of urgency to keep up certainly puts pressure on organizations. Since repeated updating can get costly and frequently training a team about new systems may slow down production and efficiency, learning when to change or when to work with the current system remains key. Choose timing and technology wisely by using current systems optimally and making informed decisions. The HR tech arms race remains a contest to find what works best for each individual organization – not a battle to the upgraded finish line. ■

WHEN IT COMES TO HR TECHNOLOGY, A BUDGET MAY OR MAY NOT WORK BUT IF MANAGEMENT REMAINS UNAWARE OF ISSUES OR RESTRICTIONS, NOTHING HAPPENS.

Raj Sheth is the co-founder of Recruiterbox, an online recruitment software and applicant tracking system designed especially for growing companies.

Human Resources & Career Development

BRIDGING THE DISCIPLINES

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP

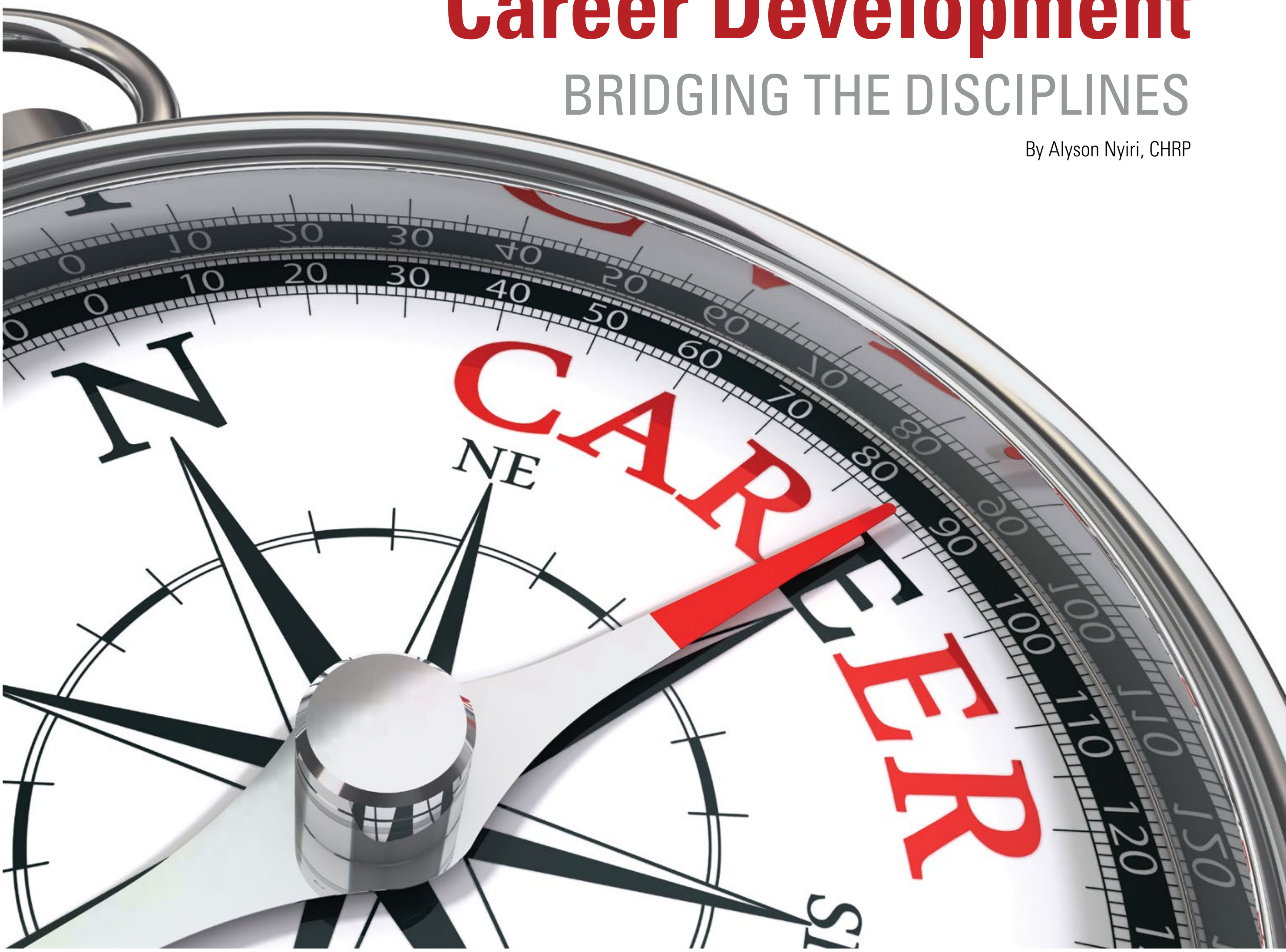

Photo by donskarpo

Do What You Are; Who Are You Meant to Be?; Do What You Love and the Money Will Follow.

You've heard the titles and perhaps secretly worked through the books just to make sure HR was really for you. In large part, these career investigations happen on our own time and most likely rely on online information and colleagues' or family members' recommendations. The business of finding what we really want to do is largely left up to us and not typically to one's employer. In an online survey on public perceptions about career development and the workplace, about half of Canadians have only some idea of what they need to do to advance their careers.

Career counselling – or vocational guidance, as it is also known – began around 1880 as industrialization, urbanization and immigration shifted the Canadian landscape from a largely agrarian to increasingly urban society. The rise of factories brought new systems of production. Specialized machines required workers to have specific skills and employers began demanding those skills. As specialization and overcrowding rose, so did labour abuses and poverty. Educators and social activists developed programs to help individuals learn the skills needed to fit into the new workforce by analyzing the job and matching the individual.

NATURAL COLLABORATORS

Today, career development is no longer simply job matching. The world of work is rapidly changing, with jobs becoming increasingly complex, demanding specific skills while at the same time forcing individuals to adapt rapidly and effectively in order to remain in the workforce.

Rob Straby, professor and curriculum developer in the Career Development Practitioner Program at Conestoga College for 19

EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL ACTIVISTS DEVELOPED PROGRAMS TO HELP INDIVIDUALS LEARN THE SKILLS NEEDED TO FIT INTO THE NEW WORKFORCE BY ANALYZING THE JOB AND MATCHING THE INDIVIDUAL.

years, says there are many direct benefits to the organization when a career development program for employees is implemented. According to Straby, career development has the ability to help an organization know what type of talents currently exist, and what needs to be developed to have the resources available for future initiatives.

When career development practitioners work with individuals, says Straby, they teach people how to examine their skills, interests, values and attitudes, and use this knowledge to plan their work, education and life choices across their lifespan. Individuals learn how to constantly re-invent and re-package themselves in order to secure jobs in the progressively complex world of work.

Effective career counselling takes into account the realities of the workplace. For this reason, career developers and HR professionals are natural collaborators. Career counselling can further complement HR's recruitment, retention, development, engagement and outplacement strategies by:

- Helping individuals anticipate and train for the jobs open now and in the future;
- Structure their resumes and interview skills to better suit what recruiters are looking for; and
- Learn the soft skills necessary to perform in an increasingly team-oriented and complex work environment.

PULLING THE DISCIPLINES TOGETHER

Both disciplines are interested in employee development and engagement. Dr. Deirdre Pickerell, Ph.D., CHRP of Life Strategies in B.C. has 21 years of experience as a career development specialist and human resources professional. Pickerell says that HR can help the "broader employee population" to see a future within the company by helping individual employees see who they are in terms of their skills, interests, values and personal style, and how those relate to what the organization has to offer.

For many individuals in the workplace, this opportunity may come during their performance review with the opportunity to express their career aspirations and develop a career path with their manager. These conversations can be an excellent place to delve deeper into the employee's skills, interests, motivations and personal style. HR specialists, who add career management principles to their practices, can help facilitate these discussions by coaching managers on how to help employees explore, plan and execute career development strategies within the company.

Pickerell advises that integrating career development practices into employee development can also help employees who are disengaged and unlikely to be considered for promotion, secondment or special projects. HR pros know people who are just "coasting" at work; they are bored, underutilized, disengaged

Photo by Jezper

and might even be causing problems. In this case, a career development conversation would focus on the employee's preferred future, motivated skills, passions, desires and explore specific occupational choices within the company. More importantly, it is the opportunity for the employee to take ownership for their level of engagement.

HR can add supportive modalities to existing career path or succession programs by:

- Documenting common interests, motivations and skills of individuals in particular positions;
- Identifying individuals who made significant and deliberate moves from one position to another; and
- Connecting individuals to others in the organization who have successfully moved into new positions.

Many HR professionals already have the basic building blocks for career development discussions. In their day-to-day roles, many offer counselling to employees on issues ranging from work-life balance, child or elder care, compassionate leave, return-to-work and performance development. Career development offers similar assistance to individuals, so both disciplines borrow heavily from a wide range of related disciplines such as counselling and therapy; adult education; ministry and spirituality; and economic and labour force development. ■

WHERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREER DEVELOPMENT

For HR professionals interested in taking courses on career development, the Directory of Career Development Education Programs in Canada can be found at *www.ceric.ca/documents/CDEP_Directory.pdf*.

To learn more about the Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners, visit *http://career-dev-guidelines.org*.

INTERVIEW with an HR Hero:

LES DAKENS

THE "PEOPLE EXPERT"

By Lisa Gordon

This is Les Dakens' second attempt at retirement. In 2008, at age 53, he retired from his job as senior vice-president, People at CN Rail. For the next three years, he kept busy working as a human resources executive coach and a writer, authoring a business book in 2008 and again in 2009.

But Dakens couldn't resist the opportunity when Michael McCain, president and CEO of Maple Leaf Foods, offered him a three-year assignment as chief HR officer. His mission at the international packaged-food conglomerate was two-fold: provide HR support during a major business transformation; and, find and train his successor before he left. For Dakens, it was like getting a second chance to go back and tick some things off his professional "to do" list.

His contract with Maple Leaf Foods ended last December, but *HR Professional* caught up with Dakens in Florida, where he was happily re-embarking upon retirement. He reflected on some of the key lessons learned during his 39-year career, talked about HR's role as "people experts," and discussed how second chances are often good opportunities to improve your professional game.

HRP: How and when did you decide upon an HR career?

LD: I didn't actually plan a career in HR; I graduated from Sheridan College with a marketing degree. Carolyn Walda, one of

Photo by Oliver Le Moal

In a Nutshell

- **First job:** The one that stands out is when I was 14, and I lived in Elliott Lake, Ont. I got interested in music and decided to bring in bands from Toronto. I'd sell tickets to the concert and brought in three or four different bands. It was fun to do. I didn't actually tell my parents until the first band arrived. I had decided I wouldn't put them in a hotel; they'd stay at my house!
- **Childhood ambition:** Like many Canadians, I wanted to be a hockey player. I was tall prior to age 12; but by age 16, everyone else grew taller and I became the smallest – and that was the end of my career.
- **Best boss and why:** I've had great bosses. At CN, Hunter Harrison was the toughest guy with high expectations, but I learned a lot about the business from him. More importantly, he absolutely had the people mindset in terms of development. He gave me everything I needed and more.
- **Current source of inspiration:** The person who has been my biggest supporter and inspired me the most is my wife, Mary Jane. She was always supportive; she was a psychologist and she always gave me great advice throughout my career. Now, it's a different kind of advice, but it's still inspirational.
- **Best piece of advice you ever got:** I'm an introvert by nature and never wanted to be the centre of attention. The best advice I ever got was that at the end of the day, results always speak for themselves. So produce the results, and let others recognize your effort. You don't have to over-promote yourself.
- **Favourite music:** My favourite band is Bon Jovi, so I guess rock music is my favourite.
- **Last book you read:** *Command Authority* by Tom Clancy with Mark Greaney.
- **How do you spend your time away from work?** Playing golf and tennis, and spending time with my wife and our dog, a golden retriever named Cassie.

my instructors at Sheridan, was the HR director at Nortel. She had me interview for two jobs, one in marketing and a second role in the personnel department. She didn't have to encourage me to go into HR, but she saw something in me.

HRP: Describe your last job.

LD: As CHRO at Maple Leaf Foods, my areas of responsibility included everything from hiring to retiring. We were involved in performance management, leadership development, compensation, benefits, training, promotions, succession planning, labour relations – everything to do with the 20,000 people in the organization.

HRP: What did you like about your job?

LD: I liked that it offered total accountability for the HR function, working very closely with the CEO and the management team, as well as the board. I never expected to go back to work full-time, and it actually reinvigorated me to try to do things in a way that was faster than ever before. It was like a second chance at doing something as fast and as effectively as possible. I only had three years to complete the mission.

HRP: What were some of the challenges of your job?

LD: Part of the restructuring plan involved closing factories. There were multiple plant closures to announce and complete. From a human perspective, that was the most difficult challenge. But I do think Maple Leaf Foods does it well. As an example, the company tends to give a long notice for a plant closure – up to three years, where some companies do it in six months or less.

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

LD: Make sure you have a people strategy for the HR function, so that everyone in the department understands your people strategy and how it supports the business strategy. The two must be linked. Second, you can't over-communicate your progress to the organization. Third, reward and recognize your people. You actually have to be more visible in the difficult times.

HRP: What skills are important for success in HR?

LD: You must have good business acumen – in other words, you must understand the business you're in and how it makes money. In HR, the biggest skill is the ability to attract, develop and lead people. You must have the ability to recognize and assess talent, and be able to coach people to become better leaders.

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

LD: Here's an example from Maple Leaf Foods: in 2012, we hired a university grad with a master's in human resources and labour relations, and put her in a three-year training program. She worked the first year in production, then the next year as a sales rep and in the third year, we plan to introduce her to HR. If a person can understand how products are made and sold, they will have so much more credibility in

THE EXPERTISE WE BRING TO THE PARTY IS THAT WE ARE CONSIDERED PEOPLE EXPERTS.

the HR function. They will speak the language. So take advantage of any and all training opportunities. You will set yourself up for success in your future career.

HRP: What's the future of HR?

LD: Going forward, since a lot of the HR functions of the past have been outsourced, we need to determine the value that an internal HR department can provide. The expertise we bring to the party is that we are considered people experts. We can advise, coach and assess talent, and should be involved when hiring, developing, promoting and improving departmental performance. It's not about being the administrative expert; it's about being the people expert.

HRP: Describe the focus of your third and most recent book, *The Real Deal on People: Straight Talk on How the CHRO Creates Business Value.*

LD: The book delivers advice and useful tips for current CHROs, and for those who want to get to the C-suite one day. It's also targeted at CEOs to help them understand the role of the CHRO and how to leverage that position in their organization. Finally, it's directed at board members who are on HR committees and want to learn how to leverage HR better.

HRP: What's the key to a satisfying retirement?

LD: I failed at retirement once. The difference for me this time is that with Maple Leaf Foods, I got to do the things I never thought I'd do. When you're retired, staying engaged in your profession – in whatever form that takes – is important. So I'll coach executives on a part-time basis, and I'm on several boards and give back where I can. But this time around, I also want to become a better husband, golf and tennis player! ■

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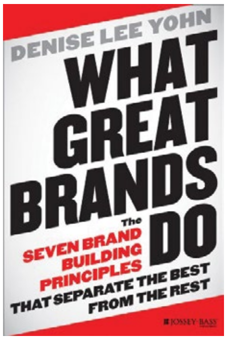
OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP



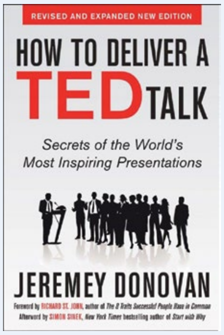
WHAT GREAT BRANDS DO: SEVEN BRAND BUILDING PRINCIPLES THAT SEPARATE THE BEST FROM THE REST

Denise Lee Yohn
Jossey-Bass, 2014

When change is needed, management sometimes looks to making over the company's message and logo. But for real change to occur, management needs to strengthen its culture, which more effectively shapes how employees turn brand into breakthrough customer experiences. Yohn's brand-as-business approach is the systematic management of the business around the brand with case studies and practical tools to help business leaders implement the process.

Talking Point

Brand-as-business encourages the use of the brand's values to inform and influence employee recruiting, training, development and compensation and reward programs. How can brand be infused into these processes?



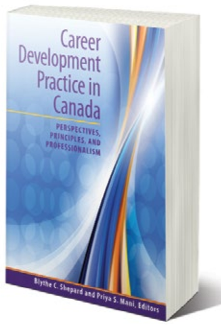
HOW TO DELIVER A TED TALK: SECRETS OF THE WORLD'S MOST INSPIRING PRESENTATIONS

Jeremey Donovan
McGraw-Hill, 2014

For anyone with a secret desire to deliver a TED talk, this engaging book provides humourous and practical tips on how to create your persona and determine what your primary objective is: to educate, entertain or inspire. Filled with tips on how to build your content, craft your delivery and produce compelling documents, Donovan outlines in detail all of the steps needed to give an unforgettable presentation.

Talking Point

In the afterword, Simon Sinek writes that the most important lesson in giving a TED talk is showing up. "Showing up to give can make the difference between a brilliant and authentic speaker versus someone who is not."



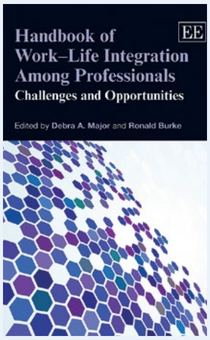
CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE IN CANADA: PERSPECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, AND PROFESSIONALISM

Eds. Blythe Shepard and Priya Mani
CERIC Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling, 2014

This new publication represents the first textbook on Canadian career development practices. As the field continues to grow, there is interest in moving the profession to a regulated approach similar to HR. Topics include the evolution of the field, best practices, community economic development, diversity and social justice and professional ethics; it is a solid overview for HR professionals interested in integrating career development into their practices.

Talking Point

A recent study commissioned by CERIC on career development in the workforce states that seven in 10 executives (71 per cent) agree that employers have a responsibility to provide career management programs for the their staff. How can we make that happen? ■



HANDBOOK OF WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION AMONG PROFESSIONALS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Eds. Debra Major and Ronald Burke
Edward Elgar, 2013

Positive psychology has strongly influenced the practice of leadership. Creating the Asset-Based Thinking (ABT) advantage, Cramer prompts leaders to focus on what is working and what strengths already exist. While this concept is not new, the strategies and practical advice offered here go a long way to help leaders implement ABT.

Talking Point

Deficit-based thinking has been the primary model in business, psychology, healthcare and leadership. Do things really get better when we focus on what is going wrong?

index to advertisers

Time for Change

MANAGERS ARE STILL UNSURE ABOUT HOW TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

By Nik Kinley

In recent years, many businesses have invested in training managers to coach and develop their people. Yet new research suggests that far more support for managers is still needed.

Changing people's behaviour is one of the most difficult and complex tasks of management. It is rare to find it actually called "behaviour change" in any job description. However, whether we call it coaching, training or development, what we are trying to do is to change how people behave in order to improve their performance. Not only is it a difficult task, but most managers appear to be stuck with trying to do it with a deeply limited set of tools and techniques.

A global survey was recently conducted with thousands of business leaders and managers. When asked what the main behaviours were that they needed to develop in others, the top five responses were:

- Drive and work motivation
- Management and supervisory skills
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Interpersonal skills
- Attitude

Equally unsurprising as those responses was the list of the main methods managers report using to change the above behaviours: feedback, coaching and training. However, when these leaders and managers were asked how often their attempts to change people's behaviour worked, the response – on average – was just under 50 per cent. Half the time it seems to work, and half the time it doesn't. And when we dig into these figures further, it reveals something fascinating.

According to the survey, if you ask managers how confident they are about helping other people to identify and understand what behaviours they need to change, 72 per cent say they find this easy. And if you ask them how confident they are about giving feedback, 75 per cent say that they find that easy, too. Yet only 35 per cent say that they are confident about which techniques to use, and only 10 per cent say that they feel confident about making sure behaviours stick and stay changed over time.

However hard and complex behaviour change may be, managers ought to feel well equipped for the task. One reason they are not lies in the fact that "behaviour change" is a phrase hardly ever heard. Fields that have a great deal to say about how to change people's behaviour – such as behaviour economics and psychotherapy – are rarely referred to and drawn upon.

The words we use matter. The language of "learning and development" engenders a line of thinking and the consideration of issues that are quite different from the ones that are raised if we talk of "behaviour change." The challenge of changing behaviour is just not the same as the challenge of imparting information or teaching skills, and not talking about it prevents us from recognizing these different challenges and acting to meet them. To improve the support that we as HR professionals are able to offer managers, we are going to first need to change how we talk about the issue. ■

Nik Kinley is a director and the head of talent strategy for the global talent management consultancy YSC. He has specialized in the fields of assessment and behaviour change for nearly 25 years.

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