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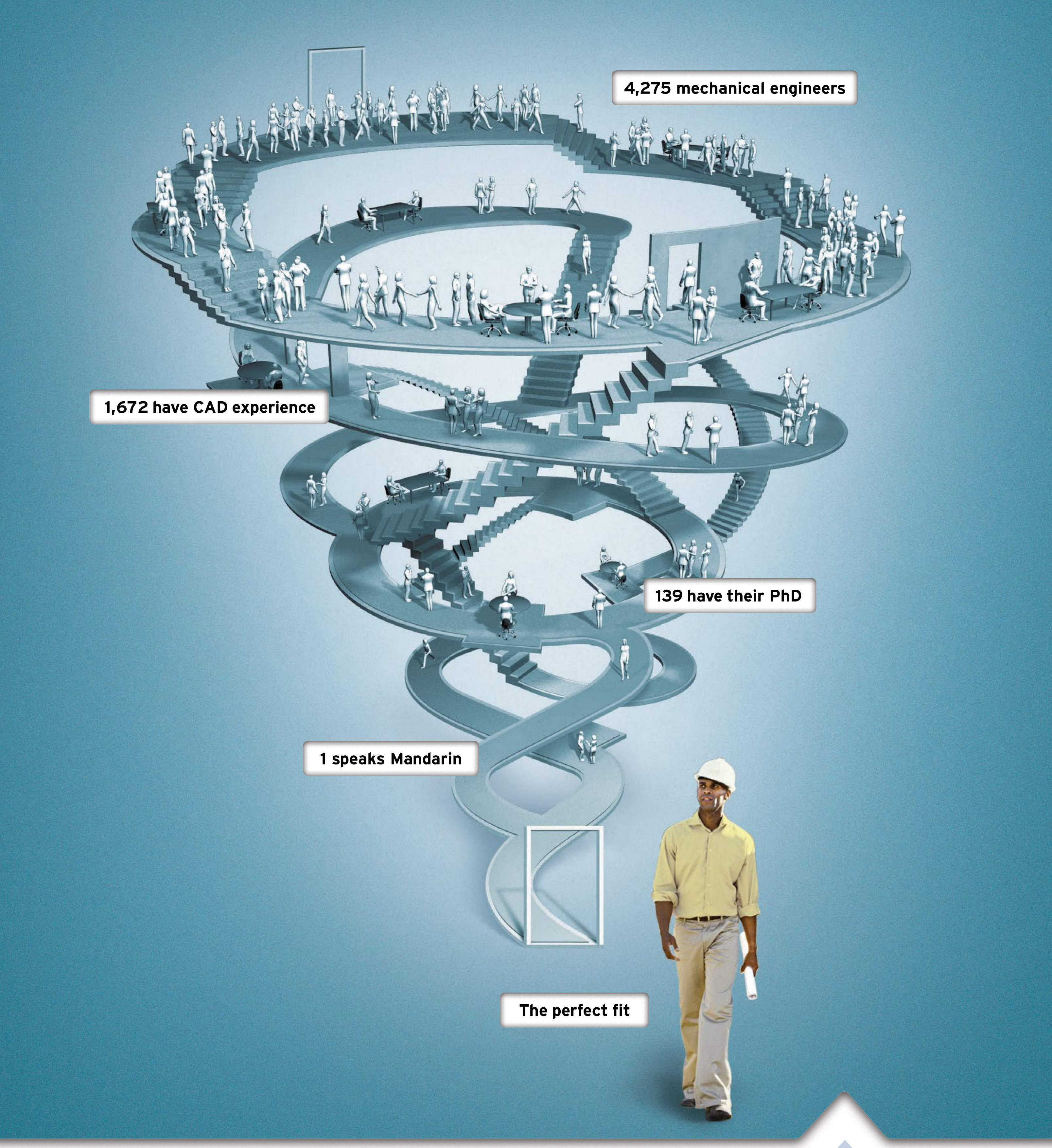
THE MAGAZINE OF HUMAN RESOURCES THOUGHT LEADERSHIP | JULY/AUGUST 2014

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

HR'S KEY ROLE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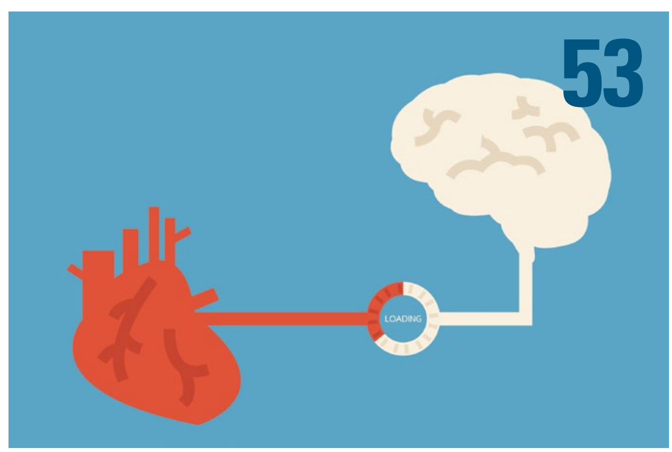

IN THIS ISSUE

Organizational culture is an all-encompassing phenomenon that exists in every workplace. HR professionals and departments have the power to positively influence the culture in their own work environments. In this issue of *HR Professional,* explore the ins and outs of culture, the ultimate foundation for any organization.

Cover photo: Denis Cristo/Shutterstock

contributors

LAURA WILLIAMS

Laura Williams has extensive experience advising employers on a full range of labour relations and employment law matters. She is the founder and principal of Williams HR Law and Williams HR Consulting Inc., a human resources law firm and HR consulting practice both located in Markham, Ont. servicing employers exclusively. Williams' style is defined by her proactive and practical approach along with her ability to understand the human dynamic, which is at the heart of most workplace issues. Williams is recognized for her emphasis on the importance of employee engagement and the effective management of workplace morale. Read her article about what organizations need to know about the new Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation, starting on page 17.

CRAIG DOWDEN

Craig Dowden, Ph.D., managing director of the Toronto office of SPB Organizational Psychology, has a doctorate in psychology with a concentration in business. As a coach and trusted advisor to numerous organizations and individuals, Dowden develops practical solutions grounded in the science of leadership and organizational excellence. He is also routinely involved in supporting his clients in assessing, developing and engaging their talent. Before moving to Toronto, Dowden was recognized as one of Ottawa's "Forty under 40" business leaders by the *Ottawa Business Journal*.

Dowden sat down with best-selling author Adam Grant, Ph.D. to discuss building a workforce that emphasizes a culture of giving as opposed to taking. Read the interview, starting on page 30.

TIM JACKSON, PH.D.

Tim Jackson is the president of Jackson Leadership Systems, carrying on the management of the firm established by his father, David Jackson. He oversees all client projects, including leadership development programs, at two large corporate clients. Jackson also maintains a busy assessment and coaching practice. He specializes in working with dynamic, fast-growing or strategically changing organizations, and ensures that they receive strong leadership development support to cope with these changes. Jackson Leadership's assessment and coaching practice is global in scope, involving leaders across North America, China and Western Europe. Jackson completed his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at The University of Western Ontario, and lives in Toronto, Ont. Read the article he co-authored about communicating performance feedback, starting on page 35.

LEANN SCHNEIDER

Leann Schneider is an independent consultant who works as an associate for Jackson Leadership Systems. She has extensive experience developing, conducting and training others to conduct structured behavioural interviews. In addition, she has experience integrating data from interviews, assessment centre exercises, personality tests and 360-degree feedback to write assessment reports for developmental and selection purposes. She is currently completing her Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at the University of Guelph. Her research has been published in outlets such as the *Journal of Research in Personality*. Read the article she co-authored about communicating performance feedback, starting on page 35.

letter from the editor

CULTURE IS KING

Since *HR Professional* first landed on my desk at the end of 2013, organizational culture is something that I think about every day, in some form or another. It's there whether you realize it or not, and once I really became conscious of it, it was hard not to analyze the culture of my own workplace and try to find where improvements might need to be made.

Of course, the topic of organizational culture has woven its way throughout many articles in *HR Professional* in the past few issues and prior. Culture's omnipresence in the workplace is inescapable; however, when the July/August issue of the magazine was slated as taking on the culture theme, I was both excited and a little bit nervous. How do we capture culture in an article? With the help of Bonnie Flatt, LLB, CPCC, PCC, SHRP, a member of the Editorial Advisory Board and professed "Cultural Yoda," we mapped out our cover feature, and I hope you enjoy what writer Melissa Campeau put together. Find it on page 20.

The other article from this issue that I'll highlight here brings up an activity that each of us will relate to: sitting. How many hours a day do you spend sitting at your desk? With summer finally coming, the opportunities to move your body are more frequent, and getting away from a sedentary lifestyle is critical for our health. In our office at Lester Communications, we've implemented a company-wide walking challenge, which motivates us to consciously think about getting up and walking around during the day. For information about what sitting all day does to our bodies, turn to Heather Hudson's article on page 47, and consider this a friendly reminder to get up from your desk more often.

As always, I hope you enjoy and learn from this issue of *HR Professional*, and I'm waiting for your thoughts. Please feel free to send me an email, or tweet me at @hrpromag; I look forward to your feedback. ■

Thanks for reading,

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Reforming Ontario's Apprenticeships Regime

By Phil Wilson, CHRP, SHRP

There's a paradox in the Ontario economy: youth unemployment is sitting at 17 per cent, yet the province is facing a skilled trades shortage that's costing Ontario $24 billion annually.

Young people are sitting idle while high-paying jobs as electricians, millwrights and mechanics go unfilled. And as a wave of baby boomers begin to retire out of the trades, more Ontario companies will be scrambling to fill skilled trades positions.

This spring, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) released a report containing a series of recommendations to remedy this situation. The report, *Apprenticeship Reform: Ontario's future depends on it*, calls on Ontario's new College of Trades to make changes to its apprenticeships regime, including modernizing the certified tradespeople-to-student ratio required to train apprentices, and ensuring fair and transparent classification of compulsory trades.

To restore Ontario's prosperity, the government must invigorate the trades to both fulfil the talent needs of business and to create high-paying jobs for young people. HRPA produced the report to prompt discussion among government, business, educational institutes and other stakeholders on how they can partner to produce apprentices and apprenticeship programs that meet the province's skills needs.

The report's key recommendations include modernizing Ontario's journeyperson-to-apprentice ratio (the numbers of certified tradespersons required to train an apprentice). Compared to other provinces, Ontario's current ratio is restrictive and unjustifiable – and risks losing potential apprentices to provinces with more favourable ratios. The report recommends government review the current ratio to get the province in synch with other jurisdictions.

The report also calls for fair and transparent classification of compulsory trades. While some trades like electrician, plumber or auto mechanic are already compulsory and require certification of tradespeople, the College's Review Panel is charged with classifying other trades and deciding whether they need to become compulsory (with added fees and training demands for workers). HRPA recommends ensuring fairness and transparency during this process, with the rationale for every decision to extend the range of compulsory trades clearly outlined and monitored for consistency.

And most importantly, the report says government must do more to promote the skilled trades as viable and lucrative careers to young people, including: raising awareness of future prospects in the trades, changing perceptions of skilled trades, increasing the flexibility of paths to skilled trade jobs and increasing

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TO RESTORE ONTARIO'S PROSPERITY, THE GOVERNMENT MUST INVIGORATE THE TRADES TO BOTH FULFIL THE TALENT NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND TO CREATE HIGH-PAYING JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The report is available on the HRPA website at www.bit.ly/appr-reform

apprenticeship completion rates (which now sit at about 50 per cent).

LOOKING TO EUROPE: LEARNING FROM GERMANY'S DUAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

Ontario can look to Germany and its innovative dual vocational training system to see how government, business and schools partner to produce apprentices and apprenticeship programs that meet the country's skills needs.

The system covers 348 skilled trades across all economic sectors and sets out formal rules governing mandatory skills for each trade; requirements for the apprentice, the host business and partner vocational school; and specific training/certification for each occupation. The dual system typically sees the apprentice undergo a three-year program featuring three or four days per week of on-the-job training and another one or two days of in-class education at school.

This dual system serves all parties well – it validates and professionalizes each occupation; apprentices get experience and paid training; and businesses can draw from a ready pool of talent, plus get an opportunity to "try out" workers to see how they fit in the organization's culture. ■

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

UPFRONT

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT BECOMES MORE BUSINESS-FOCUSED

Businesses are waking up to the changes in the world of work by aligning learning and developing initiatives to business strategy, according to new statistics released by the CIPD. However, more still needs to be done by organizations if they are to maintain a competitive lead, engage their employees and increase productivity.

The *CIPD / Cornerstone OnDemand Learning and Development report 2014* is an annual survey that tracks changes in workplace learning and development (L&D) practices. Findings show that the top two changes anticipated over the next couple of years are closer integration of L&D activity with business strategy, and more emphasis on monitoring, measuring and evaluating training and effectiveness. Reflecting the increasing emphasis on evaluating training, the survey revealed that the number of organizations measuring return on investment from L&D practices has increased from 26 to 48 per cent. The report also found that more organizations are offering training to non-employee groups, most commonly students, and two-thirds of not-for-profits are offering training to volunteers.

While the report revealed that organizations are paying closer attention to metrics, it also showed that L&D processes and systems could be better integrated with other aspects of HR management, such as recruitment, performance management and reward.

"While there is no 'one size fits all' approach to learning, it's clear that businesses and their employees want to get more out of learning," said Vincent Belliveau, senior vice president and general manager EMEA at Cornerstone OnDemand. "Learning activities need to support not only the individual's goals and development but also those of the business. This can only be done by integrating HR at the board level, agreeing on meaningful metrics and understanding the impact of learning through measurement and evaluation."

MAJORITY OF CANADIANS FEEL THEIR EMPLOYMENT IS "JUST A JOB"

Getting up and going to work every day is harder when you don't see your occupation as a career. Fifty-eight per cent of Canadian workers feel they have "just a job" as opposed to a meaningful career. The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of Careerbuilder.ca and included a representative sample of 426 full-time, private sector employees across industries and company sizes.

Nearly a quarter of Canadian workers say they plan to change jobs this year, up from 17 per cent last year. What is driving workers to explore other possibilities?

Employee satisfaction may be one cause. Job satisfaction matters to most Canadian workers, yet one in five employees say they are dissatisfied with their job. Still, 57 per cent are satisfied with their current jobs, mostly because of their coworkers, benefits and work/life balance.

Those who reported being dissatisfied with their job most frequently cited the following concerns:

- Don't feel valued, I feel like just a number
- My salary
- I don't like my boss
- Inability to make a difference
- No training/learning opportunities
- I don't have a good work/life balance
- I don't feel challenged

Those who are satisfied cited the following reasons:

- I like the people I work with
- Benefits
- I have a good work/life balance
- I like my boss
- I feel valued/my accomplishments are recognized
- My salary

"Offering frequent recognition, merit bonuses, training programs and clearly defined career paths are important ways to show workers what they mean to the

Shawn Hempel/Shutterstock

company," said Mark Bania, senior career advisor at CareerBuilder Canada. "With new positions constantly being added across Canada each month that are enticing workers to change jobs, now is the time for employers to look at their recruitment strategies and make adjustments so their top talent doesn't jump ship."

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS SHOULD CELEBRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For 20 years, WOMEN Unlimited, Inc. has been partnering with Fortune 1000 companies to help talented women develop the skills and mindset they need to become the next generation of top corporate executives. Dr. Rosina L. Racioppi, president and CEO of WOMEN Unlimited, Inc., offers advice to women who aspire to usher their organizations to new levels of growth and profitability.

"Most women are passionate cheerleaders for the achievements of those they care about – kids, spouses, parents, siblings, friends, bosses, colleagues and subordinates – with one notable exception: themselves," said Dr. Racioppi. "Women often shy away from getting the word out about their corporate accomplishments. They harbor the misguided expectation that their work will speak for itself."

Catalyst research has found that men are paid on potential while women are paid on performance. This may be due, in part, to the reluctance of women to celebrate their own accomplishments, says Dr. Racioppi. "When a woman chooses to let her work speak for itself, she thwarts her own progress by limiting information critical for senior leadership to assess her talents and abilities. By 'tooting her own horn,' a woman can begin to shift the equation and give corporate leaders a sense of not just her performance, but her leadership potential as well."

There are many effective ways to spread the word about significant accomplishments, says Dr. Racioppi. "If a woman has closed a major deal, helped launch a new product or received an award from a professional organization, for example, there is nothing wrong with relying on word of mouth to spread the news," she said. "However, she should also consider sending out a memo, forwarding a press release or having a trusted corporate friend or colleague get the word out."

MANY HR PROFESSIONALS SAY UNPAID INTERNSHIPS ARE UNFAIR

Almost two-thirds of human resources professionals believe unpaid internships not tied to education or training should be illegal, according to a recent survey conducted by the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

Of those respondents who work at organizations that currently offer unpaid internships, almost 60 per cent said they should be illegal, providing an interesting perspective on the issue from HR professionals charged with overseeing internship programs.

"Many respondents said that no organization should be exempt from the Employment Standards Act, particularly concerning minimum wage laws," said survey author Kristina Hidas, HRPA's vice president, HR Research and Development. "Other respondent concerns included that unpaid internships displace paid workers, and that the practice is unfair because it provides an advantage to wealthy young people who receive family support while working for no pay."

"MANY RESPONDENTS SAID THAT NO ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING MINIMUM WAGE LAWS. OTHER RESPONDENT CONCERNS INCLUDED THAT UNPAID INTERNSHIPS DISPLACE PAID WORKERS, AND THAT THE PRACTICE IS UNFAIR BECAUSE IT PROVIDES AN ADVANTAGE TO WEALTHY YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE FAMILY SUPPORT WHILE WORKING FOR NO PAY."

– KRISTINA HIDAS, VICE PRESIDENT, HR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, HRPA

Other survey stats:

- 68 per cent of HR managers working in organizations with less than 50 employees said unpaid internships should be illegal, while 45 per cent working in large organizations (with more than 5,000 employees) said the same
- 20 per cent of respondents are concerned that unpaid internships displace paid workers
- A third of respondents say unpaid internships only benefit the organization
- A third of respondents have seen the number of unpaid internships at their organizations increase over the past five years

Internship value

"Many respondents did feel there was a place for unpaid internships – as long as it's tied to education and training," said Hidas. "They provide young people with important work experience, as well as an opportunity to build networks and acquire important, transferable skills. Many members said unpaid internships should exist within specific frameworks: that they be run as part of a larger educational program; be limited in length of time (i.e., three to six months); and offer compensation for expenses like food and travel. [Respondents also said that] the role of HR professionals can be pivotal in brokering internships that benefit both the employer and the individual."

USING DATA TO BUILD BETTER HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEMS

New Conference Board of Canada research shows that Canadian organizations are heavily investing dollars and energy into their HR functions in the emerging "Talent Decade." During this time, strategic factors such as demographics, labour markets and productivity are converging to elevate the importance of talent even further. In this dynamic business environment, it is talent management that will create sustainable competitive advantage.

During the Talent Decade, organizations will also need to ensure that their HR function is building effective talent systems and measurement tools that support strategic business decisions and strengthen workforce capacity.

Organizations that effectively exploit knowledge of data and analytics will have the capability to drive better business decisions. However, findings in *Human Resources Trends and Metrics: HR Function Benchmarking, Third Edition* reveal that Canadian organizations are only starting to build this capability, and less than a quarter of Canadian organizations use human capital performance dashboards or scorecards.

"In the emerging Talent Decade, aligned and integrated HR programs, policies and systems that find, develop and deploy the right talent will be the key differentiator between successful organizations and their less successful counterparts. An HR measurement strategy is needed to demonstrate that the HR function is getting this right," said Ian Cullwick, vice president, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada.

Despite the elevated importance of strategic alignment between the business and the HR function, the research also shows that 48 per cent of organizations describe the nature of their HR strategy as "traditional HR management" with a focus on core HR program activity. Many boards of directors continue to see the HR function in this light and are seeking assistance most often in the areas of compensation and rewards, rather than higher value HR strategies.

Human Resources Trends and Metrics: HR Function Benchmarking, Third Edition provides HR and business leaders with detailed and comprehensive benchmark findings and insights relating to the role of the HR function. The data is presented in the context of HR strategic considerations, the changing role of the HR function itself and human resources and labour market trends.

Access the report at http://bit.ly/1rcYWZG. ■

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Ensure your Organization Complies with Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation

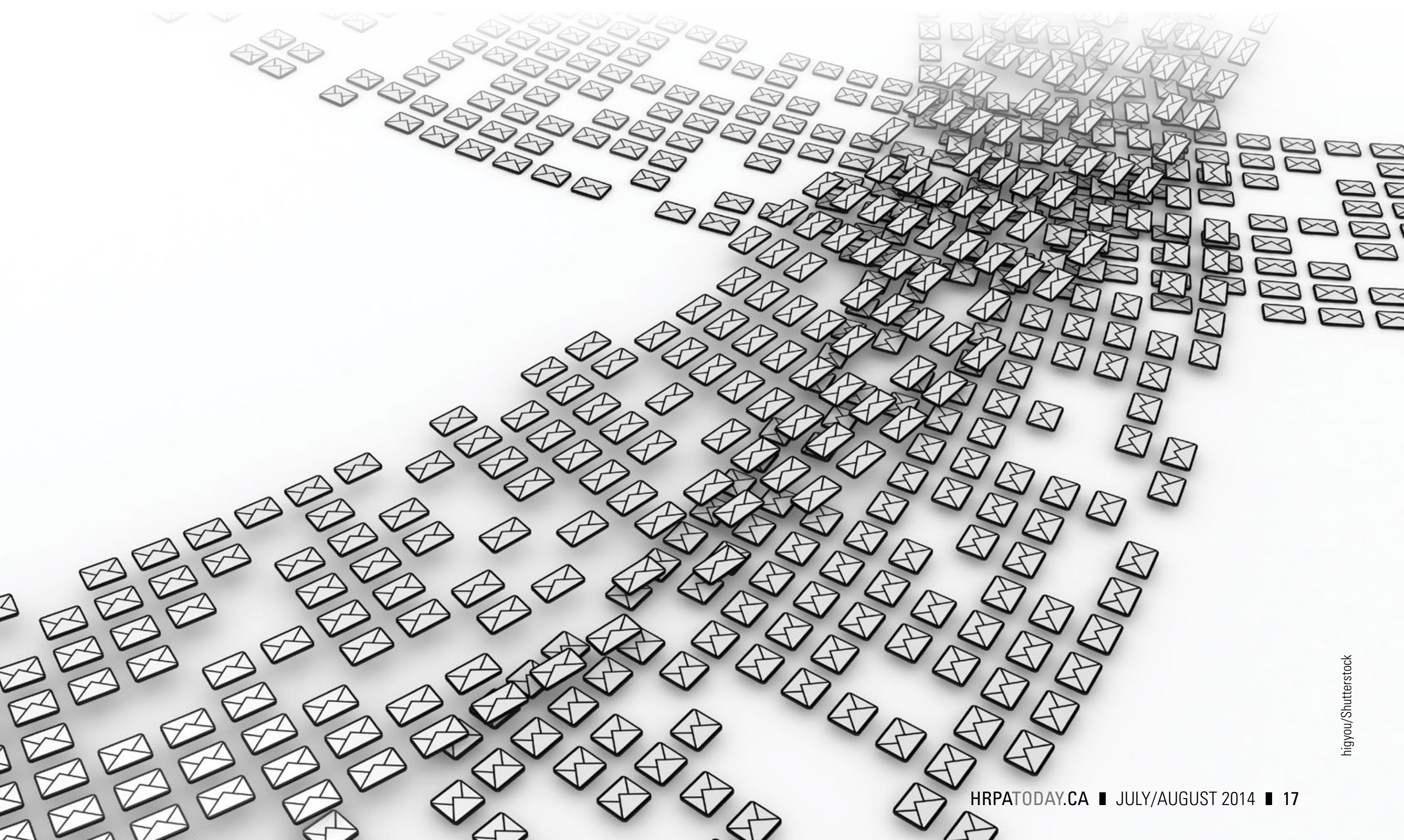
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CASL

By Laura K. Williams

By now, your organization is likely aware that new legislation commonly referred to as Canada's Anti-Spam Law (CASL) is coming into effect on July 1, 2014. In fact, your IT, sales and marketing teams have probably been scrambling to adjust your processes and procedures to comply with the legislation.

The federal government introduced the bill after years of complaints on the part of individuals and businesses whose inboxes were constantly being inundated with unsolicited electronic messages, otherwise known as spam. There is merit to those complaints. According to a 2013 report by Mountain View, a California-based Internet security firm Symantec Corporation, a whopping 66 per cent of emails sent daily are spam.

Enter CASL. One of the strictest pieces of existing legislation regulating electronic messages, CASL's purpose is "… to promote the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy by regulating commercial conduct that discourages the use of electronic means to carry out commercial activities." Specifically,



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THE "STICK" THAT HAS MADE MANY ORGANIZATIONS PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO CASL IS THE SERIOUS PENALTIES THAT MAY BE IMPOSED ON OFFENDERS, WHICH TOP OUT AT $10 MILLION FOR CORPORATIONS.

the Act regulates organizations that send commercial electronic messages (CEMs), which include text, sound, voice and image messages that encourage or solicit participation in a commercial activity. This includes a CEM that offers to purchase, sell, barter or lease a product, good, service or land, or that promotes a person who is connected to these commercial activities.

The key requirement under this legislation is that as of July 1, organizations sending CEMs from or to Canada need to obtain the consent of their recipients to send the message, subject to certain exceptions and where consent is implied. This compliance deadline is significant because, after July 1, even the message requesting consent will be considered a CEM and regulated accordingly.

Don't think it's worth the trouble to comply? The "stick" that has made many organizations pay serious attention to CASL is the serious penalties that may be imposed on offenders, which top out at $10 million for corporations. Criminal charges can be laid where organizations are alleged to have made false or misleading representations regarding CEMs. And unlike most legislation, CASL allows private rights of action. This means businesses and/or consumers can seek damages of $200 per spam violation, to a maximum of $1 million per day, with officers and directors of companies who knowingly violate the legislation potentially being held personally liable.

Of course, CASL includes several exemptions, which make its compliance requirements somewhat less onerous. Electronic communications sent within a business and between businesses that are in an ongoing business relationship are one example. Also exempted are messages sent to customers in response to a request for information, quotes or complaints; messages sent to enforce a legal right, such as those related to enforcing contractual obligations or collecting a debt; and third-party referrals where the CEM sender discloses in the message the full name of the person who made the referral and the individual making the referral has an existing personal or business relationship with both the sender and the recipient.

Under CASL, consent to send a CEM can be implied in certain situations. Examples include where an organization sends a CEM to a person with whom they are in an existing business or non-business relationship, such as where the recipient has previously bought or leased a product or service from the sender; been involved in an investment opportunity; or has entered into a written contract with the sender in the last two years or made an inquiry or application to the sender within the last six months.

IMPLICATIONS

CASL will have a profound impact on an organization's ability to market its products or services, not to mention prospect new business leads. Most importantly from an HR perspective, CASL will force organizations of all sizes to develop new measures and protocols to control the sending of electronic messaging across their workplaces.

While organizations will make efforts to meet their compliance obligations under CASL by July 1, 2014, unfortunately many will leave themselves susceptible to violating these new rules by failing to implement compliance measures that are sustainable. In this respect, certain workplaces are particularly vulnerable – think companies that employ a large sales force, employees who are charged with maintaining customer accounts or conducting business development or promotional activities. Often these employees have been performing their sales roles under the broad mandate of closing the sale by whatever means necessary, and in our digital age, this has meant heavy reliance on CEMs.

It is critical for employers to ensure their employees understand and are held accountable for adhering to CASL because under the legislation, companies whose employees are not in compliance will be held vicariously liable for violations. Employers need to take steps to protect themselves by:

Familiarizing themselves with the legislation – In particular, organizations need to understand how CASL will impact their operations, what they need to do to meet their compliance obligations and what sanctions they could face for violations.

Seeking consent – As mentioned, even messages seeking permission to send CEMs will be considered spam after July 1. This means there is simply no time to waste in obtaining that critical consent, which could be as simple as sending a message to a current email recipient from the company's contact list and requesting permission to continue receiving electronic communications. Remember that you must also save that email confirmation in case your electronic messaging practices are called into question by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, which will be enforcing the Act.

Understanding compliance gaps – There should be a robust evaluation of where your company may be exposed to not meeting compliance on an ongoing basis. This means assessing everything from your marketing initiatives, sales processes to individual staff practices to understand where you could run afoul of CASL.

Implementing policies – One of the keys to avoiding vicarious liability exposure under CASL is creating and implementing CEM workplace policies. These policies should make sense in the context of day-to-day operations and be communicated in a manner that gains employee buy-in. The policies must be simple to follow and avoid burdening employees who could ultimately revert to their old CEM tactics if they think the new methods are too onerous. To compel adherence to these workplace policies, the consequences for

breaches must be clear and employees should be required to sign off signifying their understanding and agreement to comply.

Training employees – Employers should not expect that by implementing policies, staff will immediately fall in line with the new practices that your organization will be required to implement under CASL. Employers must train all employees on their new CEM policies, and any new systems adopted to support CASL compliance, e.g. new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. Training is critical, particularly in environments that will need to help employees break historical non-compliant CEM habits. Everyone in your organization needs to understand their obligations under CASL and what steps are required to meet ongoing compliance.

Monitoring compliance regularly – Compliance is an ongoing exercise. This means that organizations not only need to establish procedures for sending electronic messages, but they also need clear metrics for assessing compliance. This could be as simple as insisting that all CEMs are sent via your CRM software, which is programmed to support and regulate ongoing compliance with CASL. Whatever the case, compliance monitoring means conducting regular internal audits to ensure that employees are following the proper procedures. Also critical is ensuring that someone is specifically designated within the organization as being accountable for monitoring ongoing CASL compliance.

While CASL regulations may seem burdensome at first, focus on the positive. This legislation offers your organization the opportunity to refocus sales and marketing strategies, improve promotional content, vet customer and prospect lists and reinforce solid practices and procedures. It could also possibly rein in rogue sales staff, and help employees work more productively and effectively. What may seem like a business and HR nightmare at first could instead present an opportunity for operational improvement and bottom-line growth. ■

Laura K. Williams is principal with Williams HR Law Professional Corporation.

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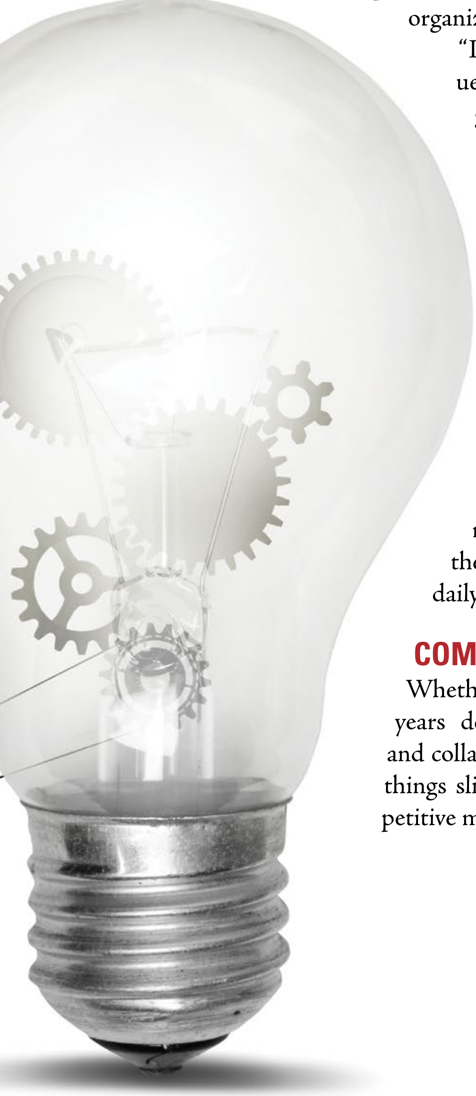
Organizational Culture

HR PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN ESTABLISHING AND REINFORCING A COMPANY'S OVERARCHING CULTURE

By Melissa Campeau

Plug "organizational culture" into Google and you get more than 32 million results. Clearly, culture is a topic on many people's minds. Forward-thinking business leaders, in particular, have embraced the link between culture and performance, which is good news for human resources professionals – the natural owners of culture. You might say there's somewhat of a tipping point happening at the moment, setting the stage for HR to positively influence, impact and steer corporate culture like never before.

From the front-line worker to the off-site accountant, from the CEO to the front-desk receptionist, culture permeates every nook and cranny of an organization.



"It really has to do with the values and the assumptions that guide day-to-day behaviour in the workplace," said Kelowna-based Graham Lowe, president of workplace consulting firm The Graham Lowe Group and author of *Creating Healthy Organizations*. "It's the unwritten rules people carry around in their heads that guide how they relate to each other, how they relate to customers and how they go about their work on a daily basis."

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Whether an organization has spent years developing an entrepreneurial and collaborative culture, or they've let things slide into disengaged and competitive mire – there's still a culture.

It's not surprising that organizations with a clear and compelling purpose, as well as a set of values that define how they work together, will attract and engage employees who have a similar purpose and set of values. And these organizations will outperform other businesses on both financial measures like productivity, share price returns, profitability and employee engagement and retention.

"Culture is the lifeblood of any company," said Bonnie Flatt, a leadership coach in Toronto. "The clearer and more purposeful your culture is, the more you'll differentiate yourself from your competition."

CULTURE IN CONFLICT

Management expert and author Peter Drucker famously asserted, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Essentially, no matter how great your business plan is, it's really the wellness of your culture that will determine whether or not your strategy takes hold.

When there's no alignment between what an organization says it's all about and how employees think and act on a daily basis, strategy doesn't stand a chance. What's more, an organization could be at risk for reduced performance, decreased engagement, retention difficulties – and worse.

When the space shuttle Columbia broke apart over Texas on February 1, 2003, news reports pointed to foam insulation that shed on liftoff and struck the left wing, allowing hot gases to penetrate and destroy the wing structure on reentry. The internal investigation, however, revealed a very different cause.

"When NASA conducted an inquiry, they said that the root cause had been a failed safety culture," said Lowe. "NASA is an organization – at least on the surface – that had been known for rules and procedures, for safety and zero tolerance of any error."

Engineers working on this particular shuttle, however, were subjected to a different set of pressures and incentives that steered them away form the formal commitment NASA had made to safety.

"They were focused on deadlines," said Lowe. "The real corporate value that was placed on safety became secondary and that's what resulted in the disaster."

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>
> – BONNIE FLATT, LEADERSHIP COACH

WEAKENED CULTURE

Actions in direct conflict with corporate values, as with the space shuttle disaster, are a clear indication of a problem with culture. More subtly, witnesses to those actions who choose to remain silent, rather than speak up, point to a culture's failings as well.

Canadian engineering giant SNC Lavalin recently struggled through several troubled years, embroiled in headline-making scandals. While only a handful of employees may have been directly involved in illegal activity, there were plenty of silent witnesses who never spoke up about what they saw going on.

"A key way you can tell if culture is being reinforced is how employees react when they see behaviour that's inconsistent with the prescribed values and beliefs put forward by the organization," said Norm Sabapathy, executive VP, People at Cadillac Fairview.

At SNC Lavalin – a company that lists respect for its code of ethics among its core values – the employees who didn't speak up were as indicative of a broken culture as the actions of the wayward employees.

TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP

While a leader can't single handedly develop a strong corporate culture, it's nearly impossible for an organization to have one without a visionary leader at the helm. But culture isn't simply a top-down exercise. Instead, it needs to be shared and made real from the bottom up as well.

"Followers give leaders permission to lead and they can take it away just as easily," said Flatt.

In some cases, a CEO might engage employees to drive the change, as was the case at IBM just over two decades ago. In 1993, IBM was floundering as an organization and brought in a new CEO, Louis Gerstner. To help realign the culture, he ran a company-wide grassroots consultation on values.

"He tapped into the views of all employees, and basically rebuilt the values based on bottom-up input across the organization," said Lowe. "They followed through with good communication and took steps to engage the workforce. While it was a participatory process, none of it could have happened without the 100 per cent dedication of the leadership of that organization."

Typically, the roots of change begin with questions. Flatt, for example, typically asks her clients, "Why is your organization here?" A compelling why is a necessary base for a strong culture. Southwest Airlines, for example, is here to democratize air travel. Apple is here to disrupt the status quo. Disney is here to create dreams. Your organization's "why" provides an overarching statement that should resonate across the entire company.

Under that overarching umbrella, the executive team can begin to develop values.

"One of our clients hired us to work with the leadership team, get really clear on the culture and change it," said Flatt. "So we spent two days with them in a workshop. After the team got clear on the company's overarching reason for being, we asked each person to share stories and we helped them unpack their individual values." Each person identified two or three important values of his or her own. From there, said Flatt, "We asked, okay, what are the collective values of the group? What do you really stand for as a leadership team and as a business? And they narrowed it down to four values."

DEVELOPING BLUEPRINTS

Before attempting to encourage staff to embrace those values, it's critical to understand the current lay of the land. After all, it's impossible to create a map to point B if you don't know where point A is.

"Take time to measure baselines," said Sabapathy. "What are the shared standards, attitudes and beliefs in your current organization, and what would you like them to be?"

When you've got a handle on those coordinates, you can understand what sort of gap you're attempting to bridge in each area of the business and you can create a tailored map for each stakeholder group.

KEEP IT REAL

Whether an organization is working with a set of values or an umbrella vision statement, it's likely that each area of the business will understand these through a slightly different filter. HR can help each group establish what these sometimes lofty-sounding ideas and principles might look like in the real world.

"If you ask someone to share their values with you, they'll give you a blank look," said Flatt. "If you ask them to share a story they're really proud of, when they were at their best or something they want to celebrate, you'll hear the values in that story."

BEHAVIOURS AND POLICIES

Simply sharing values with team members, however, isn't likely to have much impact on culture. Instead, each group within an organization needs to define what behaviours support the values, as they understand them.

At Disney, for example, the umbrella statement "We are here to create dreams" might be defined by different actions in the accounting department than in the marketing or customer service departments.

Teams can also influence policies that empower employees to take action in support of those values. Online shoe and clothing company, Zappos, for example, lists "Deliver 'wow' through service" as a core value. Company folklore tells of customer service reps arranging pizza delivery

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for an unhappy customer on the phone at the dinner hour, and flowers delivered to a customer whose mother had recently died.

"These are customer services reps who are empowered to do whatever is required to give the customer a 'wow' experience," said Flatt. "The culture is about the 'wow' and the policies support this."

GROWING PAINS

Smart recruiting has always been a key ingredient to an organization's success and the interview process has become more sophisticated over the years to reflect our growing understanding of the process. But when the goal is to hire employees whose values align with the organization's, the hiring process can require some ingenuity. Values, core beliefs and natural tendencies – these can be difficult things to uncover during a typical situational interview.

To counter this, some creative companies put together involved behavioural interviews to spot their future superstars. WestJet, a company that considers itself to be in the hospitality business (rather than the travel business), conducts lengthy behavioural interviews to zero-in on candidates who are natural hosts. WestJet co-founder and senior vice-president of customer service, Don Bell, has famously said, "People by nature are negative, but some are criminally enthusiastic." WestJet tries to spot those optimists by putting potential employees into unconventional group situations that bring out natural instincts.

"These front-line people represent the manifestation of culture," said Flatt. With that in mind, what may seem like an expensive exercise becomes a reasonable and justifiable investment in culture, brand identity and retention.

Hiring isn't foolproof, of course. Even great recruiting tactics can mean onboarding the wrong employee from time to time. To counter this, Zappos rather famously offers new hires a certain amount of cash to quit after the one-week mark and even more cash after the one-month mark. As Zappos sees it, if a new employee takes the cash, they don't fit the culture.

As an organization attempts to shift its culture, there will inevitably be employees whose values no longer align with the organization's. Sometimes, employees will identify this on their own and take the initiative to leave.

In other situations, leadership will need to make some difficult decisions, especially if an employee excels in certain areas but shows problematic behaviour in others.

"There's the classic example of the employee who hits the ball out of the park every year when it comes to results, but who struggles with behaviour that drives engagement and sustained results," said Sabapathy. "Does leadership then make the tough call to say, 'This person is coming off the high potential list and if he doesn't improve, he's going to be fired'?" If an organization is committed to changing its culture, this is the kind of hard choice that needs to be made.

MULTIPLE CULTURES

Within even the most aligned and positive culture, there will still be room for personality differences and deviations in personal style. Teams, too, may develop their own healthy variations on a cultural theme.

This can be true on a global scale as well. Four Seasons founder Isadore Sharp managed to run a very successful organization with outposts around the world despite some obvious challenges to a singular culture. For example, a team working in a hotel in Tokyo would have a different set of values than one in Rome and another in Toronto. What Sharp managed to do – very successfully – was to connect a geographically spread-out team by way of one all-encompassing principle: treat others as you would want to be treated. It's a trickle-down theory, spreading from manager to employee to guest and back into the brand.

"It's a virtuous circle," said Lowe. "Even though the company operates in so many countries with so many ethnic and religious backgrounds, this principle translates into every culture and every background, so everyone understands it."

Of course, there are challenges to maintaining a connected principle or vision across markedly different global cultures.

"In each geography, you might have a different interpretation of the corporate culture," said Flatt. "As long as those interpretations are aligned, you're okay. When they're not, it's difficult to speak a common language and you might see internal strife."

LINK BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

While differing cultures within an organization can cause trouble, tensions can also arise when there's a disconnect between an internal and external culture or brand.

"There should be resonance," said Lowe. For example, a company that supports community causes and encourages employees to be actively involved as volunteers is clearly putting value on community involvement. But, Lowe pointed out, "If internally, there's no work-life balance and people don't have the time to do externally what they're being urged to do internally, then there's a complete disconnect." Lowe also emphasizes the importance of spotting this connection – or disconnection – and helping C-suite decision makers see it, too.

"To establish and reinforce culture and values, an organization has to be completely consistent in the eyes of all stakeholders," he said. "Employees are big stakeholders."

Between CSR initiatives that put organizations in more direct contact with communities, the prevalence of social media and a business world that's less and less siloed, the line between an internal culture and an external brand is becoming so permeable, it's almost nonexistent. To keep both the internal and external cultures healthy and interconnected, "It's really important to link your culture with your employer brand, organization brand, community brand and consumer brand," said Sabapathy. "What I've seen is there's been an increasing partnership between HR and marketing."

THE LONG GAME

"Developing a particular corporate culture is not a goal to set for next quarter. You have to be in it for the long haul," said Sabapathy. Experts estimate it takes between three and 10 years to develop a strong culture. That's a challenging prospect in a society with a love for short-term results and a generalized anxiety about change.

In spite of this, HR needs to approach culture with a long-term plan in mind and the understanding that an aligned culture will deliver superior results for an organization in nearly every measurable way.

"CEOs and other leaders get that culture makes a significant difference in performance," said Sabapathy. "It's such a critical business area and it's a place where HR can drive real value creation, demonstrate high-impact leadership and really shine." ■

Conversational Intelligence

WHAT OPENS US UP AND CLOSES US DOWN?

By Judith E. Glaser

Conversations can be dynamic, interactive and inclusive – impacting the way we connect, engage, interact and influence others, and enabling us to shape reality, mindsets, events and outcomes in a collaborative way. They can move us from *power over others* to *power with* others, bridging reality gaps between *how you see things* and *I see things*.

Conversational intelligence (C-IQ) often separates those who succeed from those who fail – in business and in relationships of all kinds. Intelligent conversations are sources of energy and intimacy, connection and communication that empower us to launch transformational products and projects into the world. They are the golden threads that allow us to move toward and trust others; however, these threads can also unravel, causing us to avoid others in fear of loss and pain. Unhealthy conversations are at the root of distrust, deceit, betrayal and avoidance – resulting in low productivity and profitability.

Words are the symbols we use to view, think about and process our perceptions of reality and the means of sharing our perceptions with others. Yet few leaders see "words" through this perspective, and therefore lack insight as to how vital conversation is to the health, productivity and "sanity" of their culture.

By learning how conversations trigger different parts of our brain, and how they either catalyze or freeze our brains in protective patterns, you can develop the conversational intelligence skills to build healthier, more resilient organizations.

WHAT IS CONVERSATIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Conversations are the way we connect, engage, navigate and transform the world with others. High performance depends on the quality of our culture, which depends on the quality of our relationships, which depend on the intelligence of our conversations. Everything happens through conversations.

Strengthen relationships and results

As we communicate, we read the content and emotions being sent our way and we send content and emotions to others. Conversations are more than the information we share and the words we speak. They offer a way to package our feelings about our world, others and ourselves.

As leaders, we communicate that we are upset or happy with almost every conversation. As we come to understand the power of language in regulating how people feel every day, and the role language plays in the brain's capacity to expand perspectives and create a feel-good experience, we can learn to shape our workplace in profound ways.

C-IQ gives us the power to influence the way we interpret reality

Conversations impact different parts of the brain in different ways, because different parts of the brain are listening for different things. By understanding the way conversations impact our listening, we can

AS WE COME TO UNDERSTAND THE POWER OF LANGUAGE IN REGULATING HOW PEOPLE FEEL EVERY DAY, AND THE ROLE LANGUAGE PLAYS IN THE BRAIN'S CAPACITY TO EXPAND PERSPECTIVES AND CREATE A FEEL-GOOD EXPERIENCE, WE CAN LEARN TO SHAPE OUR WORKPLACE IN PROFOUND WAYS.

determine how we listen – and how we listen determines how we interpret and make sense of our world.

CREATING CONVERSATIONAL MINDFULNESS

As you learn how to navigate the three levels of conversations – ***Transactional*** (how to exchange data and information); ***Positional*** (how to work with power and influence); and ***Transformational*** (how to co-create the future for mutual success) – your conversations become healthier and lead to trust and transformational results. Healthy conversations are built on high trust. Trust is centered in the prefrontal cortex and distrust in the amygdala and limbic areas of the brain. We know this because these areas light up when a person is asked to respond to questions or to perform activities that stimulate "trust" or "distrust."

Fear and distrust close down our brains. You can create the conversational space that creates deeper understanding and engagement rather than fear and avoidance by doing three things:

1. **Be mindful of your conversations and the emotional content you bring – either pain or pleasure.** Are you sending friend or foe messages? Are you sending the message, "You can trust me to have your best interest at heart" or "I want to persuade you to think about things my way"? When you're aware of these meta- messages, you can create a safe culture that allows all parties to interact at the highest level, sharing perspectives, feelings and aspirations and elevating insights and wisdom.
2. **Know that conversations trigger emotional reactions.** Conversations carry meaning – and meaning is embedded in the listener even more than in the speaker. Words either cause us to bond and trust more fully, thinking of others as friends and colleagues, or they cause us to break rapport and think of others as enemies. Your mind will open as you see the connection between language and health, and you'll learn how to create healthy organizations through your conversational rituals.
3. **Remember, the words we use in our conversations are rarely neutral.** Words have histories informed by years of use. Each time a new experience overlays another meaning on a word, the

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information gets collected in our brains to be activated during conversations. Knowing how you project meaning into your conversations will enable you to connect with others and, in so doing, let go of much of the self-talk that diverts you from working together effectively.

By understanding how conversations trigger different parts of the brain and stimulate certain habits and behaviours, you can develop and grow your C-IQ to build healthier, more resilient organizations in the face of change.

What we think, what we say, what we mean, what others hear and how we feel about it afterward are key dimensions behind C-IQ. Though conversations are not simply "ask and tell" levels of discourse, we often treat them as though they are.

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

When we are having a good conversation, even a difficult one, we feel good

We feel connected to the other person in a deep way and we feel we can trust him. In good conversations, we know where we stand with others – we feel safe.

Trust is a key descriptor of a good conversation. People will say, "I feel open and trusting. I could say what was on my mind." Or, "I don't have to edit anything, and I can trust it won't come back to hurt me."

Conversations are the golden threads, albeit fragile ones, that keep us connected to others. We have hardwired systems exquisitely designed to let us know where we stand with others; based on our quick read of a situation, our brains know whether we should operate in a protective mode or be open to sharing, discovery and influence.

{ CONVERSATIONS ARE THE WAY WE CONNECT, ENGAGE, NAVIGATE AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD WITH OTHERS. }

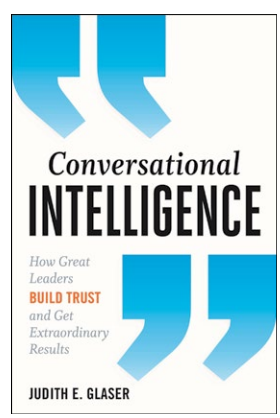
When we are in conversation with others, perhaps even before we open our mouths, we size them up and determine whether we trust or distrust them; once this happens, our brains are ready to either open up or close down. Bad conversations trigger our distrust network and good ones trigger our trust network. Each influences what we say, how we say it and why we say it, and the networks even have a heavy hand in shaping the outcomes of each conversation.

Have extraordinary, transformational conversations with others

C-IQ competence enables us to connect, engage and navigate with others. It is the single most important intelligence that gets better when "we" do it. Our individual capacity for C-IQ expands when we practice it with others and when we all focus on it together. C-IQ exists as a collaborative effort, and when we practice it together we raise the C-IQ of relationships, and we can also raise the C-IQ of teams and organizations. And, because C-IQ leverages all other kinds of individual intelligences, there is neither a more powerful skill nor a more necessary one to master. C-IQ provides a framework and practices for the way individuals, teams and organizations listen, engage, architect and influence the moment and shape the future, in all situations. When we use our C-IQ in business, we strengthen the culture to achieve better results.

We often communicate with others as if we all share the same world – which causes conflict and collisions

To become good at C-IQ, we need to recognize that the map is not the territory and spend more time joining the two through conversations. Our minds create biases, blind spots and filters that prevent us from seeing reality as it is. C-IQ is about creating an ongoing dialogue with others, to explore our maps and to stay in touch with one another's evolution of thinking as we work together to achieve shared goals. Whether you are working in a small business or a large global company, elevating your C-IQ will be a life-changing experience that will not only yield business results, it will create new energy for transformation and growth. ■



Judith E. Glaser is CEO of Benchmark Communications, Inc. and chairman of The Creating WE Institute.

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Is Giving the Key to our Success?

AN INTERVIEW WITH BEST-SELLING AUTHOR, ADAM GRANT, PH.D.

By Craig Dowden, Ph.D.

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Adam Grant, Ph.D.

Adam Grant, Ph.D. is the youngest tenured professor at the prestigious Wharton School of Business. Last year, his first book, *Give and Take*, was published to international acclaim and became a *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* best seller.

The fundamental premise of the book suggests that there are three categories of people, determined by their interaction style with others: givers, takers and matchers. As their names suggest, takers look to maximize their return while matchers look for an "even trade." Givers are relatively rare and desire to assist others without any promise of return.

Referencing his own groundbreaking research as well as other fascinating work, Dr. Grant highlights how these relationship styles directly and profoundly impact our success. Although the good nature of some givers is exploited to their detriment, others thrive and end up at the top of the success ladder. I had the privilege of interviewing Adam about his pioneering work to identify how his findings fit within an organizational context.

Given the audience for *HR Professional*, I was hoping you could share how HR leaders and executives can incorporate the primary messages of *Give and Take* within their organizations.

Adam Grant: From my standpoint, a primary role of HR leaders is to build a culture of successful givers. That means two things. One is motivating people to give and setting norms and values around helping others. And second, it is creating a context whereby when those behaviours occur, people actually rise instead of suffer as a result.

Most people think that if you want a culture of givers, you should hire givers. But, the data shows this is not actually the most important step. Rather, you should focus on screening out takers. I am fond of putting it this way, "One bad apple can spoil a barrel, but it's not so common that one good egg makes a dozen."

The negative impact of a taker on a culture is often double to triple the positive impact of a giver. Also, if you allow takers into your organization, then a lot of givers will hold back, because they fear getting exploited, and rightfully so. If you can screen out takers effectively, you are left with givers and matchers. In this environment, the givers will be generous because they do not have to worry about the consequences. The beauty of matchers is that they will follow the norm. So, in the presence of givers, matchers become givers and then the whole culture of the organization shifts towards giving without having to focus on it that heavily.

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF A TAKER ON A CULTURE IS OFTEN DOUBLE TO TRIPLE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF A GIVER.

Another benefit of matchers is that they will bring some of the strengths of takers to the table so that if an organization lets some takers through the cracks, matchers will be really tough on those people and hold them accountable. Also, if you have clients or suppliers who are takers, again, matchers are the ones who fight fire with fire. So, you end up getting the benefits of both giving and taking without having to deal with any takers.

How can organizations more effectively select the givers and matchers and screen out the takers?

AG: One thing to watch out for is the "kissing up, kicking down" pattern because references that come from above are typically a little more positive for takers than they ought to be since takers are good fakers when dealing with powerful people. What you want to do more of are lateral and downward references because takers tend to let their guard down a little bit when dealing with people who are lateral and below, so peers and subordinates tend to see more of the true colours of takers.

Another favourite strategy is when reviewing their career history, rather than focusing on their successes and failures, pay more attention to how they explain them. Takers are more likely to take personal credit for achievements and blame their setbacks on other people. Of course, there will be a little bit more balance in givers and matchers in sharing credit and they will also tend to acknowledge where they made a mistake, what they learned from it and what they will do differently in the future.

Outside of selection, what are some other strategies that HR executives can use to build a culture of giving?

AG: HR leaders have a huge influence on onboarding. Traditionally, socialization basically was about organizations breaking people in and teaching them about their culture, with new employees being in passive, receiving mode.

There is some new research by Dan Cable, Francesco Gino and Brad Statts showing that organizations actually get better results when instead of saying, "Let's break you in," they focus instead on, "Let's figure out what strengths our new employees bring to the table that can contribute value to our culture from day one." Their research shows this is a much more effective onboarding strategy.

This approach also gets employees in the mindset of giving right away by realizing they do not have to gain 12 months of experience before they have something to offer. The expertise and experience they are bringing to the table gives them a perspective that is distinctive and maybe allows them to bring something of benefit to the organization immediately.

There are lots of ways to do this concretely. For example, for the first two weeks an employee comes in, an organization could assign this new hire to conduct a culture audit. They can try to figure out, as an outsider, what is working and also use their prior experience to talk about certain practices that may be interesting to import to their new organization. Why not learn from other cultures before an employee becomes a fish in water and does not see some of the opportunities for improvement as clearly?

You can also think of a reverse mentoring initiative where the new employee works closely with people who have more experience than they do, and the new hire tries to highlight – because they have this fresh perspective – how things might be done differently and more effectively. I think this is all in service of getting people in the mode of thinking like givers from the start.

Socialization should be less about embedding giver values, and more about engaging people in giver behaviours where they just get into the habit, and then the values will follow.

What types of challenges might HR leaders encounter in incorporating more giving into their culture? What steps can they take to counter this possible resistance?

AG: One challenge is an organization that has a group of givers, but the takers are basically climbing up the ladder on the givers' shoulders. In this case, you have to seriously re-think your reward system. Many organizations do a really good job handing out performance evaluations, compensation and promotion decisions based on individual achievements. It is inherently more difficult to measure, in most organizations, how much people contribute to others. If you don't find a way to recognize and reward giving behaviour, you are basically dooming the organization to be run by takers.

A great example of a reward system, which I learned about recently, is from Corning Incorporated, the company that makes gorilla glass for the iPhone and iPad. They have a lot of scientists and engineers and the highest honour they can earn in these innovation-heavy roles is to be named a "Corning Fellow."

Corning Fellows are given two privileges that everybody wants. One is you get a "job for life," like university tenure. The other is you get a "lab for life." Essentially, you get free reign for whatever projects you think are interesting and meaningful for the company, and you can work on those with all of the resources and support you need to make those happen. I cannot think of something that would be more exciting to a scientist or engineer.

The question is, "How do you become a Corning Fellow?" Of course, one of the criteria is you have to be the lead author on a patent that has driven huge value for the business. This is a way of making sure that you are a person who can be trusted to lead really great work that will lead to more innovation moving forward.

But they do not stop there. It is not enough to just have lead authorship on a patent. You also have to have a track record of supporting other people's successful patents. One great way of doing this is to be a secondary or tertiary author on patents. The terrific thing about this is that no taker would ever do the behaviours necessary to "free ride" on other people's patents because patents could take eight to 10 years to develop, and it requires a huge amount of work to help other people on them. There is not enough short-term return for it to make sense for a taker to game the system.

By the time a scientist or engineer has done the giving and helping necessary to be on other people's patents, it becomes a symbol that they have actually been a giver. I think this is such a phenomenal way to reward successful givers who have been responsible for great individual achievements, but who have also gone out of their way to make other people successful.

When discussing this type of program, is this in line with breaking down reward systems more specifically (e.g., individual, team and organizational performance)?

AG: Absolutely. I think there is always a balance. I am not suggesting to get rid of individual performance evaluations or rewards and promotions. I am saying that most organizations are skewed too heavily in that direction. We need to do a better job of tracking not just your success, but how does your success affect the achievement of others?

How about having members of the team acknowledge each other for their giving?

I am an increasingly big fan of "peer bonus programs" for exactly the reason we talked about earlier; peers see a lot of giving and taking that bosses don't. So if you follow the lead of Google, Zappos, Southwest or Jet Blue, give every employee the opportunity to provide meaningful recognition to others or even give them a small budget to dole out bonuses for giving. Again, it is hard to game the system on these things and in general, an organization will do a better job of gathering data not only about who is receiving the most recognition and bonuses, but also about the people who go out of their way to give these bonuses out, because that can be an act of giving in and of itself.

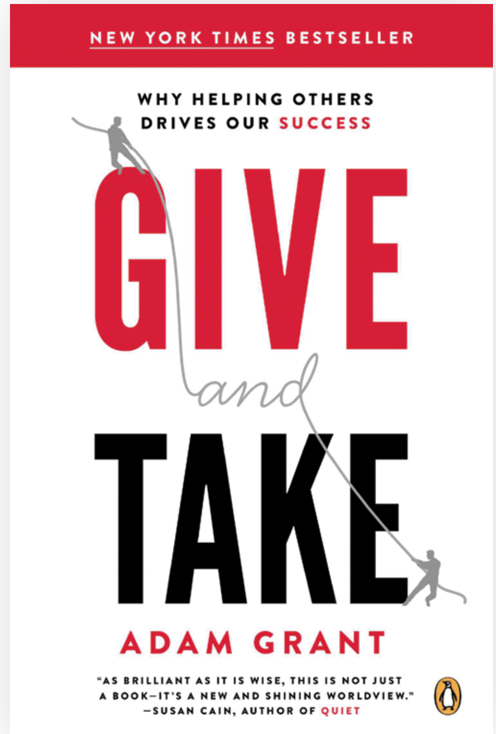
What is one of the more counterintuitive points you talk about and have found in your research while writing *Give and Take*?

AG: If you want a culture of giving, you need a culture of help-seeking. The logic for this is pretty simple. Most giving happens in response to a request. If everybody holds back on asking because they want to be self-reliant or they do not want to be vulnerable, then you deprive all of the givers in the organization knowledge about who could benefit from their help and how.

For HR leaders, there are two concrete steps they can take. First, they can model "help-seeking" so that people realize it is not a sign of incompetence, but it is actually encouraged and accepted.

A second step is to create better marketplaces for connecting people who do have requests with the best experts and the people who are most qualified to actually give. Our research shows that for the most part, when employees seek help, they go to the people they trust the most and feel the most comfortable with, and they basically ignore expertise as a consideration in terms of who they should ask.

An HR leader can play a big role here in pointing out that although the employee may not have as strong a relationship with someone, this individual is the person you want to go to with your request.



Give and Take by Adam Grant, Ph.D. is currently available and was named one of the best books of 2013 for leaders

This really resonates with coaching and organizational development work – that there is a strong fear with vulnerability and people want to think they have the answer to every question. Am I taking it too far to link that help-seeking type of culture with humility?

AG: That is a great connection. In cultures of arrogance, people feel like they have to be, Enron-style, the smartest person in the room and any display of asking for help or seeking input on an idea is admitting that they do not have all of the answers. If people embrace greater humility and modesty, we would realize we are all human, we are all fallible, we all have incomplete knowledge and on any topic, there is more than likely somebody else that may have better insight.

Also, part of humility is recognizing that even if you are a world-leading expert, there is somebody else who may know less but who has a novel perspective that could impact the work that you are doing. ■

Craig Dowden, Ph.D. is managing director of the Toronto office of SPB Organizational Psychology.

How Do You Perform at Performance Reviews?

STRATEGIES FOR MAKING FEEDBACK MORE EFFECTIVE

By Leann Schneider, M.A. and Tim Jackson, Ph.D.

No one likes to be judged. Imagine yourself entering a performance review, or a debrief of your assessment results, and knowing that all of your strengths and weaknesses would be scrutinized, talked about in the open and evaluated. Because receiving feedback isn't easy, the challenge of giving feedback is just as tough. However, as HR professionals and consultants, we owe it to others to give them effective feedback that will work towards developing their capabilities. Part of developing our own coaching skills is learning how to provide feedback in a way that others will understand, accept and use to improve their performance.

Think about the last time you implemented a developmental assessment. This likely included a 360 component, and may have also included an assessment of personality and other skills through self-report questionnaires or simulation tasks. Ensuring that the right tools are used, and that these tools assess important aspects of individuals' behaviours on the job, are primary concerns. In addition, we know that goal setting is important to make changes based on the information gleaned from these assessments. What often gets glossed over is the stage in the middle – feedback. How do we bridge the assessment and goal-setting phases, and maximize the transfer of information about the assessment to the

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THE RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT KEEPING IT TO A MAXIMUM OF TWO TO FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS REDUCES THE CHANCE THAT INDIVIDUALS WILL BE OVERWHELMED WITH AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

participant? How do we make sure they understand the results in as much depth as they want, and at the same time feel motivated to do something meaningful with the results?

Anecdotal advice is readily available on how to provide feedback. We may have also figured out what has worked in the past, and what has not, based on our own experience. Although these sources of information are useful, evidence-based recommendations for feedback can give us confidence in the feedback processes we implement, and increase the chances that the dreaded feedback conversation can have a positive outcome. We want to reduce the defensiveness that receiving feedback can often lead to, increase acceptance and promote taking action based on the results (i.e., setting goals). Whether you are a manager or a coach (or both), here are a number of recommendations you can follow to improve the quality of the feedback you provide, drawing from the latest research in the field.

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT THE PROCESS

People are more likely to accept feedback if it is clear how conclusions were made. A recent study found that individuals reacted more positively to feedback when they received information on the process and procedures used to determine their ratings. This means clarifying what the assessments you used were designed to measure, and explaining how to interpret the results and what the results mean for the individual. Further, being open and upfront about how the assessment results will be worked into the overall developmental planning process will also increase the transparency of your feedback session.

MAKE THE FEEDBACK SPECIFIC AND BEHAVIOURALLY FOCUSED

Providing specific feedback on observed behaviours as opposed to what this implies about one's traits is said to reduce the ego-defensiveness that can surface when one receives feedback. Providing examples of a type of behaviour can also help persuade the individual to work on a key area. It is difficult to ignore feedback when it is objective and evidence-based. The implication is that instead of providing feedback such as, "You seem to be a person who crumbles under pressure," it is more effective to give specific examples of a time when the person managed their stress ineffectively, and to discuss what strategies could be put in place next time to avoid this pattern in the future.

Although research suggests that specific behavioural feedback leads to better subsequent performance, it can also reduce the chances that people will try to apply their feedback to novel settings or situations. Therefore, during the feedback conversation it is important to emphasize the applicability of feedback from the assessment to multiple areas of one's performance on the job. For example, if results from the 360 noted a lack of assertiveness amongst one's peers, it is possible that a lack of assertiveness may also present itself in client interactions.

PROVIDE MORE POSITIVE THAN NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

The feedback that is most difficult to give is the negative kind – do we really look forward to the performance review with our most low-performing employee? It's tempting to go into a laundry list of the areas that the person needs to improve so that they know where to change. Unfortunately, researchers have found that even if feedback is specific and behaviourally focused, when there is a lot of negative feedback, people are likely to react poorly. So, what can be done about it?

The evidence points to emphasizing a greater amount of positive relative to negative feedback during these conversations. Research suggests that individuals who react more positively to developmental feedback are more likely to engage in developmental activities, and less likely to experience negative emotions. Importantly, positive feedback leads to positive reactions and greater feedback acceptance. The positive reactions that people experience from receiving positive feedback can be leveraged to facilitate improvement in areas of weakness. For example, researchers have found that individuals who are given positive feedback are more willing to devote attention towards accepting negative feedback.

One possible exception to this recommendation is when an employee is derailing. It is likely that a struggling employee has ignored and defended themselves against negative feedback in the past. Providing too much positive feedback could do them a disservice – giving them the impression that there is little wrong, when in fact, they need to make drastic improvements to keep

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their position. Therefore, in general, it is important to spend adequate time on positive performance markers to lessen the blow of negative feedback. However, there are some individuals who will benefit from a "tough love" approach, where they are forced to face the reality of their inadequate performance.

KEEP IT TO TWO TO FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

At some point in the feedback conversation, you will have to move past the positive feedback and provide recommendations for areas that the individual can improve upon. The question, then, is how many recommendations should be given for optimal facilitation of behaviour change? The research suggests that keeping it to a maximum of two to four developmental recommendations reduces the chance that individuals will be overwhelmed with areas for improvement. It is important to choose your developmental message. A recent study found that performance improvements were greater for managers who received a small versus a large amount of negative feedback. In addition, studies in the coaching literature point to positive outcomes of coaching sessions where a maximum of two to four areas of improvement were focused on. These findings can be directly related to the developmental planning process; by focusing on only a few areas of improvement, two to four manageable goals can be set to address these needs, which requires an amount of effort and attention that is sustainable.

BE SUPPORTIVE

The recommendations reviewed above focused on characteristics of feedback that facilitate success in feedback provision. However, there is also a need to consider how the feedback is delivered. A perhaps obvious but important aspect of feedback provision is that it is delivered in a supportive manner. A supportive feedback environment has been found to relate to perceptions of feedback accuracy and acceptance.

Starting the session by giving the participant some control over how they will receive their feedback (e.g., "Should I lead you through the feedback, or do you have questions you would like to ask?") sets the stage for a supportive environment. Additional strategies that you can use to establish a supportive feedback session are being mindful of how you are giving feedback, displaying empathy, gently probing the person on their thoughts about the feedback and framing the session around goals so the person can visualize the eventual outcomes of the process. It is also important to normalize the person's feelings. Haven't we all felt discouraged about feedback we have received at some point in our careers? Normalizing any surprise, disappointment or discouragement that the individual feels, while encouraging an orientation towards doing something with the feedback to improve, will reduce feelings of hopelessness and work towards resolving issues that have arose.

CONCLUSION

Although a difficult process, providing feedback can be a rewarding one if it results in personal insight, developmental growth and performance improvements. By being transparent about the feedback process, making your feedback specific and focused on behaviour, giving more positive than negative feedback, focusing on two to four areas for improvement and being supportive during the process, you can increase your chances of getting these valued results out of your next feedback conversation. ■

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The Benefits of Your Benefits Plan

GETTING DIRECT FEEDBACK FROM THE DIVERSE ELEMENTS OF YOUR WORKFORCE WILL HELP YOU CREATE AN OPTIMUM BENEFITS PLAN

By Joel Kranc

With 15,000 employees spread throughout the country, Best Buy has its human resources work cut out for it. To make things even more complicated, HR is tasked with addressing the needs of four talent pools – employees of Best Buy, employees of Future Shop, distribution warehouse workers and corporate head office employees. Drilling that even further, Future Shop employees are commission-based whereas Best Buy employees are paid hourly rates.

When it comes to providing benefits to manage a workforce that dynamic, Best Buy has much to think about. And because retail can be fast moving, the company has asked itself some important questions about benefits.

"With our very decentralized structure, how do we help employees cope with some of the everyday things they face?" said Kelly Cardwell, director of HR at Best Buy.

In 2008, the company went through total rewards focus groups in each of its four categories and began overhauling its benefits

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"THE TRADITIONAL 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' BENEFITS PLANS DO NOT MEET THE MAJORITY OF EMPLOYEES' NEEDS JUST GIVEN THE DIVERSITY [IN THE WORKPLACE]."

– GREG CAINES, PARTNER, BENEFITS AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT PRACTICE, MORNEAU SHEPELL

plans to address issues of coping, but also issues surrounding employee morale, happiness and needs for the future.

DOLLARS AND CENTS

Prior to the financial crisis in 2008, companies were thinking less about costs and needs and more about volume.

"When [benefits] programs started, it was 'the more the better,'" said Marie-Josée Le Blanc, health benefits consultant and partner with Mercer. "The more I can provide, whatever is new on the market, I will add that to my plan – and for 30, 40 years, it has been happening this way."

Now, says Le Blanc, companies are more cost conscious and are thinking about return on investment. She says companies are looking at it by asking, "Is my investment in benefits worth it and do I get the most out of my plan?" More and more, companies are looking for that balance between cost and good employee engagement/satisfaction.

Greg Caines, partner, Benefits and Health Management Practice with Morneau Shepell in Halifax, agrees. He says employers and HR practitioners have to look at their workforces in general.

"It starts with a conversation about the client's needs and priorities from an overall organizational perspective as well as an HR perspective," he said. "That conversation tends to inform decisions that they make around the benefit plan design, how it is communicated and how they want to engage employees in their 'benefits experience.'"

He says that HR practitioners have a voice at the finance table and are better able to show the cost benefit to good benefits plans' ability to increase productivity, employee satisfaction and overall engagement.

GETTING IT RIGHT

Much of what companies are doing now to engage their workforce and provide appropriate benefits is looking at demographics. Cardwell says some of the results coming from its focus groups allow it to provide better benefits for part-time workers understanding the transient nature of retail. Also, providing employee assistance plans (EAPs) to aid with daycare research, for example, has been implemented throughout the country, giving young families the ability to maintain their jobs and have their EAP provider do the legwork.

"We were able to address a wide variety of needs from some of the programs that we did put in place," she said.

Cardwell further explains that, within retail, employees jump from company to company solely based on hourly wages and their ability to increase salaries.

"But we were looking to say, 'How do we really bring and tie employees into the organization, how do we help them in their daily lives and how can we compete better than just getting into a bidding war for their hourly rates?'" Answering those questions were the impetus behind Best Buy's research and changes in benefits.

Expanding on that topic further, Caines says the demographic diversity in the workplace resulting in the need to provide greater choice is driving HR professionals to change the makeup of their benefits plans.

"The traditional 'one size fits all' benefits plans do not meet the majority of employees' needs just given the diversity [in the workplace]," he said. Providing choice and giving employees the ability to shape the plans and "benefits experience" through flex-plans and health spending accounts are a few examples of greater inclusion in the decision making process. He says employees show more satisfaction when given plans they can tailor and have more say in.

Don Cornack, consultant with Investors Group Financial Services Inc., says when putting together a to-do list for plan design, HR professionals would want to put together a statement such as, "What is it that our plan is supposed to be accomplishing, and let's take an inventory to see if the plan is meeting those objectives." As part of that analysis, he said, "I think you would want input from owners and senior management, but you absolutely want input from senior employees."

Finally, he says, talk to the broker or advisor about changing areas that don't work but also see what is happening in the benefits landscape in the market – what is available now that perhaps was not available when the plan was designed.

"We want to turn retail into a career and not just a temporary stopover to your real career," said Cardwell on Best Buy's reasoning for taking action on its benefits plans. But, as HR professionals consider their benefits plans and how they can engage employees, they must consult with them, see what their needs are, what the demographics are and allow them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The result will likely be a more engaged and satisfied workforce that appreciates the benefits being provided. ■

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Does Your Workplace Have a Culture of Sick Leave?

HERE'S WHY AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

By Yafa Sakkejha

A colleague once remarked to me that seven people in his department, out of a company of 400 people, had claimed short-term disability (STD) for stress leave in the last two years. I asked how this could be – is there something going on in the workplace? "No," he replied. "It's just that it's known that if you get divorced or separated, you get to take stress leave."

I asked a few other colleagues in the insurance industry if they have ever seen this phenomenon. "Absolutely not," said a disability case manager at The Co-operators Life. "Stress leave is serious, and the medical evidence required is quite extensive." Another colleague at the same insurer mentioned that almost half of her department had experienced a divorce, but they all worked through it.

What was it about that workplace which made STD so commonplace?

Here are some reasons why a company might have a culture of sick leave:

1. THERE IS SOMETHING FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG WITH THE WORKPLACE

Ask yourself – is your workplace a positive or negative place to work? Don't take low turnover as a sign that employees are happy. You may need to examine how they feel about the relationship with their supervisors. Does your environment have any unhealthy chemicals that may lead to sickness? Are there any pressures at work that may cause an employee to prefer to be at home, earning only 60 per cent of their wage?

Recommendation: Look inwards first, and be proactive to assess your company before a worker's compensation board forces you to change. Speak to your claims adjudicator, whether they are an internal employee, a third-party administrator or an insurance carrier. Ask them if they detect any signs that the workplace may be the cause, and what you can do to fix it.

2. THE BENEFIT EXISTS, SO IT'S USED

Even the presence of the benefit in an employee booklet can lead employees to believe that it's a "perk," like other "benefits" of their plan.

Recommendation: Communicate that short-term disability is meant for disability – not an elective sick leave – and claims will be audited for validity of disability. Try to remove any perception that it's a "perk" of the job.

3. EMPLOYEES TEACH EACH OTHER HOW TO USE THE BENEFIT

If distinct cliques exist within a workplace, they tend to help each other out. It can happen where the STD approval process is discovered, and one employee tells the rest how to make a claim.

Recommendation: Ask your claims adjudicator if they can see a pattern: do claims come in at the same time of year? Do employees work in the same department? Don't be afraid to ask more questions or change the process of applying to STD. Require a minimum level of medical evidence, especially if you see that the same doctor is signing off on multiple claims.

I recognize that a unionized environment can make it tough to change plan design wording, but processes and scrutiny can be increased without necessarily going to collective bargaining.

4. DOCTORS WILL USUALLY SIGN OFF

Doctors have little time, and would prefer to help their patient take time off if they can. They also have a legal obligation to listen to a patient's claim and do something about it. If they're found to have known about something, and refused to recommend time off, it could be their name listed as a defendant.

Dave Crisp, former SVP HR at The Hudson's Bay Company and blogger at www.balance-and-results.com, warns against requiring too much medical scrutiny for short sick claims (under five days).

"What the company is really doing is punishing the employee for being sick, by making them waste their and the doctor's time.

{ WE HAVE SEEN MANY SITUATIONS WHEN AN EMPLOYEE WAS DENIED EXTRA VACATION TIME, ONLY TO SEE THEM SUBMIT A SHORT-TERM DISABILITY CLAIM WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO THE WIRE. }

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… RECONSIDER WHETHER YOU CAN ALLOW THE EMPLOYEE TO TAKE SOME EXTRA VACATION, EVEN IF IT'S UNPAID.

HR managers should not be afraid to ask more questions or change the process of applying for STD

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Instead, give your employees some leeway, but always call them at home to ask how they are doing. The manager does not need to ask outright, 'Are you really sick?' Just their presence on the phone asks the question."

Recommendation: Stop requiring doctor's notes for very short-term sick claims, but don't be afraid to ask for a second medical opinion for a weekly indemnity claim.

5. ADJUDICATORS CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Adjudicators are tasked with a tough job – it's their responsibility to respect the employer's money, while making sure that employees are taken care of. Their goal is to manage the two conflicting interests. This can be a difficult task, especially compounded with the volume of claimants, all demanding to be paid at once.

Although there are excellent adjudicators, it does happen when an adjudicator errs on the side of caution by paying out a claim without doing any extra diligence, which is required by their job description.

Workplace safety boards are notoriously understaffed, which is why some companies have decided to hire private investigators or require a second medical opinion, in order to put an extra eye on their claims.

Recommendation: Be proactive and chat with your STD claims adjudicator. Ask them what their practices are, and see if there's any room in the budget for requiring a second medical opinion (can be $500 to $2,000).

6. FRONT-LINE MANAGEMENT MIGHT NOT HAVE A SOLID HANDLE ON THE DETAILS

Do your front-line mangers know what to do in the event of a claim? Do they realize how much it costs the company? It may seem obvious, but many are not trained on the specifics of how E.I., worker's compensation and STD interact.

Crisp says that STD claims plummeted when two things happened: one, WSIB and STD claims were deducted from store managers' budgets; and two, managers were required to call employees and ask them how they are feeling. Once they showed genuine concern for the employee, they saw that people were returning to work faster and had fewer follow-up claims.

Recommendation: Hold yearly training seminars, complete with dummy forms, of what to do if one of their employees gets sick. Educate them on the hard costs of a claim, and consider deducting it from their budget. Require that managers call employees to ask how they are feeling, and make it clear that it must be a genuine call.

7. HOLIDAYS ARE APPROACHING, AND EMPLOYEES DON'T FEEL AS IF THEY'RE GIVEN ENOUGH VACATION TIME

Summer is busy season for Beneplan's STD adjudication department, and Crisp has noticed that Mondays and Fridays have a third more sick claims than other days of the week. We have seen many situations when an employee was denied extra vacation time, only to see them submit an STD claim when it came down to the wire.

Crisp remembers a time when one employee took 10 Mondays off and was then disciplined for it. He eventually admitted that he had a drinking problem. The union subsequently intervened, since alcoholism is an illness, and the company had to retroactively pay him back for the suspension. "The employer could have nipped it in the bud by simply asking the employee how they felt, and if there's anything they can do – from there, they could have sent them to rehab without launching a grievance."

Recommendation: Reconsider whether you can allow the employee to take some extra vacation, even if it's unpaid. If you absolutely cannot give the time off, and they do end up making a claim, make it very clear that you care about their wellbeing, but that any disingenuous claim will have consequences.

HOLD YEARLY TRAINING SEMINARS, COMPLETE WITH DUMMY FORMS, OF WHAT TO DO IF ONE OF THEIR EMPLOYEES GETS SICK. EDUCATE THEM ON THE HARD COSTS OF A CLAIM, AND CONSIDER DEDUCTING IT FROM THEIR BUDGET.

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8. A HOSTILE UNION ENVIRONMENT CAN EXACERBATE CLAIMS

In our own short-term disability department, we have noticed that unionized workplaces experience an average of five times more claims than non-unionized environments.

Recommendation: As you would do with a non-unionized environment, you can require a certain minimum level of evidence, speak to the adjudicator and ask if they see any trends, and see if there is any room to add additional surveillance to the workplace, in order to determine unsafe practices that can be corrected.

9. EMPLOYEES WANT TO DELAY AN IMMINENT TERMINATION

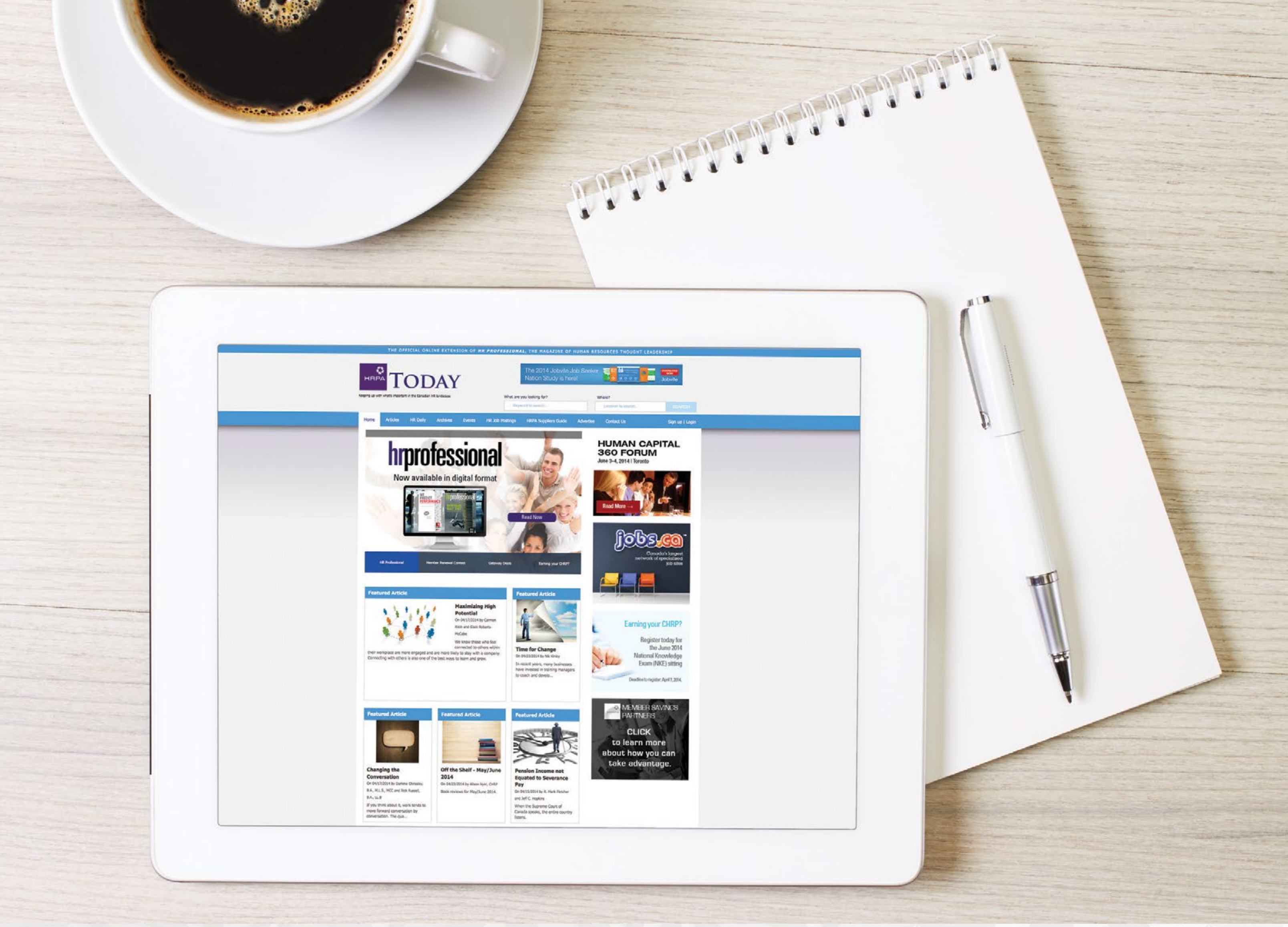
Our adjudicators have noticed that whenever our administration team receives a list of employees going on layoffs (for the purpose of extending benefits), the STD claims start trickling in.

Recommendation: If you are about to announce a layoff, proactively announce that you are aware of this being a time when many sick claims are submitted, and that while you do care about the health of every employee, your priority is to ensure that the sick leave budget is to be preserved for colleagues who truly need it – tell them that if sick leave is abused, and the company has to cut the benefit as a result, it will be the people with real illnesses who will suffer the most.

CONCLUSION

You don't have to feel helpless if you are faced with a pile of sick leave claims. Examine your workplace, show genuine concern for employees' health and have a discussion with your adjudicator. If there are motivated individuals, all of the proactive actions in the world may not deter them from making an inauthentic claim, especially if a past precedent has been set. However, it's never too late to change your process – to ensure that those who need the benefit most can continue to have access. ■

Yafa Sakkejha is the GM of The Beneplan Co-operative, a member-owned buying group for employee benefits.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IS SITTING THE NEW SMOKING?

MOST OF US ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO "SITTING DISEASE." HERE'S WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.

By Heather Hudson

According to Dr. David Harper, Canadians' sedentary behaviour could put our health at risk as much as smoking cigarettes.

The Mississauga, Ont.-based chiropractic sports and occupational health and corporate wellness specialist has a strong warning for office workers, in particular.

"Sitting disease is the most significant iconic modifiable risk factor for all chronic non-communicable disease across all ethnicities and age demographics in Canada," he said. "There's literature to suggest that if you sit for more than three hours a day, you increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and early death."

WHAT IS SITTING DISEASE?

Mayo Clinic endocrinologist Dr. James Levine may have been among the first in the medical community to name the condition that is one of the common denominators of myriad chronic, non-communicable diseases, including:

- Obesity
- Type 2 diabetes
- Cardiovascular disease
- Some forms of cancer
- Back and neck pain
- Blood clots
- Digestive problems

"Research suggests that when we spend long periods of time in one position, there are changes even at a cellular level," said Harper.

While there is no official medical consensus on what constitutes a "limit" for how many hours a day puts you in the range of the risk of sitting disease, it's safe to say that office workers who spend the majority of their workday in a chair may be putting themselves at risk.

And here's the kicker: a recent study out of England's University of Leicester suggests that active, physically fit people who sit for several hours a day are at an equal level of risk as sedentary people

> **"EVERYONE NEEDS TO GET UP TO DO INCIDENTAL WALKING … ORGANIZE YOUR DAY TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE MOVING REGULARLY."**
>
> – GIOVANNA BONIFACE, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, BC CHAPTER

morning run won't decrease your risk of disease if you spend the bulk of the day and evening in a chair.

"One study indicated that if most people would spend less than three hours per day sitting, it would add two years to the average life expectancy," said Harper.

CAN YOU REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF SITTING DISEASE?

The research is certainly disquieting, but there are strategies to help decrease the health risks associated with doing your job in a chair every day.

"The standard answer is that you have to move more," said Harper. "But it's more than just getting up and sitting down again."

He says it's actually the loss of our experience with gravity due to being sedentary that impacts our health the most. He treats some patients with "whole body vibration" in his office – a technique used by the Russian space program to help slow down and reverse aging – which essentially changes a person's gravitational force for a few moments at a time.

To achieve a similar effect, jumping might be the answer.

"Getting up and hopping up and down changes the body position but also the gravitational experience the body has in the chair. It's a simple strategy that works well."

Giovanna Boniface, managing director of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, BC chapter, agrees that regular movement is critical for people who sit for long periods of time. She suggests using time management to make sure those "movement breaks" happen at work.

"Everyone needs to get up to do incidental walking, whether it's to go to the photocopier, the washroom or to get coffee," she said. "I recommend looking at all the different things you do in a day and staggering those activities to ensure you're getting up a couple of times an hour. Organize your day to make sure you're moving regularly."

If you lose track of time by becoming engrossed in your work, Boniface suggests setting a timer on your computer to remind yourself to get up, move and stretch.

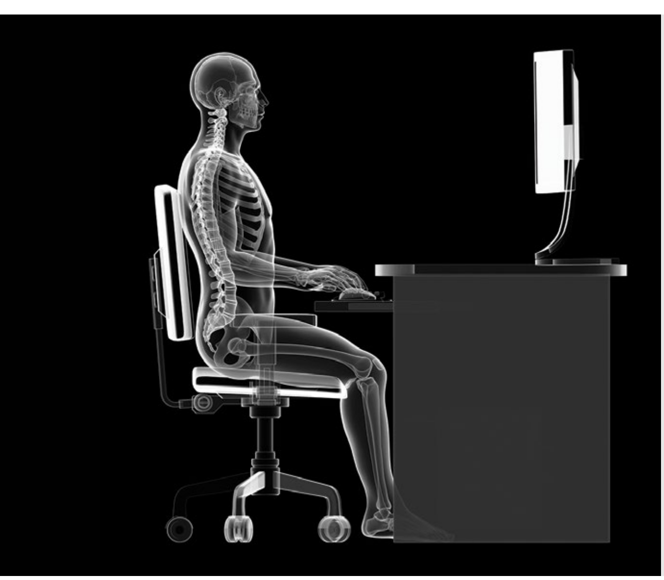
"For some of our patients we have to install a break timer on their computer that has a stretch built in. Each break stretches a different part of the body so that over the course of the day, they've gotten several stretches."

Standing workstations are recent additions to some workplaces, but Boniface and Harper agree that standing in one position for a long period of time is equivalent to sitting.

"It's really about the change in what happens when you walk, jump up and down, shake out your legs, stretch and move the body around," said Harper.

HOW CAN HR HELP?

Creating a culture that values health and wellness is key to fostering a healthy workforce. In fact, the World Health Organization advises that the workplace is the ideal place to educate people about the impact of sedentary lifestyles.



You're Invited

Because sitting is something that we will never be able to avoid, dealing with the consequences of chronic sedentary behaviour must be proactive. The workplace – where many of us sit for hours on end – is the place to begin this conversation.

The first annual Move to Live® Corporate Wellness Challenge is being scheduled for early September 2014. The corporate community in the Toronto area will have the opportunity to come together to support and learn more about workplace wellness in a fun, friendly environment. The first event will be an evening of five or 10-pin bowling; bowling is a social and simple active sport that enables all to participate, regardless of athletic ability or skill level. There is no individual cost to participate and food will be provided. Lanes are available for corporate sponsorship, and bowler pledges will support a local charity whose focus is one affected by chronic sedentary behaviour, yet to be confirmed.

For more information, call 905-629-0688 or email Dr. Dave Harper at drdave@mosaiclifecare.com.

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"THERE'S LITERATURE TO SUGGEST THAT IF YOU SIT FOR MORE THAN THREE HOURS A DAY, YOU INCREASE THE RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE AND EARLY DEATH."

– DR. DAVID HARPER, CHIROPRACTIC SPORTS AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND CORPORATE WELLNESS SPECIALIST

"We protect employees from obvious harmful environments, such as chemicals, lifting or working from heights. Now we must confront what science is clearly warning us about the epidemic of sitting disease," said Harper.

Strategies include education and awareness that goes beyond disease avoidance and enters into prevention.

"It's not so much about changing the work station as it is about each employee becoming responsible for their own personal health and safety. What is needed is the education, the activation and the motivation in a supportive and collaborative team environment," said Harper.

Harper suggests considering using measurement tools such as the Creating Wellness Assessment System to get personal and corporate feedback to help identify risks so each employee may address them with the support of the workplace.

Boniface recommends encouraging employees to take short, regular breaks to stretch and move and making break reminder software (with or without suggested stretches) available.

"Fostering health and wellness in the workplace goes a long way," she said. "Health and wellness accounts, regular lunchtime walks and healthy lunches together are the kinds of things that demonstrate that the workplace values their employees' well-being."

Other strategies include holding "walking meetings" instead of piling into a conference room, standing or walking while talking on the phone and considering alternate commuting options, such as cycling or walking.

Harper is discouraged by The Heart and Stroke Foundation's warning that without immediate action, the average baby boomer in Canada will spend the last 10 years of his life living with sickness and disease. As a result, he works to provide computer-based wellness assessment systems that he hopes will lengthen lives of people through activity.

"Early death does not have to be your fate. We can realize a better health outcome if we heed this warning and choose a different path." ■

Next Gen Recruiting

INTEGRATING VIDEO TECHNOLOGY TO ATTRACT TALENT AND BUILD BUSINESS

By Colin Martin

When a Toronto recruiter first tried out video interviewing earlier this year, she was amazed at the ease of the process and how comfortable the applicant seemed to be. Little did she know, the candidate – dressed conservatively from the waist up – was actually doing the interview in his underwear.

The simplicity of completing the initial interview in the comfort of his own home – not to mention his unconventional interview-attire – may be partially responsible for the candidate's eventual success, but video technology certainly proved to be a time-efficient solution for the recruiter, as well.

In 2013, Skype celebrated the two-million-minute mark, meaning users around the world were spending nearly 38 centuries on Skype every single day. People have been connecting through video for years and are clearly comfortable with it. What's new is how it is being incorporated into the business world, particularly for human resources and recruiting. In this competitive, talent-hungry environment, companies are getting ahead by implementing simple recruiting technologies that speak to this generation's job candidates,

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VIDEO IS BEST USED IN BETWEEN NARROWING DOWN RESUMÉS AND CONDUCTING FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS.

and they are using video in a way that complements their traditional HR practices.

To date, adoption of video into the recruitment process is highest amongst external recruiters, hiring managers in direct business lines and the C-suite, all of whom tend to be focused on how video technology can save time and money. An example that speaks volumes involves a client that operates in a billable hour structure. After narrowing down resumés, they used on-demand video (on-demand video refers to the process of creating questions for job candidates and inviting them to record their answers using a web cam) to screen their short list. Because they bill by the hour, they were able to see that reviewing video responses took less than 15 minutes and saved them approximately $1,400, or three hours of scheduling and participating in preliminary phone or in-person screenings. The even better news is that they also hired the candidate they chose to bring in for a face-to-face interview following the video screening process.

Of course, the applicant experience is more important than saving time or money and is where the HR team tends to focus. Clearly committed to the processes they have in place to protect the employer/employee experience, HR professionals sometimes express concern that video can seem cold and impersonal. This is one of the most common misconceptions about using video, and it usually means video is not being used the right way. Video must complement the hiring process. It must be incorporated in a way that enhances the experience for both the employer and employee, and gives everyone back some of their day. Below are some tips to make that happen.

USE VIDEO TO SCREEN YOUR SHORT LIST

HR pros are incredibly talented at finding the superstars in a pile of resumés. There is no need to replace that process with video. Video is best used in between narrowing down resumés and conducting face-to-face interviews. Instead of picking up the phone to schedule and conduct preliminary screening calls, request an on-demand video and get to know candidates much more quickly. In that few minutes of video, hiring managers will learn enough about each candidate to choose the right ones to meet in person. Also, look for a service that allows you to share those recorded videos with other decision makers so, as a team, you know you are bringing in the best candidates. The formal interviews will still happen, but with the right candidates after a significantly condensed screening process.

CATER TO THE APPLICANT EXPERIENCE

Video recruitment works for roles as diverse as interns, accountants, commercial bankers and sales people. No matter the role, the feedback on the applicant experience is stellar. They can record videos on their own time from the comfort of their own home, they see it as a fast and efficient way to present themselves to the hiring team and they are further along in the recruitment process before they have to excuse themselves from their current role to participate in interviews.

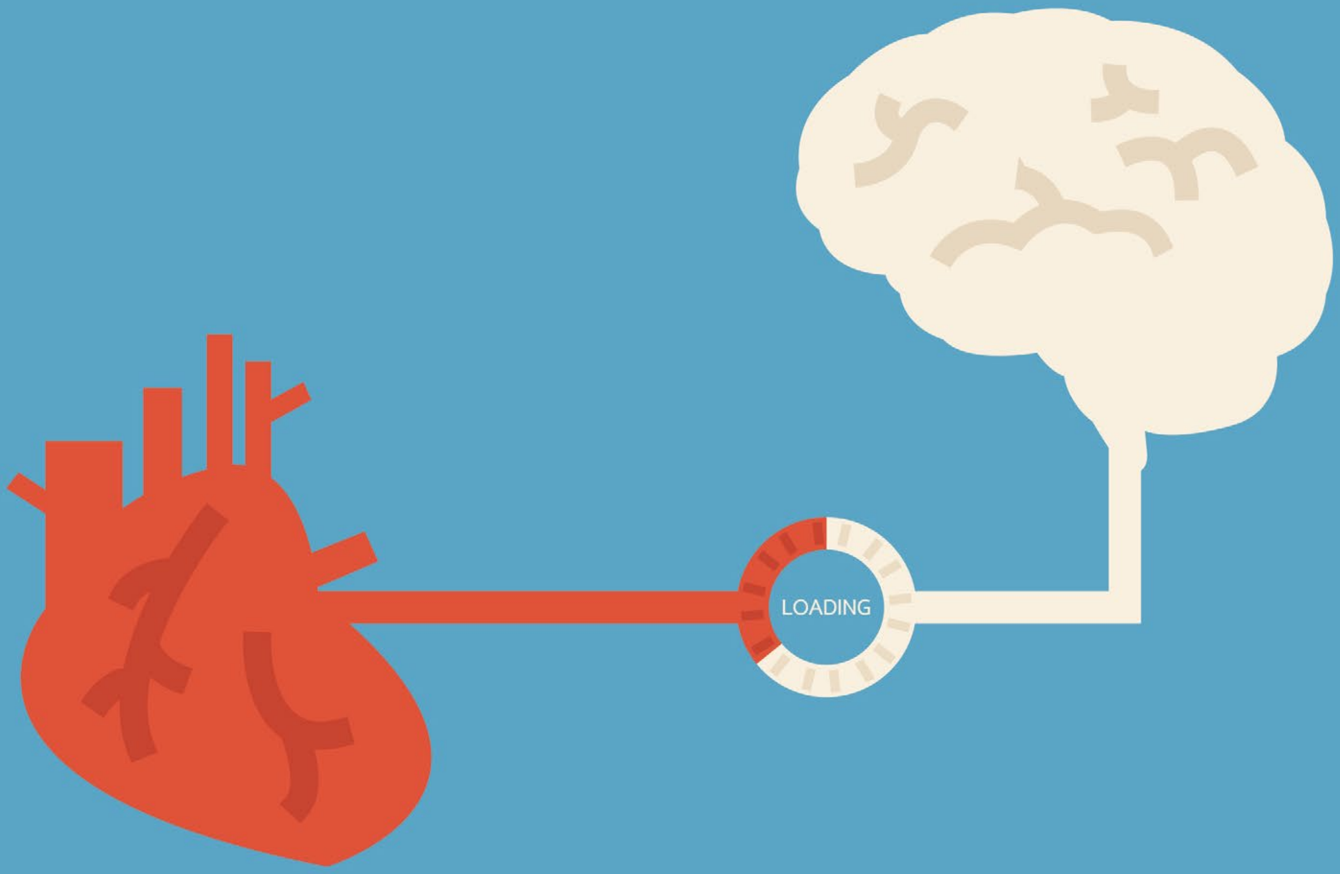
It is important for the employer to properly communicate with applicants regarding the video interview. Sending candidates a personal email from the hiring manager or HR team makes the candidate feel like they are being recognized by the employer as a quality candidate. That personal approach HR workers value so highly is equally important when it comes to video.

TAKE THE PLUNGE

Most service providers offer a free trial so employers can experience firsthand the benefits of adopting video into their hiring process. Quickly, some of the preconceptions around video tend to disappear. What if the applicant doesn't have a webcam? This is rare, but when it happens, they tend to visit the local library or use a friend's computer. Will this discriminate against an older applicant? So far, user demographics have varied significantly. How can I learn anything about a candidate in a one-way dialogue? You will be surprised what a few key questions will deliver for you and other decision makers in your organization.

The corporate landscape has changed. Flex work environments, work-from-home policies and a shift to more global hiring practices have created a need for effective video recruitment technology. Although it may be considered by some to be the future of recruiting, it does not replace all the valuable strategies and processes the HR team is currently employing – it must complement them. Finding the elusive needle in the haystack will be that much easier if you are speaking the same language as your applicants – online and by video. ■

Colin Martin is the founder of Intervue.ca, an on-demand video interviewing company.



Hearts, Guts & Minds

HOW OUR MULTIPLE BRAINS MAKE FOR GREAT LEADERS

By Carlos Davidovich, M.D., MBA and Suzanne Hood, Ph.D.

In our current age of rapid change, strong leadership skills have never been more valuable. Many words come to mind when thinking of an ideal leader: rational, logical, decisive, single-minded. But how true is this ideal image? The latest findings from neuroscience would suggest otherwise. In fact, new research is providing support for old ideas that great leaders think not just with their brains, but with their hearts and guts, too. Making the most of these ideas is key to advancing the field of leadership coaching.

MULTIPLE BRAINS

Usually, we think of our brains as a kind of CEO, an executive entity at the top of our physical hierarchy that issues commands to subordinates below. But increasingly, we are discovering that our physical sensations and emotions unconsciously influence the rational thinking and decision-making of this executive. To illustrate how profoundly this information affects our thinking and behaviour, we can think of ourselves as having multiple brains, each of which responds to different types of information:

Our left and right cerebral hemispheres are specialized to perform different tasks, leading to the idea that we have two brains; our left brain prefers language, reasoning and linear thinking, whereas our

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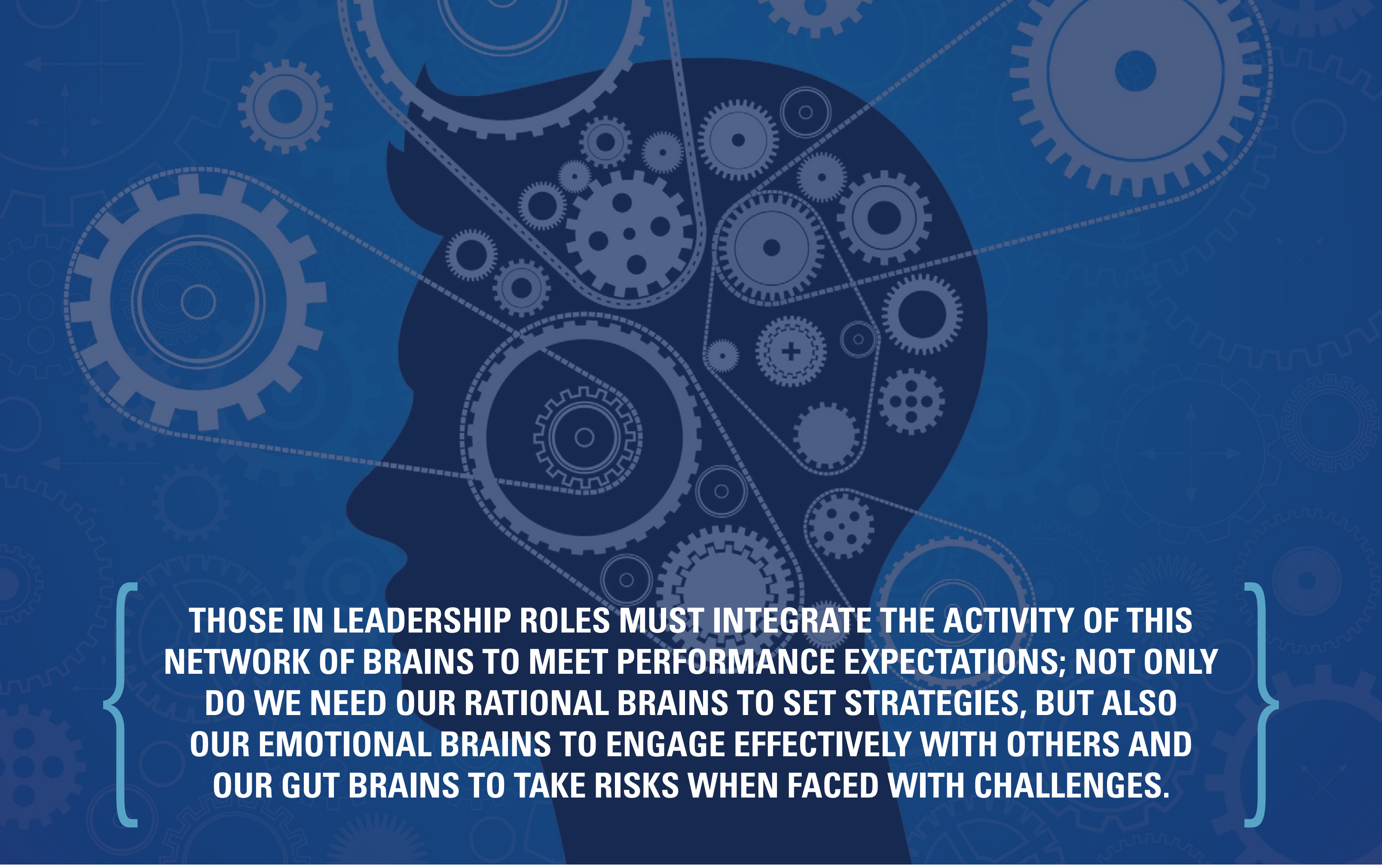

THOSE IN LEADERSHIP ROLES MUST INTEGRATE THE ACTIVITY OF THIS NETWORK OF BRAINS TO MEET PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS; NOT ONLY DO WE NEED OUR RATIONAL BRAINS TO SET STRATEGIES, BUT ALSO OUR EMOTIONAL BRAINS TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS AND OUR GUT BRAINS TO TAKE RISKS WHEN FACED WITH CHALLENGES.

right brain excels at processing creative and holistic information.

In the course of our evolution, we have developed three brains. Although the newest of these, the neocortex, controls our conscious thinking abilities, like reason and focused attention, the other two, evolutionarily older brains, are attuned to social and emotional information: the reptilian brain values information about survival, sex and safety, whereas the limbic brain is in charge of our motivations and emotions.

Another brain resides in our hearts. The heart contains neurons, the same type of cells as those found in the brain. Activity in our heart-brain is tied to our emotional states and affects activity in our CEO brain, giving substance to the adage, "What does your heart tell you?"

Yet another brain is in our stomach and bowels. This gut-brain contains as many neurons as contained in the spinal cord, and monitors our internal state and emotional status – our "gut feelings." Not only is the gut brain the body's largest producer of serotonin, a brain chemical closely linked with happiness, our gut brain is keenly active when we are faced with challenging or risky situations.

"I THINK, THEREFORE I LEAD – RIGHT?"

What does this all mean for those in leadership roles? Clearly, our neural hardware is as sensitive to social and emotional cues as to facts and figures that we consciously analyze. Crucially, more than 50 per cent of the information received by our CEO brain is channelled through our emotional and gut brains. This means that those in leadership roles must integrate the activity of this network of brains to meet performance expectations; not only do we need our rational brains to set strategies, but also our emotional brains to engage

Admin Design /Shutterstock

effectively with others and our gut brains to take risks when faced with challenges.

What does this mean for those who coach leadership? Improving leadership skills means encouraging the ability to integrate this information. By developing this ability, managers can make better-informed decisions as a result. However, a roadblock to improving this ability is our innate tendency to dismiss information from our emotional brains. We all know the unease we've experienced when the team goes ahead with a decision, even though we feel in our gut that another strategy would be better. Yet, we usually hold back from voicing our dissent because we can't find the words to justify our feelings. Under the pressures of the business world, we are quick to overrule our fast, but non-verbal emotional brains when we are unable to immediately express our feelings using the language of our rational brains. Put simply, we are unwilling to take the time to translate these sensations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP COACHING

Until recently, best practices in leadership have called for impartiality and rationality in making tough decisions. But according to the perspective described here, our visceral and emotional responses play a fundamental role in influencing our thoughts and behaviours. How, then, does this affect leadership coaching?

As an HR professional tasked with coaching leaders in your organization, encourage your executives to develop insight into their emotional brains using the following strategies:

- Build confidence in listening to our guts and hearts. They are educated advisors that only grow wiser over a career of varied experiences and challenges.
- Pay attention to social and emotional cues. These are critical for productive relationships with colleagues and subordinates.
- Practice taking time to "translate" the activity of our emotional brains into the language of our rational brains. Through repetition, expressing our gut reactions to others will become easier and faster.

Having insight into our multiple brains is key to training the leaders of today and tomorrow. With effective coaching, leaders can improve their ability to make decisions that are consistent with their hearts, guts and heads. ■

Carlos Davidovich, MD, MBA is vice president, Executive Coaching at Optimum Talent.

Suzanne Hood, Ph.D. is a scientific writer and editor.

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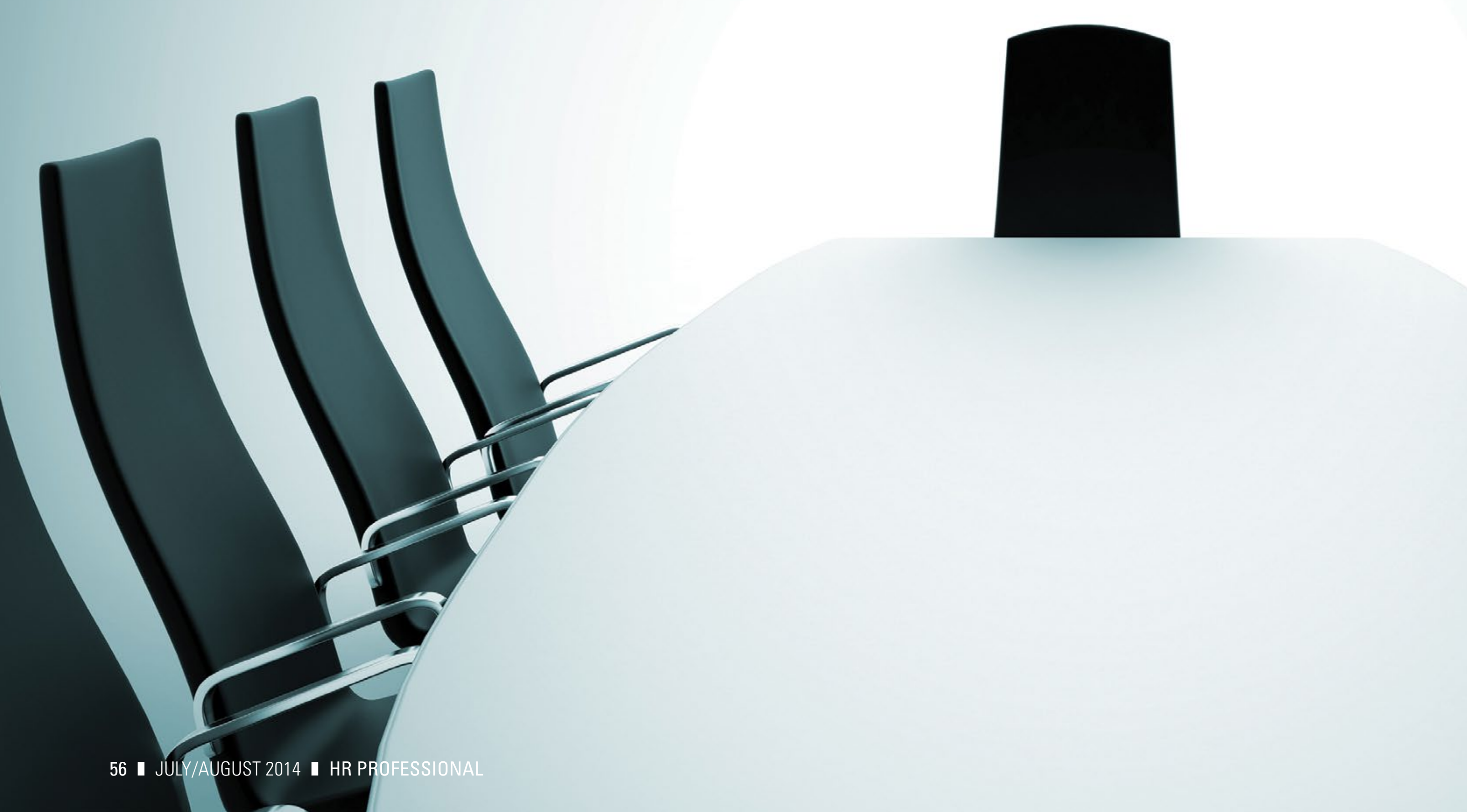
INTERVIEW WITH AN HR HERO: Chris Judge, SHRP

HR AT THE TABLE

By Lisa Gordon



Chris Judge doesn't mind admitting that academically, he was a late bloomer. After struggling through high school in his native England, he ended up at a community college to earn a diploma in business studies. For him, that's where it all clicked.

"I matured and it all fell into place," he said. Switching to a degree program, Judge turned his focus to human resource management. Now, after a successful 25-year HR career, he's earned his "seat at the table" with a promotion to head of operations at the Ottawa location of Novozymes Canada, an industrial biotechnology firm specializing in enzyme production. Altogether, 50 employees work at the site to re-engineer products for enhanced sustainability, energy savings or decreased production costs. In his new role, Judge has overall responsibility for the site's efficient, productive and safe operation.

HR Professional spoke to him recently about what it takes to succeed in business-focused HR.

HRP: How and when did you decide upon a career in human resources?

CJ: At college, I specialized in HR management in the fourth year of my degree course. However, it was several years after graduation before I landed an HR role.

IN A NUTSHELL

- **First (full-time) job:** Newspaper delivery boy.
- **Childhood ambition:** To learn to fly a plane (I got my private pilot's licence in 2001).
- **Best boss:** Liam Nagle (now CEO of SISK Group in Ireland). I worked with Liam at Nortel. He was the first boss to really involve me as a trusted advisor; he taught me the value and importance of employee communication. He was an inspirational leader who cared about his employees but was not afraid to make tough decisions.
- **Best piece of advice I ever got:** Not to forget the importance of family (also from Liam).
- **Favourite music:** *Pulse* (Pink Floyd).
- **Last book I read:** *Corky Bonner* by John Tomashek (John is a former employee who signed my copy with the words…"If you hadn't fired me, this book may never have been written." We still keep in touch.)
- **Time away from work:** Mainly spent cycling (I have done the Rideau Lakes Tour five times), and travelling back to Europe.

ActiveSteve/Flickr

HRP: What was your first HR job?

CJ: I started as a retail management trainee, and in my second year I was seconded into the area-training department. That's when I got my first taste of training and development. A couple of years later, I moved into management development training, and then progressed into human resources management.

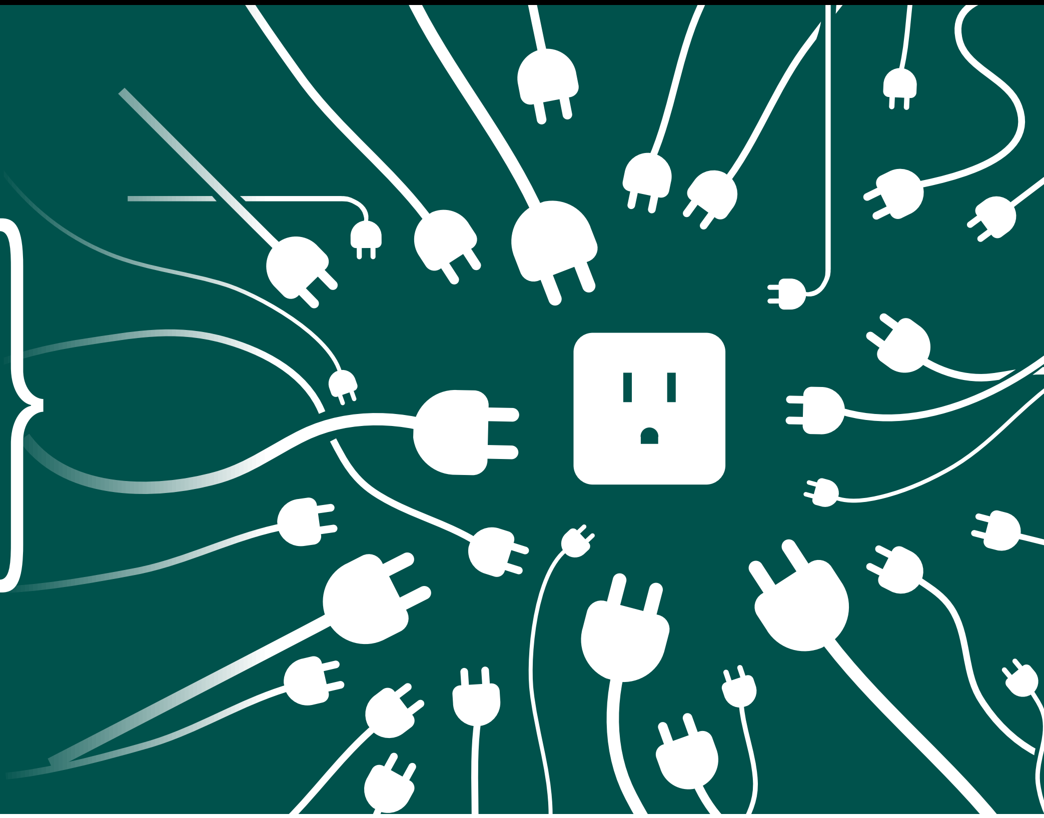
HRP: Describe your current job.

CJ: I have recently been given the opportunity to step outside of HR for the second time in my career. I have just taken on the role of head of operations for the Novozymes Canada location in Ottawa. My career may still end in consulting (as I approach retirement), but for now I am leading a team of managers responsible for production operations, process engineering, maintenance and quality assurance.

HRP: What do you love about your job?

CJ: The job is all about leading a group of talented and very technically skilled individuals. It is about teamwork and communication and effective management. I actually enjoy managing and leading teams to get the most out of them. Finally, it's about directly impacting the bottom line of the company, and I have always enjoyed being a business-focused HR partner.

> **"I'M A GREAT BELIEVER IN ENERGY AND ENERGIZING OTHER EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS."**
>
> – CHRIS JUDGE, SHRP



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

CJ: I have only just started this new role, so I am learning all about the manufacturing processes of the company (I had a similar challenge with a previous employer when I was asked to take charge of production). I do not need to become a subject matter expert, but I need to learn enough to enable me to work closely with my new colleagues and establish trust. In many respects, it is not unlike what I have done throughout my career as an HR business partner – just a lot more intense! But once I've achieved that goal, it will be richly rewarding.

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

CJ: I'm a great believer in energy and energizing other employees and managers. Arguably, in difficult times this is more important than ever, but in order to do that you need energy yourself. So, first, do what you need to do (exercise, diet, relaxation therapy) to maintain your own energy levels. Second, managers need an HR team they can count on during difficult times. I have been involved in multiple closures, downsizing events and restructurings. In all cases, these are the times when HR can show true leadership. And, I should point out that it's not just about managing an event, it is also about managing the transition (for those remaining employees). Finally, do not underestimate how much even the most senior, confident and charismatic leaders need a trusted advisor – you need to be a good listener!

HRP: What skills do you think are important for success in an HR career?

CJ: That depends on what sort of HR career you want. In general terms, I would say that the skills (if you can call them that) that have helped me in my career are adaptability; the ability to build relationships; pragmatism and business focus; and enthusiasm.

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

CJ: Have patience with people like me when we offer to give advice! We mean well, but of course we do not know all the answers. I can readily admit that I have made mistakes along the way – sometimes very painful ones! But over time I have dusted myself off, learned from those mistakes and moved on. My advice would include these tips:

- Make the most of your non-HR experience; you will still be able to draw upon it in your HR career.
- Don't give up. I don't envy new grads in 2014. I think it is incredibly tough for you – but it will get better.
- Consider volunteering as a way to get further work-related experience.
- Try to maintain an inner confidence and an outer humility (and if you can figure out the secret, let me know!)
- The road to a successful career is never straightforward. Twice in the last decade, I have taken a significant cut in salary and, arguably, responsibilities. But within a few years, I had moved beyond where I had been.

HRP: What is the future of HR?

CJ: I think the introduction of legislation in Ontario (Bill 32 – *Registered Human Resources Professionals Association Act*) is significant, and I think HR will increasingly move towards being a true professional organization. But with that professional status comes professional responsibility – and it may not be everyone's "cup of tea." As well, the skill of managing others is not intuitive to a great many managers. HR will continue to provide a key role in guiding the right people into the right roles and, when necessary, encouraging others to move out of roles that do not fit their abilities. ■

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HRPA Human Resources Professionals Association

CHRO – The Next Generation of HR Executives

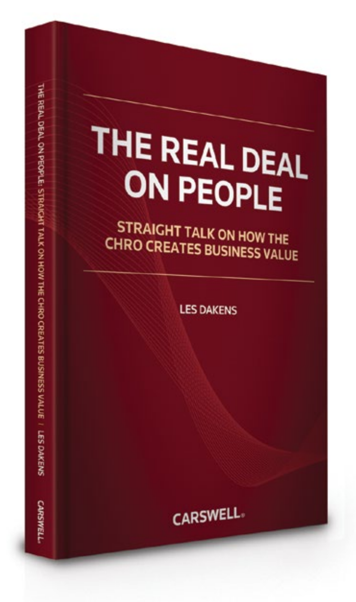
LES DAKENS ON HIS NEW BOOK, *THE REAL DEAL ON PEOPLE*

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP

In his new book, Les Dakens writes about his experience as a Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), and provides a career development plan for HR professionals looking to reach the top spot in the C-Suite. In a recent interview, Dakens shared what he has learned as a CHRO.

What was your inspiration for writing the book?

LD: Taking on the Maple Leaf Foods job re-invigorated my interest in the role of the CHRO. This book would help me as a teaching aid that I could give to people I am coaching and to my fellow board members on the HR committee to show how we leverage the CHRO. I also wanted to introduce many other voices that could tell the story of the CHRO.



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MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CHRO IS THE ARCHITECT OF AN ORGANIZATION'S TALENT STRATEGY.

The designation of CHRO is the next generation of HR executives. What role does the CHRO play in the organization?
LD: The CHRO, first and foremost, is directly accountable to the CEO. It's an evolving role, and at the heart of it you are both the individual coach to the C-suite and below, including the CEO, plus you are the team coach. As the head of HR, you hire these people. You develop them, promote them and support them as they execute their jobs. The bottom line is because you are at the front end of the hiring, you're also accountable for making sure they perform effectively. You need to develop them for future assignments and you need to coach them in terms of how they operate, not just within their own teams but how they operate within the executive team. The CEO must be totally aligned with you in terms of what you want to get done with the team. Most importantly, the CHRO is the architect of an organization's talent strategy. Where HR may have been let go when a strike hit the plant, today's HR strategists will find themselves out of a job if they cannot execute a well-defined people strategy.

You include a chapter on plant-level HR management. What are some of the specific skills HR professionals need to be effective at this level?
LD: In a manufacturing company, there are two functions that really matter in terms of making money on a sustainable basis: making the product and selling it. In HR, you have to understand those two functions to understand how the business makes money. In a labour-intensive manufacturing setting, most of the employees are in the plants and quite often unionized. If you are successful in that environment, you will be successful anywhere because you are dealing with the essence of the business. It's the same case if you are supporting the sales and marketing function. You understand the business and know what it takes to be successful in those roles. You also need to know how to find and develop the right people so that every day in manufacturing, they can put out a high quality, safe and cost effective product, or similarly if you are selling a product. Getting that experience early on in a career helps balance technical knowledge of HR with strong business acumen. That's been the biggest gap in HR. We are all technical experts but we don't always have the business acumen to the level we need. You can fix that by taking an operating assignment.

The next generation CEO will lead differently. What are the differences?
LD: The next generation of CEO has had more personal development and is more sensitive to talent development, succession planning and career planning than the previous generation, who came up the ranks not necessarily having a well-planned out game plan. Many CEOs were selected early in their careers as high potentials and they've had special development. They get it. This means that the CHRO will have an ally right from the start. Secondly, orientation around development has a larger focus on people than in the past. CEOs will be more interested in turning to their CHRO and saying, "Here is our business strategy; what is your people strategy to support this?"

How can the CHRO be a strong strategic partner and confidante to the CEO?
LD: The strategic partner and confidante are two distinct roles. Some CHROs are successful at both; others pick one. The best way for the CHRO to be the strategic partner to the CEO is to have strong business acumen and make the direct link between business strategy for the company and the people strategy that helps the CEO execute the business strategy. It used to be that the only time you were fired as the head of HR is if you ended up in a strike that you didn't want. Now, the biggest reason a CHRO would be fired is if they did not have a people strategy to help the CEO execute the business strategy.

The confidante role is related, but independent in terms of skills required. The confidante is part psychologist, part listener and part nurturing parent. The confidante is there to listen, but there are times when they have to be the one to "kick the CEO in the butt" – you have to have the courage to do this, and there may be times when you cross the line and it's irreparable to the relationship. It's a fine line to challenge your boss. Most CEOs appreciate the honest feedback, but some do not.

What are your predictions for the CHRO role in next five years?
LD: I see a formal acknowledgement that the CHRO will report dually to the head of the HR committee on the board of directors and the CEO. The CHRO will be regarded as the people expert when it comes to executing the business strategy of the company. If the company doesn't successfully implement their strategy by the time that the three- to five-year period is over, the CHRO needs to be held just as accountable as the CEO. ■

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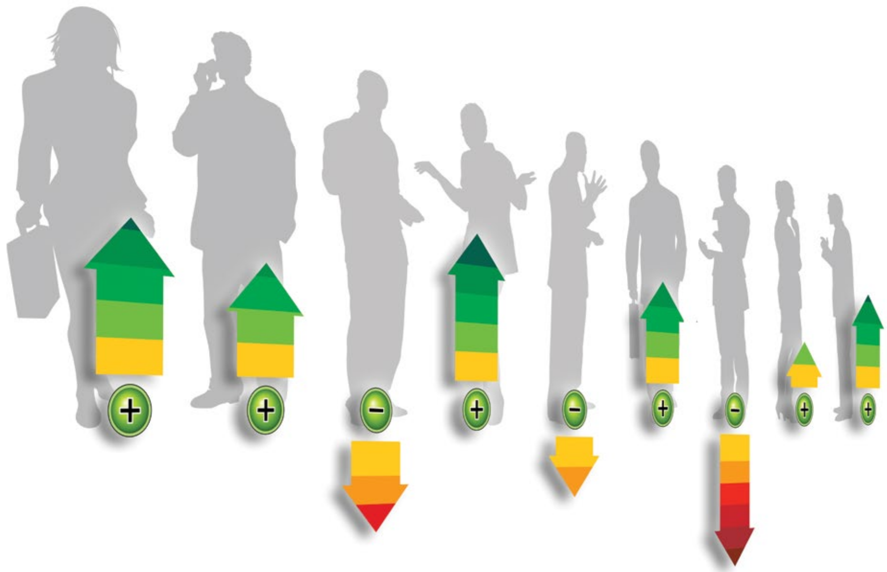

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Considering Career Engagement

KEEPING TRACK OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR CAREERS

By Deirdre Pickerell, Ph.D., CHRP, GCDF-i

Human resources professionals are the lifeblood of any organization. In this knowledge economy, HR is tasked with managing an organization's most valuable commodity – its people. HR professionals often need to be recruiters, marketers, coaches and counsellors; as more organizations seek to embrace a career development culture, HR is tasked with that, too. Yet, how many HR professionals take time to pause and reflect on their career engagement?

Different from employee engagement, which generally focuses on the relationship employees have with their employers, career engagement focuses on the relationship individuals have with their careers. Optimal career engagement is realized when challenge and capacity are in balance. However, when there is too little challenge for the available capacity, individuals can begin to feel underutilized. When there is too much challenge for the available capacity, individuals begin to feel overwhelmed. Without correction, full disengagement, and all it brings, occurs. By identifying two routes to disengagement – either through being overwhelmed or underutilized – the career engagement model offers an important framework for career conversations, and for considering interventions aimed at re-engaging workers.

To begin, HR professionals may wish to explore how engaged they are with their own careers. Has their level of passion, excitement and energy stayed the same? Increased? Diminished? Is there the right level of challenge and sufficient capacity (e.g., time, money, resources, skills) to deal with those challenges? If yes, great news! Stay the course, but check in often to ensure changing circumstances aren't negatively impacting opportunities for career engagement. If no, reflect on whether there is too much or too little challenge, resulting in either feeling overwhelmed or underutilized; then, identify realistic solutions. For example, as it can often be difficult to reduce the level of challenge, it may be necessary to increase capacity instead. However, remember that capacity relates to both individuals and organizations and in the career engagement model, career is broadly defined (i.e., it is more than just work). If the organization can't help increase capacity, consider whether personal supports (e.g., family) can help; reducing the pressures at home can help to "free up" the capacity needed to deal with increasing challenges at work.

HR professionals can also consider these 10 strategies to maximize career engagement – both for themselves and for the employees they work so hard to support:

1. Provide motivating work
2. Offer meaningful opportunities
3. Recognize the importance of "work fit"
4. Equip supervisors to support employees' careers
5. Strengthen co-worker relationships
6. Provide relevant resources
7. Continuously monitor alignment
8. Facilitate work-life balance
9. Respect work-life boundaries
10. Align challenge and capacity

Whether reflecting on their own careers or helping others, HR professionals are encouraged to consider career engagement, remembering that disengagement occurs in two distinctly different directions – through feeling overwhelmed or underutilized. Knowing the route to disengagement is key to designing interventions and/or organizational supports. ■

Deirdre Pickerell, PhD, CHRP, GCDF-i has over 20 years' experience in the fields of career development, adult education, and human resource management.