

INSIDE: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT | HIRING TEMPORARY STAFF | WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

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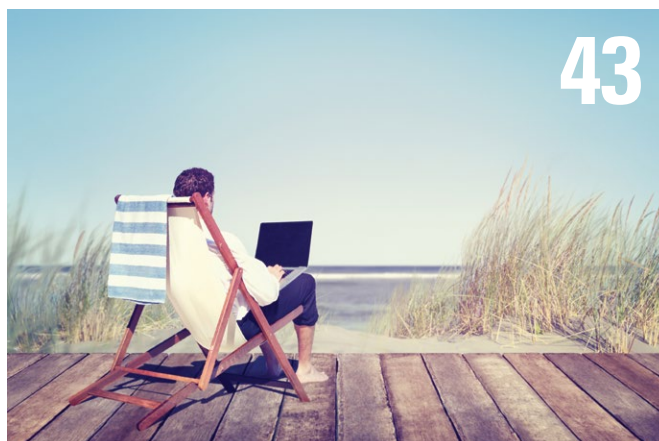
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IN THIS ISSUE

In this edition of *HR Professional*, brush up on your legal knowledge in several key areas of HR law.

contributors



MICHAEL DONSKY

Michael Donsky has been with Fogler Rubinoff since 1992. He practices in the firm's employment litigation and brokerage liability groups. He has acted as lead counsel on matters before the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Court of Appeal for Ontario and the Supreme Court of Canada, as well as numerous administrative tribunals. Throughout the time he has been working in employment law, he has regularly worked both sides of the fence: employer and employee. He has worked on employment standards, wrongful dismissal and human rights code matters over that time. Read Donsky's article for this issue's Legal Words column on the topic of new leaves of absence, starting on page 15.



LIZ WISEMAN

Liz Wiseman is a researcher, executive advisor and speaker who teaches leaders around the world. She is the author of *Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work* as well as the bestselling book *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter* and *The Multiplier Effect: Tapping the Genius Inside Our Schools*. Wiseman is a former executive from Oracle Corporation. She has been listed on the Thinkers50 ranking and named as one of the top 10 leadership thinkers in the world. Read her article about how employees in rookie situations can add value to an organization, starting on page 26.



DEBRA HUGHES, PH.D.

Dr. Debra Hughes is a partner with RHR International LLP in Toronto. Diverse experiences gained from a 25-year career enable her to work with CEOs and senior leaders to ensure they are developing the leadership behaviours that drive career and organizational success. Dr. Hughes has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Waterloo. In the first of a three-part series of leadership articles, she discusses how to best integrate new executives into an organization to optimize their chances of success. Read the article, starting page 31.



KIM SHEPHERD

Kim Shepherd joined Decision Toolbox, a 100 per cent virtual organization providing recruitment solutions, in 2000 as CEO. Today, she leads the company's growth strategy, primarily through developing partnerships and alliances, and as an active member of the Los Angeles and Orange County human resources community. As a recognized thought leader by HR organizations across North America, Shepherd regularly speaks on topics such as recruitment best practices, recruitment process outsourcing and the virtual business. She authored *The Bite Me School of Management*, a book journaling her business journey and the challenges she has overcome. In 2009, 2011 and 2012, Decision Toolbox was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in workplace flexibility. To read Shepherd's article about how successfully implement workplace flexibility in your own organization, turn to page 43.

CORRECTION:

In the September issue of *HR Professional* on the contributor's page, Dave Lahey's bio suggested that Predictive Success Corporation provided HRPAs with predictive index (PI) training as a requirement of the CHRP designation. HRPAs do not endorse any individual psychometrics vendor, nor is PI training a requirement for the designation.

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IN THE SYSTEM

One of the reasons I enjoy working on *HR Professional* so much is that with every issue, I learn several new things – October's HR Law issue was no exception. In speaking with Christine Thomlinson, partner at Toronto employment law firm Rubin Thomlinson and a member of the *HR Professional* editorial advisory board, we decided that our best approach for our legal issue would be to focus on a varied, extended length feature article that covers a number of prevalent HR law topics. We followed the format of HRPAs 2014 HR Law Conference, and writer Melissa Campeau spoke to some of Canada's top employment and human rights lawyers to highlight 12 issues especially relevant to HR professionals. To gain more in-depth legal knowledge and learn in-person from some of Canada's top lawyers, register for the HRPAs Law Conference – taking place October 22 in Toronto. Read the extended cover feature, starting on page 18.

This issue also houses Part One of a three-part leadership series by Dr. Debra Hughes. In this first article, Dr. Hughes discusses how HR professionals can help to successfully integrate new executives into the leadership team by implementing a structured onboarding plan. She discusses several key integration success factors to help you train and retain executive hires in your organization. Flip to the article, which starts on page 26.

To conclude, I'll let you know (if you haven't already discovered!) that a digital version of every issue of *HR Professional* is uploaded after mailing distribution and is available at <http://www.hrpatoday.ca/content/archives.html>. In these digital versions, you're able to bookmark articles, share content and download the issue as a PDF.

I hope you learn new things from this issue of *HR Professional*, and as always, I look forward to your feedback. Happy reading,



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Professionalism and the HR Profession



By Phil Wilson, SHRP

With last year's passage of the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*, HR professionals will continue to focus on enhancing the "professionalism" of what it means to truly become a human resources "professional."

My colleague Claude Balthazard, HRPAs VP Regulatory Affairs, examined this topic recently in an article he wrote for Queens University's industrial relations journal.

Borrowing a definition of professionalism created by the Chief Justice of Ontario's Advisory Committee on Professionalism (which was developed to help define professionalism for lawyers), Claude explores HR professionalism through the prism of 10 "building blocks" of professionalism.

SCHOLARSHIP

This is what HR professionals refer to as "competence." What distinguishes professionals, however, is a sense of obligation to maintain competence in their field, and that professionals don't entirely decide for themselves what they need to keep up with.

HR professionals should feel a sense of obligation or duty to maintain competence in their field and do so in a disciplined way.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is one of the cornerstones of professionalism and goes beyond the obligation to observe ethical standards established by the professional governing body. The idea is that HR professionals can be counted on to act according to their espoused values despite opportunities to do otherwise.

HONOUR

Honour means the sense of "higher purpose" or serving some broader societal good beyond the immediate interests of clients and employers that distinguishes professionals. The real test of professionalism comes about when the professional must "safeguard the higher societal value" when the interest of the employer conflicts with the broader public good.

As Claude says, many HR professionals may be uneasy with this concept. HR professionals understand that they are often the ones to protect the interests of employees, but are also aware that there is often a price to pay for pushing back and taking a stand. And without government recognition – i.e., licensing – then HR professionals have little support and are far more vulnerable in these situations than, say, lawyers.

It creates a catch-22; to be considered as a true profession, HR must be seen as safeguarding a higher societal value. However, until HR is widely seen to be a true profession, many HR professionals will consider it risky to do so. Nonetheless, it is a risk we have agreed to accept when we chose to become true professionals.

LEADERSHIP

Here, leadership means taking a proactive role on matters relating to the profession and its impact on society. This may include speaking out to address a systemic injustice.

INDEPENDENCE

Professional autonomy is another challenging area for HR professionals. The phenomenon of "client capture" has been documented in regards to lawyers. Client capture refers to the situation where a professional begins to identify more with their employer and less with the profession to the extent that the professional begins to lose their independence and their professional judgment becomes clouded.

PRIDE

Like many professions, HR has been the subject of criticism that requires a balance to be struck. On one hand, HR professionals cannot dismiss criticism; and, to the extent that those criticisms are valid, the profession should address them. Nonetheless, it is important that such criticism not get in the way of pride in the profession.

INTEGRITY IS ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF PROFESSIONALISM AND GOES BEYOND THE OBLIGATION TO OBSERVE ETHICAL STANDARDS ESTABLISHED BY THE PROFESSIONAL GOVERNING BODY.

tips from dispute resolution experts

Dealing with someone who makes personal attacks

1. Ignore the attacks and focus on the issues;
2. Try to determine if you did anything to upset them and if so, apologize;
3. Set ground rules for behaviour; or
4. Use an “I” statement to indicate that attacks are not helpful.

Dealing with someone who is stubborn and positional

1. Separate the people from the problem and focus on the problem.
2. Show that you are open to being persuaded by them and that their view has merit.
3. Look for creative ways to accept their position and add in what you need.
4. Talk about how you will both be worse off if they won’t budge and an agreement cannot be reached.

Dealing with someone who lies or is untrustworthy

1. Ask yourself whether the lie is about something important or just puffery.
2. Ask for proof/third party verification.
3. Outline impact on future interactions if present discussion is based on lie/misinformation.
4. Build in a consequence that will occur if they have lied.

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SPIRIT AND ENTHUSIASM

A professional requires energy, drive, initiative, commitment, involvement and enthusiasm. This too appears to be valid for HR professionals.

CIVILITY AND COLLEGIALLY

This is an interesting element for HR since some HR professionals will be members of a professional regulatory body while others will not be. And yet, HR professionals (whether members of the professional regulatory body or not) cannot stand apart from the profession – individual HR professionals cannot divorce themselves from the rest of the profession. Whenever an HR professional behaves in a way that falls below the expected level of professionalism, it reflects poorly on all HR professionals.

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD

This refers to the balance between the duty to serve the client and the obligation to serve the public good. Business ethics and professional ethics are not the same and this dichotomy presents challenges to professionals who are guided by a commitment to serve the public good, but are embedded within an organization that may only be interested in maximizing profits.

Like other embedded professionals, HR professionals need to work out how to make public service coexist with the profit motive.

BALANCED COMMERCIALISM

Income and status cannot become the primary goals of professional life – the primary goal of professional life should be service to others.

As noted at the outset, these defining “building blocks” were developed for lawyers; however, the definition appears to work well for HR professionals in the sense that each element seems to apply equally well. In time, the HR profession will likely develop its own definition of professionalism, but for now, this definition provides a good starting point. ■

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

UPFRONT

EMPLOYERS MISSING OUT: SKILLED WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES BEING OVERLOOKED

Employers consistently overlook a skilled, stable and underutilized segment of the workforce – people with disabilities. According to new research by The Conference Board of Canada, people with disabilities are generally as well educated as people without disabilities, but are three times more likely to be unemployed or out of the labour force. The report, *The Business Benefits of Accessible Workplaces*, also reveals the many areas in which businesses benefit when they invest in accessible employment practices, including higher attendance, enhanced job performance and improved brand image.

“If Canadian businesses wish to thrive, they need to be able to recruit and retain the talent they need – this includes people with disabilities,” said Ruth Wright, director, Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada. “We need more inclusive and accessible workplaces and practices that attract new employees with disabilities and at the same time allow existing employees with disabilities,

and those that develop them, to remain in the workforce.”

The report outlines a number of the benefits to businesses when they invest in accessible employment practices for both new and existing employees.

“These include access to large consumer markets, better customer loyalty and improved brand image, as well as reduced costs for reintegrating existing employees who acquire disabilities in the course of their work lives,” said Wright.

Companies that invest in accessible employment practices reported a number of other business benefits, including better job retention, higher attendance, lower turnover, enhanced job performance and better safety records.

People with disabilities are a large and growing percentage of the population. Almost 3.8 million Canadians, or 13.7 per cent of the population, identified themselves as having a disability in 2012. This was up from 12.4 per cent in 2001. As the incidence of disabilities increases with age, this growing segment of the population is deserving of a greater focus within Canada’s current and future workforce.

DON'T OVERLOOK CYNICISM IN MEASURING JOB PERFORMANCE

A study of more than a decade’s worth of job performance data shows that organizational cynicism may be a major factor associated with poor job satisfaction and employee turnover, and it’s one that companies overlook at their own risk.

Organizational cynicism is a negative attitude toward one’s organization and a belief that the organization lacks integrity.

“Human resources trends today focus on the positives, and that’s good,” said Dr. George Banks, who specializes in human resources and organizational behavior at Longwood University in Virginia. “But our research shows the need not to ignore the negatives of what’s going on in an organization.”

Banks’ recent study analyzed the job performance information of 9,186 people from 34 samples conducted from 1998-2011.

The study found that cynical attitudes can be far more detrimental to employees than trust can be helpful, in relationship to attitude and behavioral outcomes.

“When negative issues were present, 86 per cent of the variances were explained by cynicism,” said Banks. “It tells us that you have to pay attention to negative attitudes when addressing job performance and companies have to address these issues.”

The research also found that cynicism was an across-the-board issue and didn’t appear to correlate in any substantial way to any specific demographic issue including age, sex, tenure or education level.

“The bottom line we found is that if I’m a cynical person, it will hurt my job performance, but if I’m a trusting person, it won’t help my job performance as much,” said Banks. “The lesson is that sometimes if you have a bad employee and they quit, it’s not the worst thing for the organization.”



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LEADERS ARE PERSUASIVE RULE-BREAKERS

Psychometrics Canada, an assessment publisher and consultant for the development and selection of people in business, government and education, announced new research on how specific personality traits characterize leaders and differentiate them from other occupational groups. As part of the norming study for the new version of the Work Personality Index® assessment, over 2,000 managers and executives reported that the personality traits that best characterize them are leadership, multi-tasking, energy, persuasion, social confidence and teamwork.

“The traits that best discriminate leaders from non-leaders indicate that managers and leaders like to take control, do many tasks at once and are very energetic,” said Dr. Donald Macnab, director of research at Psychometrics Canada and author of the Work Personality Index assessment. “In contrast to earlier studies, where conscientiousness tends to be one of the best predictors of job performance,

managers and leaders show a lower level of rule-following (a conscientiousness trait) than other groups. In fact, the higher the level of leader (manager, executive or top executive), the lower the level of rule-following – with top executives being lowest of all groups in rule-following.”

Managers and leaders perhaps characterize themselves as rule-breakers as opposed to rule-followers, and are more interested in considering new approaches than following standard operating procedures.

“The research indicates that personality does distinguish leaders from other groups,” said Macnab.

HIRING MANAGERS ARE ONE OF HR'S BIGGEST CHALLENGES

When it comes to the job of finding and acquiring talent, hiring managers are one of the biggest challenges facing HR professionals today, according to a survey conducted by The McQuaig Institute.

In fact, 53 per cent of HR professionals surveyed identified issues with hiring managers as one of the top three challenges they face in recruiting talent.

Nearly half of respondents said their hiring managers are not strong interviewers. That number climbed to 65 per cent for large companies.

“HR professionals are frustrated,” said Ian Cameron, managing director of The McQuaig Institute. “They’re focused on bringing the right talent into their organizations and the single biggest obstacle is not skills shortages, candidate supply or qualifications; it’s their internal partners.”

Getting those candidates in the door is just the beginning, though. Those surveyed said they expect 10 per cent of new hires to be gone before the end of the first year and a whopping 61 per cent said lack of skills are not to blame when someone doesn’t work out.

Half of HR professionals surveyed said it’s hard to find a good cultural fit. New employees are also getting unhappy earlier,



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with 54 per cent saying disenchantment begins to set in during the first six months.

To help improve talent acquisition in their organizations, HR professionals said their top three investments for this year will be in:

- Social media management;
- Onboarding programs; and
- Employment websites.

BEAT RECESSION WITH INTERNAL TRAINING

Companies that invest more in internal training for their staff recover faster from economic turmoil, according to a new study.

The research, carried out by the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina, also found that selective staffing boosted productivity and profit in pre-recession periods, and also helped firms to recover more quickly following a downturn.

Professor Robert Ployhart in collaboration with Youngsang Ray Kim found that effectively managing HR allowed flexibility and adaptability within a range of economic conditions. Firms that implemented hiring freezes and cut back on training during recession were found to have taken longer to recover.

The study examined the effects of staffing and training on firm productivity and profit growth before, during and after the Great Recession (December 2007 to June 2009) in more than 350 firms.

“Larger firms were hit harder by the recession because they tended to have more profitability – hence, when markets contracted, they had more room to fall,” said Ployhart. “Nothing insightful there, but the interesting thing is that if you only look at the period when the recession hit and profits fell, one would have the impression that talent was unrelated or even negatively related to profit. Yet this short-term view obscured the bigger picture, which is that better hiring and training actually helped firms recover.

“Companies should realise that even when the economy is uncertain or even turning negative, you shouldn’t stop investing in people.”



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news

WORKPLACE TRUST FOUND TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT KEY BUSINESS RESULTS IN RETAIL

A recent research study by Great Place to Work® (GPTW) Canada has identified highly significant relationships between trust in the workplace and key performance indicators (KPIs), including retail sales performance, customer service, employee turnover and workplace illness. Correlating the results of its Trust Index® (TI) employee survey with KPIs at a large Canadian retailer, GPTW found several relationships.

The top 25 per cent of retail stores on the TI achieve seven percentage basis points greater sales performance than

the bottom quartile “low trust” retail stores. On a \$100 MM annual revenue base, this translates to \$7 MM greater sales. Employee perceptions of trust in the workplace alone account for 25 per cent of the variance in annual retail sales. The research findings go well beyond this, having numerous implications for other KPIs as well. For example:

- If you want to reduce employee illness, create a workplace that is not only physically safe, but which also fosters work/life balance, straight and honest feedback and a reasonable work pace
- If you want to increase unit sales per transaction, develop a culture

that trusts employees and delegates responsibility

- If you want to reduce employee turnover, develop flexible work practices – for example, support to take off work when necessary

“How employees perceive and experience their corporate culture, particularly around relationships and trust, greatly influences business performance,” said Dr. Ron Grey, senior vice president at GPTW. “This study provides empirical data and rich insights into which aspects of trust and underlying culture management practices drive different KPIs.” ■

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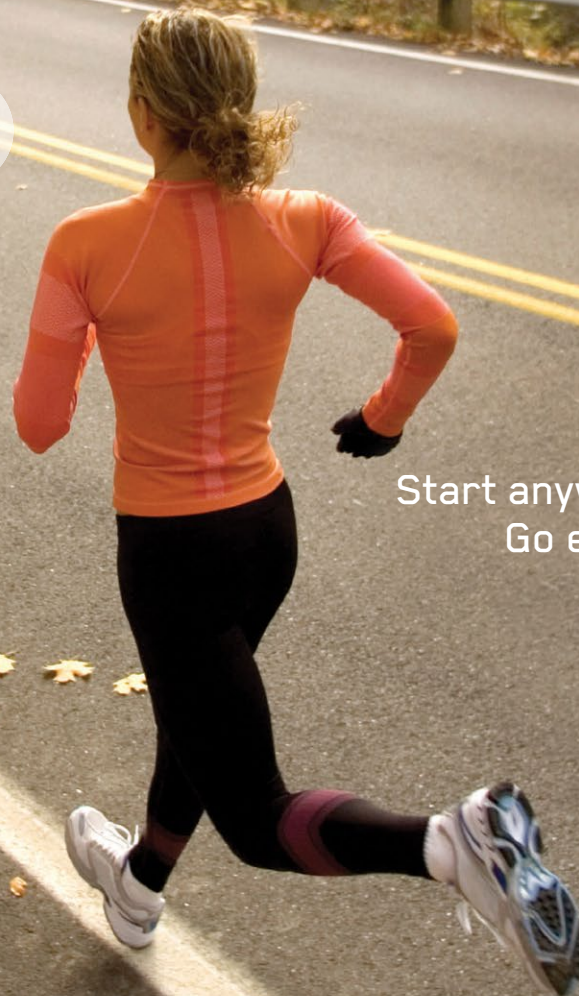
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New Leave of Absence Provisions under the Employment Standards Act

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TYPES OF LEAVE FOR FAMILIES

By Michael Donsky

On April 29, 2014, the *Employment Standards Amendments Act (Leaves to Help Families), 2014*, passed third reading in the Ontario legislature. As such, three new types of leaves of absence come into effect under the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (the “Act”), starting October 29, 2014.

According to Kevin Flynn, the Minister of Labour, “The one thing working Ontarians need most when it comes to caring for seriously ill or injured family members is time to be with their loved ones.” In order to satisfy that need, the Government of Ontario

has established three new types of leave. It will be up to HR professionals to make these new leaves work in practice.

As with the other types of leave provided under the Act, these new types of leaves are provided for under Part XIV of the Act and are all leaves given without pay. The types of leave coming into effect October 29, 2014 are:

- Family Caregiver Leave
- Critically Ill Child Care Leave
- Crime-Related Child Death or Disappearance Leave



IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS PROVIDED BY THESE NEW TYPES OF LEAVE, WHO MAY QUALIFY FOR THEM AND HOW THEY INTERACT WITH THE EXISTING LEAVE PROVISIONS UNDER THE ACT.

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FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE (“FC LEAVE”)

Now Section 49.3 of the Act, FC Leave provides an employee with up to eight weeks of leave each calendar year where he or she must provide care or support to a family member. While the medical condition itself can be either chronic or episodic, a qualified health practitioner must issue a certificate stating the individual in question has a serious medical condition.

Qualifying family members include the employee’s spouse; either the employee or the spouse’s parent (including “step” or “foster”); either the employee or the spouse’s child (including “step” or “foster”); either the employee or the spouse’s grandparent or grandchild (including “step”); the spouse of the employee’s child; the employee’s sibling; a dependant relative or any other individual prescribed as a family member under the regulations.

The employee can take no more than eight weeks leave for each individual described, but can take a further eight weeks if it’s for a different family member.

Any employee wishing to take such leave must advise the employer in writing before or as soon as possible after beginning such leave. If requested, a copy of the referenced certificate must be provided.

FC Leave is in addition to any employee entitlements to Family Medical Leave, CIC Leave, CRCDD Leave or Personal Emergency Leave.

CRITICALLY ILL CHILD CARE LEAVE (“CIC LEAVE”)

CIC Leave under Section 49.4 of the Act requires that the employee first be employed by his or her employer for at least six consecutive months. The employee, if qualified, is entitled to take up to 37 weeks leave to provide care or support to a critically ill child of the employee.

Again, a certificate from a qualified health practitioner is required and it must state both that the child is critically ill and

requires care from one or more parents and it must set out the period during which the child requires such care or support. If the certificate states a period of less than 37 weeks, then the leave is to be no longer than the period in the certificate.

An employee may have more than one child critically ill as a result of the same event but, nonetheless, can take no more than the statutory 37 weeks as CIC Leave.

If a child passes away while the employee is taking CIC Leave, the leave ends at the end of the week that the child dies, unless there is more than one critically sick child at the time. In the latter case, the leave ends when it otherwise would be based upon the Act’s leave limitations or the end of the week when the last child dies.

Any employee wishing to take such leave must advise the employer in writing, setting out the plan regarding the weeks in which he or she will be taking leave. Such notice should be before or as soon as possible after beginning such leave. If requested, a copy of the referenced certificate must be provided.

CIC Leave is in addition to any employee entitlements to Family Medical Leave, FC Leave, CRCDD Leave and Personal Emergency Leave.

CRIME-RELATED CHILD DEATH OR DISAPPEARANCE LEAVE (“CRCDD LEAVE”)

CRCDD Leave under Section 49.5 of the Act requires that the employee be employed by the employer for at least six consecutive months. The employee, if qualified, is entitled to take up to 52 weeks leave if the child disappears as a result of a crime.

The employee is *not* entitled to take a leave of absence if the employee is charged with the crime or “if it is probable, considering the circumstances, that the child was a party to the crime.”

Further, if the employee does take a leave of absence but, during that leave, circumstances change such that it “no longer seems

probable that the child died or disappeared as a result of a crime," the leave ends on the day on which it no longer seems probable.

If during the 52-week period, the child is found alive, the employee may take 14 days leave after the day the child is found. If the child is found dead, the employee may take 104 weeks leave from the day the child disappeared.

Any employee wishing to take such leave must advise the employer in writing, setting out the plan regarding the weeks in which he or she will be taking leave. Such notice should be before or as soon as possible after beginning such leave.

CRCDD Leave is in addition to any employee entitlements to Family Medical Leave, FC Leave, CIC Leave and Personal Emergency Leave.

SUMMARY

The new types of leave essentially build on the existing Family Medical Leave provided under Section 49.1 of the Act but are generally in addition to such Family Medical Leave.

It will be important to understand what is provided by these new types of leave, who may qualify for them and how they interact with the existing leave provisions under the Act. It is also important to note that while the leaves in question may be cumulative, the necessary conditions for a given leave to be available are not always identical. For example, the specified family members for which Family Medical Leave may be available are not identical to the specified family members for whom FC Leave or CIC Leave



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may be available. The leave can be cumulative only where the family member qualifies under each heading.

Further, while employers do not have to pay wages to an employee on the above-noted types of leave, an employer must not threaten, fire or penalize any employee for taking or planning on taking such types of leave. ■

Michael Donsky is a partner with Fogler, Rubinoff LLP.

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HR Law:

Back to Basics

By Melissa Campeau

Workplaces have been continuously evolving over the past few decades, and issues surrounding the employer/employee relationship (and everything in between) are far from black and white. As office dynamics and work methods change and develop, it's critical to have at least a basic understanding of different HR laws that can affect an organization.

Below are overviews on 12 different topics especially prevalent to HR workers in the realm of employment law.

CONSTRUCTIVE DISMISSAL

Trying to do more with less is common practice in many organizations as they tighten belts and tend to bottom lines. But the practice can land a company in hot water if they're not careful.

"When an employer unilaterally and fundamentally changes an individual's essential terms of employment, it's often seen as unreasonable and unfair," said Jeffrey Percival, partner with Pallett Valo LLP in Mississauga, Ont. "And legally speaking, it may be considered constructive dismissal."

It can be a tricky area, though, because there's room for interpretation.

"It's very fact-specific," he said. "Every situation is different and needs to be examined on its own merit."

There are also plenty of details to consider.

"For example, if you're going to change something about an employee's role – it might be the duties they perform, a demotion, a temporary layoff, a change in pay or even location – the employee generally has to agree to those terms," said Percival.

If the plan is to cut an employee's pay, it's permissible up to a certain point. "But once you start reducing an employee's pay by around 15 or 20 per cent, you've crossed the line into constructive dismissal territory.

"It's an area of HR law that's fraught with changes and uncertainty," he said. "It's best to tread cautiously and get qualified guidance when you need it."

EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS

Does your organization dust off a decade-old employee contract every time there's a new recruit? If so, it's time for a review.

"Contracts we might have thought were enforceable a few years ago, the courts might be taking a different view of them today," said Michael Fitzgibbon, founding partner with Watershed LLP in Oakville, Ont. "In particular, they're looking into any areas where the employer has given them wiggle room upon drafting."

Fitzgibbon says that historically speaking, a big motivator when drafting employment contracts has been to make sure there's an enforceable termination provision, limiting the employee to something less than the common law would imply.

"However, recently when courts have looked at termination provisions, they've looked at things like whether they provide for benefit continuation, which is required under the Employment Standards Act," said Fitzgibbon. "They've struck down certain clauses as being unenforceable when they don't." When that happens, it can be costly for an employer.

"Five years ago, we might not have been so concerned about that type of drafting," he said. Now, though, HR professionals need to advise their organizations to spend



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a lot of time when drafting contracts, considering all the areas where there may be ambiguity or room for interpretation.

EXTRAORDINARY DAMAGES

Extraordinary damages aren't commonplace, but they can be extremely costly. Unlike compensatory damages, extraordinary damages are not designed to compensate an employee for some kind of loss when he or she is terminated.

"They are designed to punish the employer for that loss," said Karen Sargeant, partner with Fasken Martineau DuMoulin, LLP in Toronto.

Certain behaviours are more likely than others to set off legal fireworks.

"The situation we see most often is mistreatment of a sick employee," said Sargeant. "It can be hard in some cases to determine if someone is legitimately sick or not." When an employer is investigating or communicating with the employee, it's important not to get too aggressive. "We've seen moral damages in particular awarded in those cases where an employer crosses the line."

In other cases, Sargeant has seen employers relentlessly pursue employees in some form of litigation.

"It could be a situation where the employer knows there's not cause but continues to allege it," said Sargeant. Conducting a biased and negligent investigation could also get an organization into hot water. "The process is as important as the substance with investigations."

While extraordinary damage awards tend to be expensive when courts do award them, "the good news for employers is that the threshold to award them is very high," said Sargeant.

EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a decision dealing with the availability of summary judgment that has meant a major shift in employment litigation.

"On a practical level, it means that employees and employers can obtain results without having to wait for trial and sometimes before the employee has secured new employment," said Janice Payne, partner at Nelligan O'Brien Payne LLP, based in Ottawa.

Judges are already showing a willingness to grant dismissed employees early decisions about the length of the notice period they're entitled to, even when allegations of cause or failure to mitigate charges are involved.

"From an access to justice perspective, this is an important and welcome development," said Payne.

Another recent decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal is getting plenty of attention, too. In that case, the court held that there was no obligation to mitigate damages when an employment contract was silent on the issue.

"The courts now require clear language to give credit to an employer for income earned post termination or to order relief if the employee has not made appropriate effort to mitigate," said Payne.

When it comes to potential litigation, document everything, says Payne. Keep records accurate, up to date and accessible.

"HR professionals are on the front line in terms of providing necessary and effective litigation support to their employer and legal counsel," said Payne.

WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS

Done right, workplace investigations are an important HR tool. Done wrong, they can be a difficult legal situation waiting to happen.

"There's a steady stream of legal decisions from human rights tribunals, courts and arbitrators that outline the types of legal trouble employers can get into if they conduct a workplace investigation that is flawed," said Janice Rubin, the managing partner at Rubin Thomlinson LLP in Toronto. In fact, she says, the type of trouble employers can get into can be quite costly.

What makes an investigation flawed?

"A litany of things," said Rubin. A complainant may be handled in an insensitive way, a respondent may be treated unfairly or an investigator may neglect to interview all the witnesses, for example. Another big challenge, says Rubin, is that employers may appear to be biased because they're internal to the organization and know all the players involved.

Preparation is key for anyone handling an investigation.

"There are many situations where a trained, competent internal investigator is appropriate," said Rubin. Other times, it's best to get someone outside the organization to help out. "I think an internal HR person needs to know how to recognize the signals or the triggers for using someone external to the organization."

JUST CAUSE

Just cause – when an employer terminates an employment relationship because of significant misconduct by an employee – is the exception to the employment rule.

"If we took an organization, and they did 50 terminations over time, the vast majority are going to be without cause," said George Vassos, senior partner at Kuretzky Vassos Henderson LLP. They may be triggered by restructuring, downsizing or poor fit, for example. "Because just cause is the exception, and that means HR and the organization need to be careful and pay close attention to the scenario and whatever's causing them to think about just cause."

The punishment also needs to fit the crime.

"All the just cause cases you see coming out of the courts are in that vein now," said Vassos. "For example, you may have a 40-year employee who steals a can of pop and a one-year employee who steals \$1 million." Both are instances of theft, but would clearly warrant different responses.

The Supreme Court of Canada has identified employees as a vulnerable group in society and has noted that employees are most vulnerable at the time of termination.

"This takes us back to fairness and how employers have to be fair and exhibit good faith when they are terminating," said Vassos, "especially when just cause is involved."

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

In the first year that Ontario's Bill 168 came into force, nine out of 10 calls to the Ministry of Labour dealing with workplace harassment and violence are about harassment.

"In the past few years, we've seen a lot of media coverage of harassment and bullying, and it's become a very powerful term," said Shana French of Sherrard Kuzz LLP,

Employment & Labour Lawyers. “With heightened sensitivity and awareness, the landscape changes and so do the legal obligations.”

Employers are facing evolving obligations to address harassment and violence in the workplace.

“The potential liability that can flow from a failure to meet those obligations is significant,” said French. “Also, when there’s a situation you may have an instinct to dismiss as frivolous, it’s important to recognize there might be significant consequences if you don’t handle it with due process.”

What this underscores for HR professionals is the need to stay on top of the issue.

“Be very diligent about establishing, implementing and reviewing your policies,” said French. Take even the most frivolous claim seriously and put it through the assessment process. This won’t necessarily mean a full investigation, but it can’t be ignored. And finally, says French, “Take steps to prevent against any kind of violence in the workplace and encourage a respectful workplace culture.”

PRIVACY

With the proliferation of technology in the workplace, the issue of privacy has become a hot topic.

“It raises a lot of questions,” said Rich Appiah, partner at Israel Foulon LLP, based in Toronto. “Does an employer have the right to search employee equipment? Does the employee have a right to privacy? If the employee is suspected of wrongdoing, does the employer have the right to search through the employee’s computer or locker?”

In Canada, there are not necessarily concrete answers to these questions.

“Every case is different, and fact-specific,” said Appiah. “Human resources professionals need to understand that while we can articulate principles that ought to guide their decision making, every situation will be different and managed on a case-by-case basis.”

What employers can do, however, is to clearly state and communicate their privacy policy.

“The trend is towards protecting employee rights, except where the employer

Continued on page 23

“HR PROFESSIONALS ARE ON THE FRONT LINE IN TERMS OF PROVIDING NECESSARY AND EFFECTIVE LITIGATION SUPPORT TO THEIR EMPLOYER AND LEGAL COUNSEL.”

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has taken steps to clearly circumscribe those rights in the workplace," said Appiah.

One ongoing tension, in particular, relates to privacy and disability accommodation.

"The debate is over the extent of the employer's right to access confidential medical information when faced with a request for accommodation," said Appiah. "Should a medical note be enough or is the employer entitled to a greater amount of info?" In Canada, the courts are constantly challenged to find a balance between the two rights.

MITIGATION

In this country, the idea of mitigating with a former employer crystalized with the 2008 Supreme Court of Canada case *Evans vs. Teamsters*, says Hendrik Nieuwland of Shields O'Donnell MacKillop LLP.

"Essentially that case says an employee who is dismissed and is offered another job by the dismissing employer needs to accept it in order to mitigate their damages, so long as this new job doesn't lead to an atmosphere of hostility, embarrassment or humiliation.

"That's the overarching test," he said. "Whether or not that test is satisfied is

solely fact driven, so it will depend entirely on the circumstances of each case."

For HR professionals who may find themselves in a position of offering a new job to an employee to mitigate damages, Nieuwland offers several words of advice. First of all, the job offer is most likely to be acceptable to the court if a reorganization lead to the employee's original job being eliminated or changed enough to lead to constructive dismissal. Next, the employer needs to clearly outline the new job, the new responsibilities and why the employer thinks the employee is a good fit. As much as possible, keep the compensations terms the same and keep the negotiations professional and amicable. And finally, give the employee as much notice as possible and ample time to consider the offer.

TERMINATIONS DURING THE COURSE OF INVESTIGATIONS

To keep investigations from causing legal troubles down the road – especially when they lead to terminations – the key is for employers to be honest and straightforward during the process.

"The employer has an obligation of good faith and if they fail to exercise that obligation of good faith in either the

investigation process or the termination process, then they run the risk of more severe consequences than has previously been the case," said Hugh Scher, Scher Law Professional Corporation.

Changes to how courts are handling these cases are important, says Scher, because it's reframing the way terminations are being done. "Potentially, more scrutiny is required of employers in terms of how they go about their investigations, the processes they follow in those investigations and the consequences of those investigations."

Scher says another potential complication with flawed investigations is becoming more prevalent.

"There's a question of whether a court is going to permit employees or employers simply to bring motions for the fixing of notice periods in employment termination cases where there is a legitimate argument to be made about a breach of obligation of good faith and fair dealing," he said. "In other words, are the two linked or are they separate legal obligations that the courts are going to look at separately?" If the investigation is handled transparently and according to a sound policy, it

“BE VERY DILIGENT ABOUT ESTABLISHING, IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING YOUR POLICIES.”

— SHANA FRENCH, SHERRARD KUZZ LLP, EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR LAWYERS

makes whatever follows – including a termination – less complex and problematic.

DISCRIMINATION

The idea of equality in the workplace – that people should be treated the same, regardless of individual characteristics – may seem self-evident.

“However, how that looks on a day-to-day basis given the variety of factual circumstances that present themselves becomes difficult,” said Melanie Reist of Morrison Reist. “All of the different prohibitive grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Code mean you’re dealing with a lot of variety: ethnicity, race, creed or religion, disability – so it’s multi-faceted.”

She added, “I think what’s also problematic is that the decisions coming out of the tribunal often seem somewhat hard to reconcile and inconsistent. It’s a difficult area

for lawyers as well, and that’s why it’s really critical for HR to have an understanding of the law and the obligation that the employer has.”

Tough situations can happen in any workplace, despite preventative measures. That’s where having really solid policies and established processes are key.

“Where an employer has policies and procedures in place and those are followed, then even if the tribunal decides against an employer, it will significantly reduce the liability of that employer,” said Reist. “Just take your time if a situation comes up. Gather information, see the issue from all sides and refrain from quickly jumping to any conclusions.”

HUMAN RIGHTS DAMAGES IN WRONGFUL DISMISSAL CASES

A landmark case from September 2013 marked the first time a court awarded

damages for a violation of the Human Rights Code in a wrongful dismissal case.

“The judge awarded \$20,000 in general damages for violation of the Code in addition to wrongful dismissal damages,” said Justin Heimpel with Sorbara, Schumacher, McCann LLP in Waterloo, Ont. “It’s expected that this case will be used as a precedent for other cases in which these damages are claimed.”

For HR professionals, this underscores the ongoing need to be aware of potential human rights issues in the workplace, especially when it comes to matters involving disability and discipline or termination.

“In last year’s case, the employee was terminated without cause during a disability leave,” said Heimpel. “The court was critical of the employer for being disingenuous with the employee in terms of her return to work and the reason that was given for dismissal.”

Ultimately, the court found that the employee’s disability was a factor in the decision to terminate, and this is a violation of the Code.

“HR professionals need to proceed carefully when it comes to disability leaves,” said Heimpel. While there may be special circumstances that warrant a different approach, it’s generally advisable to avoid terminating employment while the individual is on a disability leave, or immediately upon his or her return to work. ■

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Are Rookies your Most Valuable Players?

SOMETIMES, INEXPERIENCE WINS

By Liz Wiseman





Chris, a training executive for a large, multinational firm, gathered his team at an offsite retreat to refocus their priorities for the next six months. Chris' management team consisted of veteran training professionals with a wealth of experience. But Chris had also recruited two new players, Sara and Angela – both were experienced sales leaders but novices in the employee-training arena.

Each member of the management team was asked to craft a "challenge question" – a concrete objective that would focus the team's energy on quick, sustainable wins – and then share it with the group. The veterans went first. Carina began by explaining that she ignored Chris' list of priorities and came up with her own. Greg laid out an ambitious challenge – one that sounded lofty but offered no starting points. Carlos articulated a challenge to introduce a new online program. When asked how he would engage the executives inside the company, Carlos brushed it off, declaring, "I've learned to keep the executives out of things. I usually just ask for their opinion on issues that don't really matter. I know what needs to be done." Each of these veterans missed the mark by relying on their own expertise.

ROOKIES ARE UNENCUMBERED, WITH NO RESOURCES TO BURDEN THEM AND NO TRACK RECORD TO LIMIT THEIR THINKING OR ASPIRATIONS. CERTAINLY THEY BRING OPENNESS TO THE WORK, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, A DESPERATION-BASED LEARNING KICKS IN, CAUSING THEM TO WORK SMART AND SEEK GUIDANCE AND FEEDBACK.

Next came the rookies. The newest member of the group, Sara, nailed it. Her challenge question aligned with Chris' priorities and would garner attention and support from internal clients. The rest of the team was stunned. Next came the other rookie, Angela. Her challenge was good, but not yet great. During the next work session, while the others worked independently, Angela sought guidance from the workshop leader. In round two, Angela nailed it while the veterans were still struggling.

When business cycles are spinning fast and organizations need to pivot and move in new directions, experience can become a burden and inexperience a blessing.

THE RESEARCH ON ROOKIES

A recent study looked at 400 workplace scenarios and compared how inexperienced versus experienced professionals approach a particular type of work.

The research showed that being a rookie – facing a new problem or a challenge for the first time – can provoke top performance. Rookies are unencumbered, with no resources to burden them and no track record to limit their thinking or aspirations. Certainly they bring openness to the work, but more importantly, a desperation-based learning kicks in, causing them to work smart and seek guidance and feedback. In the realm of knowledge work, rookies tend to outperform those with experience, especially when it comes to innovation and speed.

In the current reality of the knowledge economy, innovation cycles spin so quickly that many professionals never face the same problem twice. Those who will thrive in this environment are not just

the rookies, but the “perpetual rookies” – those who, despite years of accumulated experience and knowledge, retain their rookie smarts and draw on the power of learning to solve the new problems they and their firms face.

REVITALIZING YOUR COMPANY'S ROOKIE-SMARTS

As companies grow and become successful, they can easily settle into a comfortable place and lose their rookie edge. Savvy HR leaders can employ a number of talent management practices to ensure the company is fully using their rookie talent, building powerful teams (that utilize the strengths of both inexperienced and experienced staff) and maintaining a rookie mindset across the company.

The following talent management practices can foster this rookie mindset and maintain agility across an organization.

HIRING

Instead of hiring for experience or specific job skills, hire for learning agility. While there are numerous instruments that test for learning agility, the four traits present in perpetual rookies are a good guide – curiosity, humility, playfulness and deliberateness. According to Google's HR chief Laszlo Bock in a 2014 *New York Times* article, the least important hiring criteria is expertise. But at the top of the list are learning ability and intellectual humility.

Bock explained their hiring strategy: “There's so much coming at us so fast, and it creates an extraordinary cognitive burden. We need people who are smart and learn fast and humble enough that they don't have to carry the load of knowing it all themselves.”

JOB DESIGN

With a growing emphasis on the development of high-potential talent, it is tempting to offer the stretch assignments to a small minority of top talent while the vast majority stagnates in comfortable jobs. Everyone needs to be fed a steady diet of challenge. In surveying approximately 1,000 professionals, individuals reported being ready for a new challenge every three months. While job promotions may be scarce, new challenges exist in abundance. Encourage managers to think beyond promotions and instead present their employees with new challenges at regular intervals. When designing job roles, ensure each job has a rookie component and then rotate talent to keep people in their rookie zone.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Design work teams that blend the best of what rookies offer with the savvy of veteran staff. When a team is varied, working together can be harder, but it can also produce better outcomes, especially where creative, cutting-edge thinking is needed. To ensure innovative ideas get implemented, pair a rookie who wants to change the world with an experienced operator who knows how your world works.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

While rookies are more capable than most people imagine, they need thought leadership and guidance. Rookies need managers who know when to rein them in and when to unleash them, and they need to be placed in an environment conducive to learning and insight. In particular, they need leaders to provide:

- Freedom with direction – Provide space but set clear direction

by clarifying what needs to be accomplished and direct them to experts who can guide them.

- A constructive challenge – Offer a stretch goal, but don't overwhelm them. Right-size the challenge so they contribute quickly and build confidence.
- A tightrope and a safety net – Give them a challenge that puts them on a tightrope, but make sure someone is there to catch them if they fall.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Many organizations have slipped into the cycle approach to development, conducting training consistently at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly management classes, annual management meetings). While these predictable cycles seem purposeful to the HR team, it looks like random acts of training from the learner's perspective. We don't learn because the calendar says it is time to; we learn when we need to.

Resources are wasted on talent that has no appetite for development. People in the

workplace are most open to learning when they are:

- Brand new to their role
- Facing a daunting challenge
- Coming out of a painful failure or loss
- Returning from an epiphany outside their normal terrain
- Unclear how to get to the next level in their career

In each scenario, individuals are working in new territory – they are in rookie mode. Wise learning and development leaders will target development and coaching efforts when people are in rookie assignments and are most open to learning.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

As you review candidates in the succession planning process, factor in each candidate's learning agility – are they curious, humble, playful and deliberate? Look at their job history to see if they have a track record of success in rookie assignments. This might be the best predictor of their ability to handle a stretch assignment.

Better understanding of the intense learning and contribution that can occur when people are in rookie mode allows us to rethink and refocus our talent management strategies. In so doing, we can create a more vibrant organization for rookie and experienced employees alike.

In a rapidly changing world, experience can become a burden. Careers stall, innovation stops and strategies grow stale. Being new, naïve, and even clueless can potentially be an asset if leveraged properly.

Rookies (both new employees and long-standing staff in new assignments) are more capable than we might expect. Instead of having them "warm the bench," managers can set their sights higher, put them in the game and tell them to contribute immediately. In the current work environment where the game is changing fast, we might find that they become some of our most valuable players. ■

Liz Wiseman is a researcher, executive advisor and speaker who teaches leaders around the world, and recently authored the book Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats Knowing in the New Game of Work.

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IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN YOU THINK

By Debra Hughes, MBA, Ph.D.

Some senior HR leaders relax and think the job is done once an executive accepts an offer of employment. The fact is, without an onboarding plan, 40 to 60 per cent of new hires fail in their first two years. Wise HR professionals know the true measure of success comes only when an executive is fully integrated into the organization's culture and is producing sustained, quality results.

KEY INTEGRATION SUCCESS FACTORS

The integration process is more complex than most people think, and takes much longer than the traditional "honeymoon" period usually acknowledged. While the first 100 days are critical, integration does not stop at that point. Progress and the likelihood of success are enhanced when the HR professional and the executive address five key success factors during four distinct phases:

- Role clarity – Understanding the role, its relationship to others in the

company and how success is measured is most critical during the early stages of a new position.

- Relationships and networking – Failing to invest time in building relationships with key stakeholders before they are needed is often a cause of failure later in the integration process.
- Navigating culture – Understanding the implicit rules and beliefs that influence how things really get done is crucial. Failing to adapt to the culture can cause failure at any point.
- Early wins – Achieving early successes in areas important to the corporation is an important component in building credibility early in a new executive's career.
- Accelerated learning – Acquiring information that will be critical to understanding the business needs to be a goal for the new executive. Executives who are not seen as "catching on" feel both their credibility and ability to drive results suffer.

The focus and importance of these factors shift over time. For example, early wins are an important contributor to credibility in the first three to four months, whereas relationships take a lot longer to build and the knowledge required to successfully navigate the politics of the organization grows well into the first year.

THE FOUR INTEGRATION STAGES

HONEYMOON: WELCOME ABOARD! (MONTHS 0-3)

At this stage, the organization typically provides some orientation support to the executive. However, even this elementary step is sometimes overlooked as everyone congratulates themselves on a successful selection. HR professionals and the company can provide needed support to the executive through the following steps:

- Introduce the executive to the organization in a way that demonstrates support and confidence.
- Identify early wins and clarify



Leadership

WISE HR PROFESSIONALS KNOW THE TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS COMES ONLY WHEN AN EXECUTIVE IS FULLY INTEGRATED INTO THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE AND IS PRODUCING SUSTAINED, QUALITY RESULTS.

priorities. The executive's idea of an "early win" may be off-target.

- Provide clear and specific feedback both about task performance and fit with the culture.
- Be clear and specific about the role, expectations and measures of success.
- Provide introductions and networking opportunities.
- Provide help with the administrative basics.
- Highlight the welcoming plan and orientation program.
- Assign a peer coach.

REALITY: DID I MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION? (MONTHS 4-6)

After three months or so, executives begin to understand the organization more accurately – seeing the good, the bad and the ugly. Doubts start to set in, accompanied by a decrease in confidence. The HR professional's involvement becomes even more important in working with the executive

and the boss to implement the following actions:

- Provide the organization with recognition of the new executive's successes.
- Hold regular one-to-one meetings to provide feedback, both in terms of performance and fit with the culture, and to monitor how the executive is doing.
- Articulate decision-making processes and organization dynamics that are critical to success (i.e., how things really get done).
- Clarify critical goals and objectives.
- Broaden exposure to the culture and people.

ADJUSTMENT: DO I WANT TO DO THIS? (MONTHS 7-12)

During the third phase, expectations are more realistic, relationships start to take hold and new executives start to recover their confidence. At the same time, however, questions about cultural fit linger and

commitment hits its lowest point. Issues surfacing during this stage can be addressed by:

- Reviewing progress against goals and deliverables.
- Broadening exposure to the culture and people through a cross-functional project.
- Beginning to identify longer-term development needs.
- Providing feedback about what is working and what is not.
- Having a key leader reach out to reinforce commitment and connection to the organization, providing an opportunity for dialogue and two-way feedback.


INTEGRATION: I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE! (MONTHS 12-18)

For many executives, completing a fiscal cycle is seen as a critical aspect and brings closure. But how does the HR professional know when the integration program is over? Progress may be measured by paying attention to four distinct components of success:

- **Credibility** – Others respect the executive. His/her opinion is actively sought out, and others listen when he/she talks.
- **Alignment** – The goals and actions are aligned with both manager and organizational imperatives. The organization feels that the executive understands its goals.
- **Acceptance** – The executive is accepted and feels a desire to belong. The organization feels the executive fits in well.
- **Contribution** – The executive is achieving measurable results. He/she knows how to get things done and the company feels that the individual is making a difference.

With the integration process winding down, the HR professional can begin to shift to the next phase of the executive's career by focusing on succession planning and potential advancement, engaging in a development process to prepare the executive for the future. ■

Dr. Debra Hughes is a partner with RHR International LLP in Toronto.



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Will Temporary Workers Work for You?

A TEMPORARY PROFESSIONAL COULD BE THE SOLUTION FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS OR BUSY PERIODS

By Lisa Kopochinski

Large companies have long hired temporary workers at extra busy times or to help with special projects. Many smaller companies have been more hesitant to do so, but are taking the cue from their bigger counterparts – particularly due to the time and difficulty it can take to find the right full-time employee or a lack of resources to do so.

“Smaller companies don’t necessarily always have the skills they need, so [temporary workers] provide that specialized skill for a defined period of time,” said Dianne Hunnam-Jones, Canadian district president for Accountemps, a firm that places highly skilled candidates into temporary accounting and finance positions. “For example, we help smaller companies when they have a peak

workload. They might have landed a big account and do not need a full-time person, but there is an increase in workload. They don’t want to spend their time training. It’s expensive. They want someone with key skills who can hit the ground running.”

Hunnam-Jones says that many companies will also use a temp agency in their search for a full-time employee to see if they are right fit.

“It takes a long time to hire – particularly in finance and accounting. We did a survey recently that showed it took 49 weeks to fill a full-time position.”

Specialized firms place temporary professionals in contracts that can last a few days to several months. Some companies require a temp to help keep the workflow

going while another may need a fill-in for a maternity leave.

Danley Yip, branch manager for Robert Half Management Resources, says that within accounting and finance, companies often need professionals who can help them cut costs, increase operational efficiencies, meet regulatory requirements and improve accounting processes.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

So when is the right time to bring on a temporary professional?

“A company should consider bringing in a temp when there is expertise required,” said Yip. “Companies today are requesting consultants to support a variety of projects, including internal audit, financial and SEC reporting and tax.”



BY THE NUMBERS

According to Robert Half, the firm found in its research for its 2014 Benchmarking Study that 34 per cent of Canadian companies report using temporary or project workers. This number goes up as company size increases, with 45 per cent of firms with revenues between \$1 billion and \$4.9 billion and 76 per cent of firms of companies with \$5 billion or more reporting using temporary or project professionals to augment their internal staff.



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Yip says consultants are also brought in to work on large-scale initiatives, such as systems upgrades, merger and acquisitions and business process improvement efforts.

“Companies also need to see if their employees are working a lot of overtime,” said Hunnam-Jones. “Is everyone pitching in because you have a big project? That’s when you should bring in a temporary professional. Let’s say you land a big account and need 10 people on the phone answering customer service calls; you know that’s coming and can prepare for it.”

In the technology field, highly skilled temporary professionals are especially sought after, says Deborah Bottineau, regional manager of Robert Half Technology, which provides professionals for initiatives ranging from web development and multiplatform systems to network security and technical support.

“This industry is so fast-paced that companies need to always be on the cutting edge in order to be successful,” she said. “Small to midsized businesses don’t always have the resources needed to keep specialized professionals on staff full-time or invest in ongoing training. Temporary professionals can be a great asset with specialized skills, but without the long-term commitment.”

Smaller companies may also be slower to hire temps because they lack a human resources manager who oversees that area of the business.

“For many companies, there isn’t that ability to take that strategic step back and look,” said Hunnam-Jones.

recruitment

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

When looking to hire a temporary professional, HR managers need to consider a number of factors, such as the type of recruitment firm they choose.

“There are many reputable firms out there that do a very good job at interviewing, reference checking and putting candidates through test runs,” said Hunnam-Jones. “Others will farm workers out without the proper vetting process. You want to do your due diligence and use a highly specialized organization.”

While the importance of utilizing a reputable recruitment firm is high, the flipside is whether there are actually enough highly qualified temporary professionals to fill the demand.

“I think the market has started to turn over the last few months, but it’s still very difficult getting highly skilled professionals,” said Hunnam-Jones. “Companies struggle to find full-time people, so finding high-quality temps is getting tougher, for sure.”

Still, there are those individuals who like the flexibility that temporary work provides.

“There are temp professionals who love going from organization to organization to learn the ins and outs of different companies,” she said. “It also gives them the opportunity to learn new skills and makes them more marketable for a full-time position. It’s a foot in the door.” ■



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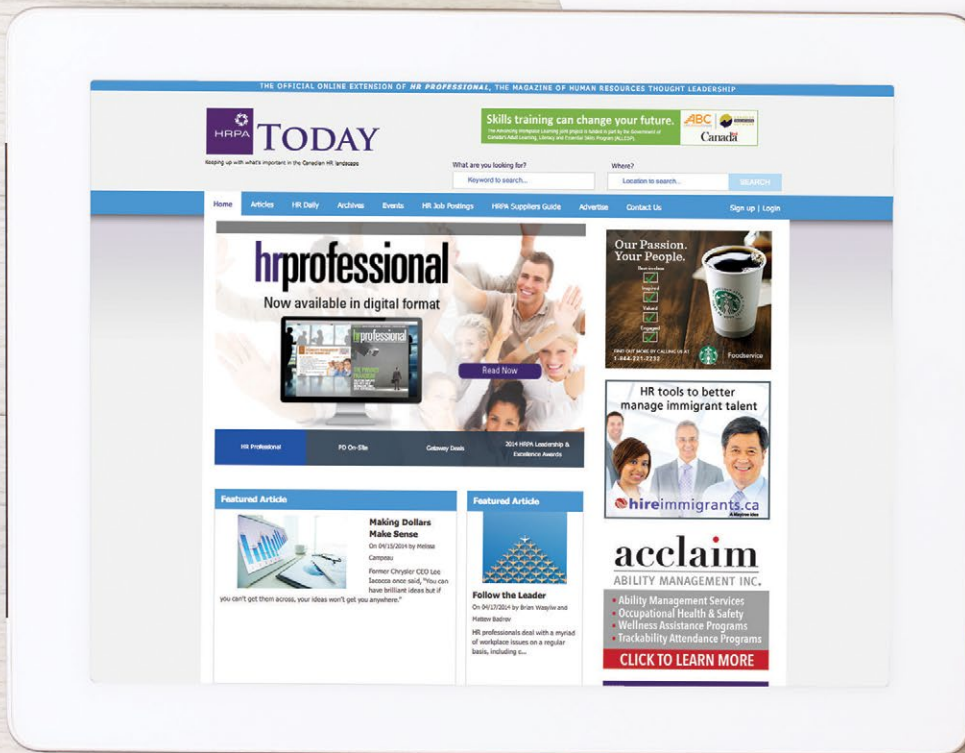
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Seeking a Cure for Founder's Dilemma

CAN HR REROUTE A COMPANY THAT'S HEADING DOWN THE WRONG PATH?

By Sarah B. Hood

Once, Kodak ruled the field of photography. Around the globe, the company name was almost synonymous with “camera,” and Kodak film was universally in demand. But when digital cameras hit the market, Kodak was suddenly caught short; the company vision was so narrowly focused on a disappearing technology that it was abruptly left behind.

Kodak is not alone; many seemingly indestructible businesses have evaporated due to a failure to adapt and change, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as “founder’s dilemma” because it tends to happen when a business holds on too tightly or too long to its original defining vision.

“If you think of companies that have died over the last decade, what’s often happening is they are being displaced by people they didn’t even think were competitors as these companies were rising,” said Marc Epstein, co-author of the book, *The Innovation Paradox: Why Good Businesses Kill Breakthroughs and How They Can Change*.

He names numerous businesses that have succumbed to the rise of Amazon, Apple or Netflix, like Borders bookstores and the Blockbuster video rental chain.

“Nokia and Blackberry were the dominant companies, and they were displaced because they missed this whole smartphone thing,” said Epstein. “Borders missed it because they saw Amazon as a small competitor. Barnes and Noble said, ‘People aren’t going to want to buy books by mail.’”

AVOIDING FOUNDER’S DILEMMA

Becoming too invested in a narrow company definition can be a blinder to future, necessary innovation.

“Basically, it’s a company that’s trapped in a paradigm or a definition of what it is,” said Ian Chamandy, who founded Blueprint Business Architecture with partner Ken Aber. “[These companies] have a definition of who they are, and they don’t know any other way or they can’t see any other option or opportunity.”

If Blockbuster had understood its core activity as providing access to entertainment rather than renting out videos, he says, they might have “bought Netflix for \$10 million when it was a start-up.”

Chamandy and Aber help businesses to better define themselves, so “when opportunities come up in the future, they will see these opportunities as lying in their wheelhouse,” said Chamandy. “If you’re the HR director, at the end of the day you’ve got to get the CEO to agree to do this, because defining the company is the CEO’s job.”

He describes an actuarial firm that had specialized in the disappearing field of defined-benefit pensions. Chamandy and Aber told them, “You need to be able to articulate your DNA in seven words or less, and when you do that, that will tell you what to do in the future.”

Instead of limiting the definition to defined-benefit pensions, Chamandy advised them to see their primary function as

**“HR IS REALLY IN A KEY STRATEGIC PLACE;
THE HR DEPARTMENT ACTS LIKE A QUALITY
CHECK TO ENSURE THE COMPANY IS
FOLLOWING THE LINE OF THE VISION.”**

— ADRIANA GIRDLER, CHIEF EFFICIENCY OFFICER, CORNERSTONE DYNAMICS



“helping businesses obtain a greater degree of certainty” about the future, which opened up new horizons for a company with shrinking prospects.

IDENTIFY THE COMPANY VISION

“All founders of any enterprise have a vision; the question is how clear are they with it?” said Adriana Girdler, chief efficiency officer at CornerStone Dynamics, which helps leading corporations streamline internal processes to work smarter and improve productivity.

Girdler encourages companies to define a vision that is clear and detailed, but not so specific that it could limit growth potential in the longer term.

“A lot of corporations have a one-line vision statement and you can interpret it any way you want, but if you’re really going to grow, you need to have more detail – and be inspiring, too,” she said. “It’s something you should look at every day. You really have to understand who you are and what motivates you. Good times are easy. It’s when times are tough that you have dilemmas and big decision-making points; what are you going to use to guide you through those tough times? It’s your vision.”

And, she says, HR has a key role in keeping that vision in focus.

“HR has the ability to say ‘We’re not going to hire people unless they’re in line with our vision.’ HR is really in a key strategic place; the HR department acts like a quality check to ensure the company is following the line of the vision, [although] ultimately, the company president has the key responsibility, and if that’s not happening, there may be the need for some education.”

WHO AM I?

“Most companies don’t have the foggiest idea of who they are,” said Chamandy. Frequently, the definition is “trapped in the head of a charismatic leader” and risks being lost if there is no succession plan to pass it along. It’s up to HR, he says, to make sure that intuitive understanding of the organization’s core function is clearly articulated to every person in the business.

“People tend to be trying to meet short-term goals, and they lose this ability to move towards breakthroughs rather than incremental development,” said Epstein. In order to be able to take advantage of opportunities for change, he says, HR must “provide some slack that’s going to allow employees to work on things that might be longer term. And when you’re shooting for breakthroughs, you’re going to have a much higher level of failure, so you have to be ready to accept failure.”

Epstein names Google and 3M among companies that leave 10 or 15 per cent of the workweek “basically unassigned” in order to encourage the kind of breakthroughs that are more often generated by start-ups.

“This is really at the heart of what HR needs to be doing [to encourage innovation],” he said. “Make sure that the organization’s systems, structures and rewards are aligned around what you really want.” ■



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Workplace Flexibility

IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM THAT INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY

By Kim Shepherd

Workplace flexibility: it's a hot phrase right now, buzzing through offices and across industries. HR professionals have embraced it and while many are adapting their office to accommodate the wants – and needs – of employees, few really know how to put a successful flexible workplace program into place. Some big-name companies have moved away from flexible procedures, while others completely ignore the pursuit of something they view as unattainable. But, the truth is, when deployed correctly, workplace flexibility can be the competitive factor that attracts – and retains – top talent. It also can help boost company productivity. It just takes time, effort and the occasional trial and error.

Companies of all sizes can learn how to introduce and master a productive, flexible work environment in their offices. There are many formulas that work seamlessly for employees and management alike, and many others that won't work. Everyone assumes there are pitfalls to going flexible – and they're right. But overcoming them is possible and can make a company stronger.

If a flexible work environment is an idea you've toyed with, or are even curious about, there are certain tips to keep in mind as to how to transform a traditional workplace.

DO RESEARCH

With more companies adapting a flexible workplace environment, there is no shortage of resources to refer to as you create a plan that will work for your office. Read articles on companies using a flexible workplace model, and talk to management about relevant experiences putting that model into action. Find out which policies have soared beyond expectations, and which have crashed and burned. Use that information to create a plan that implements tailor-made procedures for your office environment and company culture.

Networking with other HR professionals, who may be able to share their successful experiences, is also a great way to learn dos and don'ts when implementing a flexible workplace policy. Most importantly, ask your employees. They're a great resource, so talk to them and find out how they would feel – and what they would like to see – in the company's flexible workplace policy.

EASE INTO THE PROCESS

If the concept of a flexible workplace is new to your company, ease into flexible work arrangements rather than springing an entirely new environment on employees and management. Test the flexibility waters by doing a trial where you divide virtual-eligible employees into four groups and have them rotate working from



productivity

DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH EMPLOYEES CAN THRIVE AND ABSORB THEMSELVES IN THEIR WORK.

home one Friday a month. Identify your measurements, track the results and decide after three months if this is advantageous.

During this period of research and development, you can work out the kinks, test employee reactions and find the solution that is right for your company culture. As you receive feedback from management, employees and clients, think of your flexible workplace as a fluid solution, one that is able to adapt to the changing needs of your workplace.

As you move forward with a newly established flexibility plan, hire professionals who have an entrepreneurial spirit and passion for excellence. Self-discipline is essential, but it has to be motivated. Employees should be aware of what will be expected of them and they should have an inner drive to succeed that will be reflected in the work they produce.

MEASURE PRODUCTIVITY

The best way to know if a flexible work environment will work for your company is to put it into practice – and measure the results. Track employee productivity and create a metric system that allows progress and work to be monitored. Flexible workplaces should reduce the cost of doing business and increase workplace satisfaction, but work quality should not suffer. Create clear expectations and hold employees responsible for meeting those expectations.

Each industry and office will have its own way to measure success. Suggested metrics include:

- Individual performance: Each employee is expected to meet his/her goals in a timely manner and to communicate if these goals are not going to be met.

- Group productivity: Every effort put forth by employees is a group result, and triumphs are shared and celebrated.
- Company profits: A properly executed flexible workplace is one that will also increase profits. Employees' happiness should reflect the company's bottom line.

DON'T LOSE YOUR CULTURE

You don't build company culture like an office structure or implement it like a new accounting system. Culture is intangible – it's meant to be felt. Think of culture as a plant – a vine that grows and changes all the time. In many cases, the flexibility offered by a company can be vital to the fabric of its culture. In other cases, flexibility is just an added benefit of an already rich corporate culture. Whichever the case may be, don't lose sight of the importance of building an environment in which employees can thrive and absorb themselves in their work.

Establish a workplace that inspires employees and makes them feel connected, no matter how remotely they are located. Organize team "water cooler" events such as parties, recaps of family vacations and hold regular all-hands-on-deck meetings, even if they need to take place in a virtual meeting room.

DECIDE IF FLEXIBILITY FITS

A flexible workplace may not be right for every business, or every employee, but if it is a policy that would benefit your office, these tips should help ease the transition and make for a happy office.

As HR professionals, the opportunity exists to increase profitability in a way that also keeps a hold on your company's top talent. The workplace is migrating to a "Me Inc. World" mentality, which means A-players pick who they want to work for – not the other way around. With more companies offering flexible workplace options, job seekers are taking notice, and it may be the deciding factor when faced with two positions. In an ever-evolving economy, it is important to stay ahead of the trends and offering a flexible workplace may just be the way to do it in your industry. ■

Kim Shepherd is the CEO of Decision Toolbox.



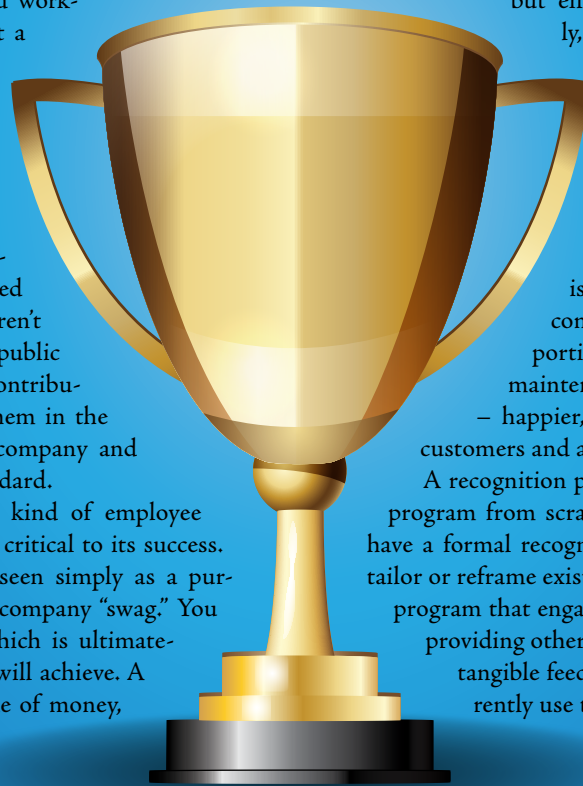
Generating Incentive through **Recognition**

SHOW YOUR EMPLOYEES THEIR VALUE TO THE ORGANIZATION

By Kathleen Powers

For even the best, most engaged workers, there are times throughout a career that motivation can begin to slump. An organization can curtail a motivational lag by keeping its employees aware that it appreciates their ongoing efforts and values their contribution to the team. Employee recognition and incentive programs can be implemented to show workers that their efforts aren't going unnoticed. A tangible and public acknowledgement of an employee's contribution rewards their efforts, engages them in the process, builds their loyalty in the company and motivates their peers to a similar standard.

However, implementing the right kind of employee recognition and incentive program is critical to its success. Too often, employee recognition is seen simply as a purchase – pens, shirts, trips or other company “swag.” You cannot purchase loyalty, however, which is ultimately what a good recognition program will achieve. A program's success rests not on volume of money,



but effectiveness of leadership – specifically, an employer or manager's ability to forge an emotional bond with their employees. It is that emotional commitment that will encourage employees to invest their talent in your organization and work more productively.

The key to employee engagement is no secret; it requires emotional commitment from its leadership, a supportive workplace culture and constant maintenance. The payoffs are equally intense – happier, more productive employees, happier customers and a better bottom line.

A recognition program may not mean building a new program from scratch. Even if your workplace does not have a formal recognition program, there may be ways to tailor or reframe existing events and practices into a custom program that engages and rewards your employees while providing other valuable assets – trackable results and tangible feedback. Consider the processes you currently use to reward performance.

A PROGRAM'S SUCCESS RESTS NOT ON VOLUME OF MONEY, BUT EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP – SPECIFICALLY, AN EMPLOYER OR MANAGER'S ABILITY TO FORGE AN EMOTIONAL BOND WITH THEIR EMPLOYEES.

talent management

Are they:

- In the moment? We respond to instant gratification. Acknowledgement at the time, even a small gesture, can be more motivating than a ceremony eight months later.
- In context? Are employees recognized by peers where the work took place?
- Appropriate in volume and scale? Examine the benchmarks for productivity in your workplace, and ensure the recognition matches.
- Authentic as opposed to automatic? Unless your workplace is a grade school class, there should be no awards “because everyone else got one” or “we have to give it to somebody this month.”
- Tied to the employee’s perception of value? A golfing trip with the team may seem like your dream reward, but to an employee yearning for more family time, it may seem like another duty to perform.

Informal recognition is also important. Leaders that are connected to employees through daily visits, check-ins and open-door invitations contribute greatly to the social connection vital to today’s employees. Even if informal or off-the-cuff, be specific when giving positive feedback, and encourage peers to do the same. Precise feedback is both genuine and constructive; general or ambiguous praise is easily dismissed. Also ensure everyone in your workplace has a voice when it comes to sharing feedback. Be sure

the invitation is shared with everyone, and avenues are in place to enable timely and easy feedback.

Informal engagement also allows leaders to monitor the need for recharging. Vacations, seminars, conferences and retreats are powerful in more ways than one. Offered strategically as part of an overall recognition program, they can provide recognition and team building opportunities, while injecting new ideas and information into the workplace and providing a change of scenery that everyone routinely requires.

Effective leaders align their employee engagement efforts with the overall workplace culture. Above all, these leaders know who their employees are, as well as what they do and how well they do it. This knowledge forges the connection vital to the success of any recognition program. So as a part of employee recognition, examine the management structure as well. Start with managers suited for the job and engagement goals that are clear and realistic. Then coach your managers and hold them accountable for engagement of their employees.

At the end of the day, employees are generally seeking attention from their organization – specifically, positive feedback, peer recognition and praise from their leaders. Whatever your workplace capacity and culture, recognition will lead to successful engagement if delivered in a personal, heartfelt way. ■

Kathleen Powers is business solutions manager for Fraser & Hoyt Incentives.



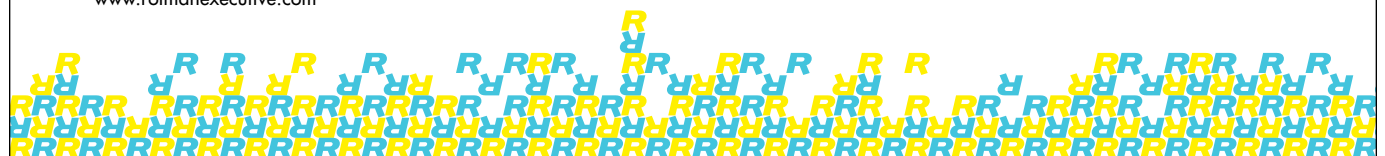
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The HR Role in Psychologically Healthy Workplaces

REDUCING THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON INJURIES AND RELATED WORKPLACE COSTS

By Ted Harvey and Neil Gavigan, with assistance from Holly Bennett

Workplace stress, including fatigue and anger emerging from labour-management disputes, can be concerns for all employers. Such stresses have been identified as contributing factors to incidents such as the April 2014 workplace shootings in Nanaimo, B.C., and the Lac Mégantic train derailment in Quebec last year.


Canada's *Voluntary National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety* (the Standard), released in 2012, provided a response to such issues, changing the landscape of occupational health and safety (OHS). What progress has been made since its introduction?

In mid-2014, SPR Associates began a review of the impact of the new Standard. The organization consulted with over 100 key

individuals from business and unions in all regions and industries, governments, academics and mental health practitioners. They also examined best practices to improve the psychological health of workplaces, and reviewed Canadian and international research.

The goal was to assess progress with the Standard and identify future directions – including how HR managers can lead in building psychologically healthy workplaces. In particular, the researchers became interested in workplace stress as a significant factor in OHS injuries and costs.

Since 2012, thousands of organizations have downloaded the Standard. There have also been increasing demands for workplace mental health training programs, and growing media attention to these topics.



**LAWS ARE ESSENTIAL
– BUT NOT ENOUGH. OHS
LOSSES REMAIN UNCHANGED
LARGELY BECAUSE LAWS AND
POLICIES HAVE NOT AFFECTED
THE CULTURE OF WORK.**

IMPACTS OF WORKPLACE STRESS

Today, workplace stress, bullying, harassment and violence are key issues for Canadians. Awareness of the cost of workplace stress and related mental health issues grows steadily. In addition to the cost in suffering when workers become ill, are injured or pass away, the financial costs of workplace stress to individuals, employers and society are staggering. Costs to the Canadian economy are over \$51 billion annually, and workplace stress is a central factor, according to Statistics Canada.

Employee disability leave or time off due to stress is a major component, as is the cost of recruiting and training replacements when needed. Stress is also a major factor in injuries, and with injuries come private insurance costs and workers' compensation.

Moreover, a growing body of research points to workplace stress as an important trigger factor in workplace accidents, injuries and violence, highlighting it further as a major OHS issue.

Given its high cost, managing and reducing stress should be a priority for ensuring good quality workplaces and productivity. Good HR and OHS practices are key to this effort.

REDUCING OHS LOSSES: THE MISSING LINK

For over 100 years, governments, employers, unions and others have worked to reduce OHS losses, resulting in highly evolved laws, regulations, inspections, training programs and workplace best practices. Yet, we still see relatively constant OHS costs, and an increasing rate of workplace deaths in Canada over 20 years (from 756 to 977 annually). Why should this be so?

Laws are essential – but not enough. OHS losses remain unchanged largely because laws and policies have not affected the culture of work. There needs to be a change in workplace culture, spurred by management and HR.

RE-INVENTING WORKPLACES

Where jobs are more stressful, management needs to communicate better, support employees and attempt to reduce stress. In more typical workplaces, stress can be related to factors such as organizational changes and staff reductions, especially if poorly managed. Unreasonable workloads, overtime (a key stress factor), poor organization of work and poor support for workers can exacerbate stress.

Two approaches can reduce stress, OHS injuries and costs:

- **Address employees' mental health problems.** Managers can better respond to mental health issues employees bring to work (such as family issues, etc.) by creating a supportive environment and making better use of wellness and employee assistance programs (EAPs).
- **Mitigate stress created by the workplace.** This is accomplished by keeping workloads reasonable, controlling overtime and related stress, maximizing respect for all employees, allowing for flexibility, maximizing employees' sense of value and security and (when necessary) implementing layoffs fairly.

BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTHIER WORKPLACES

The research identified seven best practices to create psychologically healthy, less stressful workplaces. These all represent areas where HR managers can lead:

1. **Obtain executive support.** Support from senior executives and management bodies was found to be key to the success of many programs. This could be a written memorandum from CEOs to managers and staff, affirming the goal of a psychologically healthy workplace, with an implementation plan.
2. **Assess workplace needs.** This could involve a workplace survey (using tools such as the Mental Injuries Toolkit or Great West Life's Guarding Minds at Work Survey) to assess risks such as work overload, overtime, excessive work pressure or other factors.
3. **Build the business case for a psychologically healthy workplace.** The research revealed many instances where junior managers "carried" the business case to senior management – showing the costs of sick leave, disability costs and estimated costs of presenteeism – bringing about significant changes even in large organizations.
4. **Train managers and employees.** With training on mental health, managers and supervisors are better able to assess employee performance issues and patterns of absence from work, discuss workplace factors relating to stress, mental health and job performance and refer employees to their EAPs.
5. **Create a "seamless" effort.** Workplaces should include everyone in these efforts – HR professionals, wellness services, EAPs, bargaining units and joint health and safety committees (JHSCs) – to ensure broad buy-in and full use of resources. A key challenge is to broaden the scope of EAP/wellness

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services from a focus on the needs of individual employees to address organizational issues – workload, overtime and communications.

6. **Build the goal of better psychological OHS into accountability.** Performance management agreements for managers should include psychological OHS goals. These should indicate what is expected of managers in regards to stress reduction and how they will be rewarded for success. This should include general workplace practices, and also sensitive situations such as handling layoffs in a fair and transparent manner.
7. **Review and enhance the policy environment.** Supervisors and HR managers should ask senior management to clarify expectations with respect to psychological OHS, and how success of related OHS plans can be monitored.

LEGAL LIABILITY

Many believe that existing laws carry great potential for legal liability, and thus change through the courts or administrative tribunals. Martin Shain, one of Canada's leading experts on these matters, describes the growing requirements for psychological OHS as "the perfect legal storm."

He says the general duty provisions in OHS legislation require employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees. Recent adjudication has indicated this should apply to psychological OHS as well as physical safety. Quebec has already begun to use these provisions to address psychosocial hazards. In addition, recent Canada-wide regulations aimed at preventing occupational violence have opened doors for dealing with broader aspects of psychological OHS. A similar evolution appears to be taking place with workers' compensation. Compensation awards are increasingly being upheld by the courts for mental injuries resulting from chronic stress. The obligation to deal with stress appears to be coming fast at employers.

The benefits of building psychologically healthier workplaces will be seen not only in the reduction of OHS losses, but in a corresponding increase in productivity – since reduction of stress in workplaces has been proven by two decades of research to aid the profit performance of businesses and the efficiency of other types of organizations. Improvements in related legislation and HR programs thus become a "win-win" for business. ■

Dr. Ted Harvey is president of SPR Associates. Neil Gavigan (formerly of Labour Canada) is senior consultant at SPR and Holly Bennett is senior associate at SPR.

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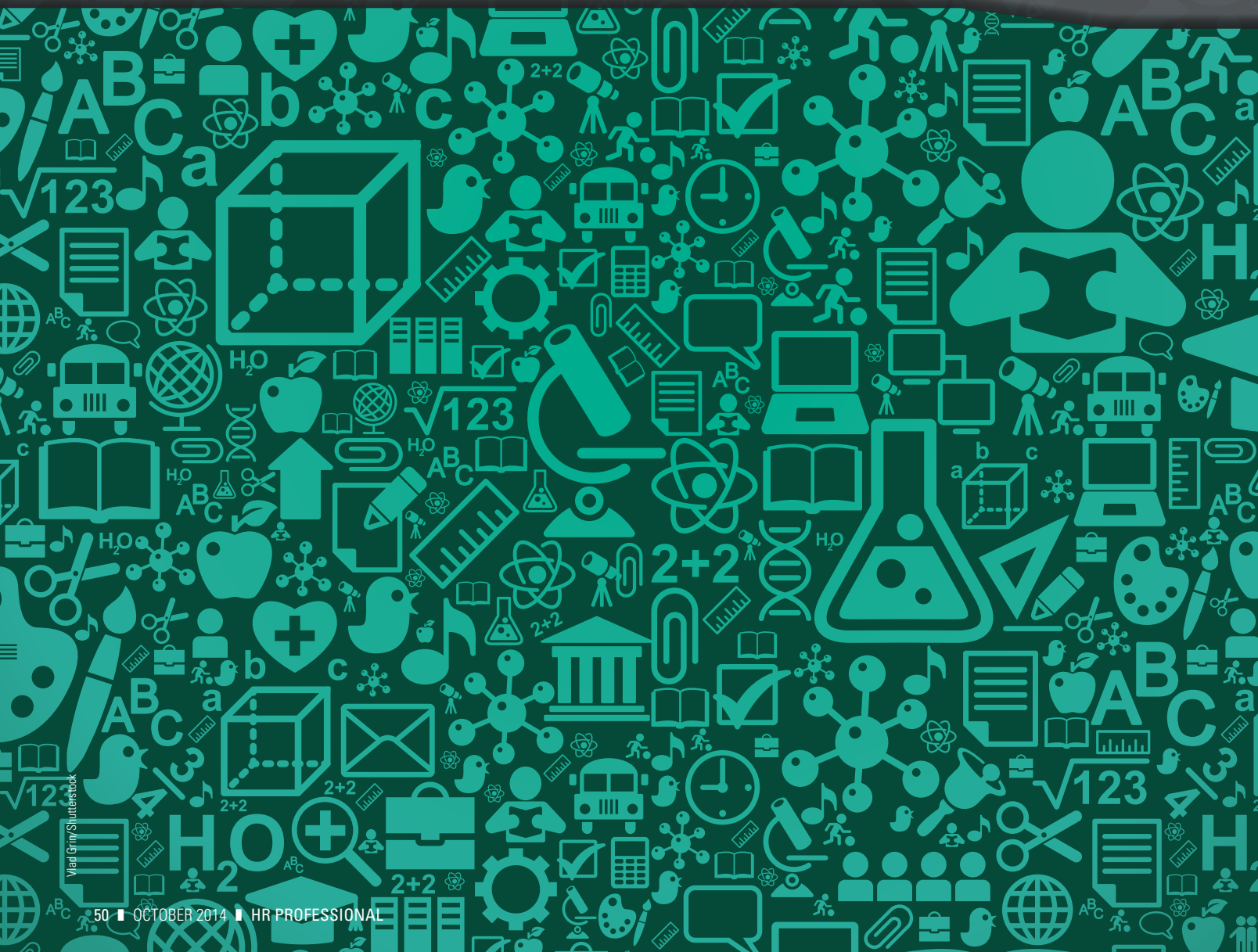
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Interview with an HR Hero: Tracy Lapointe, GPHR, SHRP





SUCCESS THROUGH CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND BUSINESS IMPACT

By Lisa Gordon

Tracy Lapointe is a huge proponent of continuous learning. From the time she accepted her first human resources job as a training coordinator for one of Canada's biggest banks, her professional success has been rooted in her dedication to never-ending self-improvement and a drive for direct business impact. Throughout her 25-year career, Lapointe has accumulated extensive HR and business experience in a series of progressive leadership positions in both Canada and the U.S. Today, she is vice president of human resources for the Canadian division of GSK, where she is responsible for the full spectrum of HR services provided to the company's 2,300 employees from coast to coast.

HR Professional caught up with Lapointe to discuss how human resources can lead through change, keep pace with an ever-changing business climate, and deliver value through constant improvement.

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

TL: When I finished my first degree I had several different interviews. While I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, I knew I wanted to interact with people, be continually challenged and have an impact. It was the HR interview that was clearly the best fit, and I accepted a position in the bank's training department. At first, I coordinated employee training classes; then, I taught in the classroom as well as banking centres. Seeing the importance of business knowledge to a progressive HR career, I completed my business degree in the evening and took on increasingly challenging roles.

HRP: Describe your current job.

TL: I started at GSK in 2011. I am a member of the executive team and responsible for all aspects of HR. This includes HR services such as compensation, recruitment, learning and employee relations, as well as strategic business partnering, talent management, change

REGARDLESS OF THE ROLE YOU ARE IN, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE DELIVERING QUALITY RESULTS AND TREATING EVERY EXPERIENCE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND GROW.

management and overall organizational development. Prior to joining GSK, I was vice president of HR for a U.S. organization, where I completed my global HR designation (GPHR).

HRP: What do you love about your job?

TL: As a member of the executive team, HR is a strong partner in maintaining a high performing and inclusive working environment, embedding our organizational values and driving organizational success. I really enjoy being in a role that is having a direct business impact.

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

TL: The pace of change and transformation we are seeing in organizations today is quite significant. The greatest challenge is being able to develop and realize the HR strategies that are going to work today, but also build for the future. That requires a deep understanding of the business, monitoring the external environment and responding accordingly. It is critical that all HR services are delivered in an efficient and effective manner, so that increased priority and focus is placed on delivering business value. HR strategy is and needs to continue to be an integral part of the business strategy.

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

TL: During difficult times, organizations often have to make hard decisions to transform their business, and this often impacts people. HR has to help the organization and employees by leading through the change and staying true to the values of the organization. During the growth times and the tough times, HR professionals can really make a difference to the employees they service and the organization they support.

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

TL: Regardless of the role you are in, it's important that you are delivering quality results and treating every

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IN A NUTSHELL

First job: I was a horseback riding instructor at a summer camp for kids. I did that for three summers, and got a more senior role each time. By the third summer, I managed the entire horsemanship program and had a staff. I would have been about 16. For me, it was an amazing opportunity – I had classes to teach, horses to look after and employees to manage.

Childhood ambition: Early in my childhood, I was always very driven to be involved and accomplish something. I worked every summer and in late high school and university, I had part-time retail jobs. When I got into university, I considered being a lawyer, working in communications or possibly HR. It was when I finished university that my direction solidified.

Best boss: I don't think there has been just one. I've been very fortunate in that I've had tremendous people managers. They were willing and able to give me constructive feedback to help me learn and grow, and they were available to coach and challenge me when I was trying to apply those learnings. That made a tremendous difference in my career.

Current source of inspiration: For me, I am someone who has to learn, grow and make a difference every day. If I think about all aspects of my life, that philosophy applies. It's embedded in my personal belief system and the charities I am involved in. It's about helping others be successful in order to realize their full potential. That gives me energy and that's where my inspiration comes from.

Best piece of advice: Don't tell me; show me! A lot of people tell you what they're going to do, but having a practical solution and being able to make a difference and have an impact is what really counts.

Last book: I'm an avid reader, and I usually have a few on the go at a time. I read, learn and apply. For me, there are a few books that have really stood out. One is *It's Not a Glass Ceiling, It's a Sticky Floor: Free Yourself From the Hidden Behaviors Sabotaging Your Career Success* by Rebecca Shambaugh. I have also enjoyed many of the John Maxwell, Stephen Covey and Gallup books.

Time away from work: I really value and protect time for my family, physical workouts and volunteering for organizations, making a difference locally and in developing countries. Whether travelling, scuba diving or sitting in the backyard, time with my family recharges me. I start my day with personal reflection time and end it with family time.

experience as an opportunity to learn and grow. By continuously learning, you increase your breadth of experience and overall effectiveness. From an HR leadership perspective, you need to know the businesses you support and deliver progressive and integrated strategies that realize results. Twice in my career, I have taken business roles to increase my knowledge about the complexities of running a business and managing a profit and loss statement. I believe that type of experience has made me a better strategic HR partner.

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

TL: Get into a role where you can demonstrate your skills and get experience.

Push yourself to deliver your objectives and continually look to improve, learn and grow. That's what I believe is important.

HRP: What is the future of HR?

TL: Increasingly, CEOs are seeing the true value of HR and leaning on their human resources professionals. As the speed of organizational transformation increases, it will be critical for HR to keep pace and perform at the strategic level. Being a true business leader, we will be right there at the table thinking outside of our discipline and cross-functionally at the enterprise level. ■

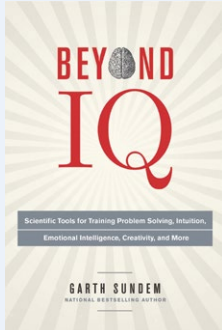


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OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRP



BEYOND IQ: SCIENTIFIC TOOLS FOR TRAINING PROBLEM SOLVING, INTUITION, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, CREATIVITY, AND MORE

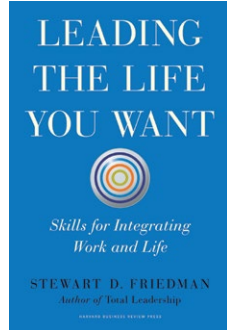
Garth Sundem

Three Rivers Press, 2014

Sundem writes that IQ or raw brainpower is not enough. We need to train our minds to boost not only our IQ, but also our wisdom, insight, willpower, problem solving, emotional intelligence and multitasking. By training our minds along these lines, we can increase our success in life and in work to a much greater degree than our IQ can. Filled with exercises based on the science of neuroplasticity, the book challenges our minds to think creatively, divergently, intuitively and boost our working memory.

Talking point

People often praise creativity but treat creative people with suspicion. What is it about creativity that we really value?



LEADING THE LIFE YOU WANT: SKILLS FOR INTEGRATING WORK AND LIFE

Stewart Friedman

Harvard Business Review Press, 2014

We can integrate our work and our lives. Friedman offers strategies to achieve what he calls “four-way wins” in four domains: work or school; home or family; community or society; and mind, body and spirit. Indeed, he writes, meaningful investments in our lives result in sustainable professional success. A self-assessment identifies which areas need attention and the book offers practices for each. Stories from individuals such as Sheryl Sandberg and Bruce Springsteen illustrate how these leaders have used the specific skills to create harmony between life and work.

Talking point

What role does gender play in the discussion of work/life integration?



DANGER AND OPPORTUNITY: BRIDGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

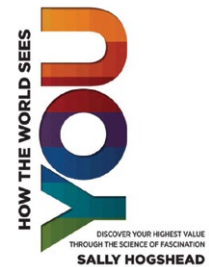
Lionel Laroche and Caroline Yang

Taylor & Francis, 2014

Laroche and Yang bring incisive analysis to cross-cultural challenges experienced by professionals and organizations, and offer equally clear and practical solutions. Drawing on real-life situations they or their workshop participants have experienced, Laroche and Yang identify root causes of cross-cultural misunderstandings and suggest constructive strategies for multicultural workforces, working with offshore resources, collaborating with joint venture partnerships and competing in the global market.

Talking point

The authors pose an interesting question: Are we converging? The answer, they tell us, is that we are not. In fact, our workplaces are becoming just the opposite, making it a business imperative to not only integrate culturally diverse employees but also to successfully serve culturally diverse customers.



HOW THE WORLD SEES YOU: DISCOVER YOUR HIGHEST VALUE THROUGH THE SCIENCE OF FASCINATION

Sally Hogshead

Harper Business, 2014

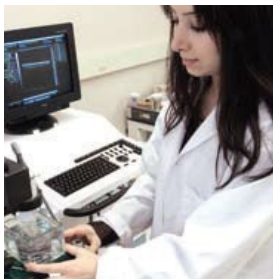
Are you fascinating? Do people listen when you speak? Hogshead has developed a system based on fascination, a neurological state of intense focus leading to feelings of intense engagement. Her system gives insight into how the world sees you and builds on your key strengths. There are 49 personality archetypes, and algorithms are used to measure and select your top three advantages that combine to form your archetype – these are your distinct ways of standing out from others.

Talking point

Maximizing your value by focusing on your strengths is a shift many psychologists and trainers are making. There is much to celebrate about this shift. Is it even necessary to look at the downside? ■

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GOAL SETTING: CREATING A PRODUCTIVE, RESULTS-ORIENTATED WORKFORCE

Agreeing and setting goals is essential to ensuring a productive and driven workforce. At the corporate, team and individual levels, goals help provide the direction employees need to succeed and the metrics needed by managers to measure performance.

When done correctly, setting goals, recording results and creating development plans offer big advantages to companies looking to improve productivity and results.

The trick is getting the right processes and tools in place. When managers motivate employees successfully, productivity skyrockets along with company growth and bottom line performance.

What's more, effective performance appraisals allow leaders to identify gaps and serve as the foundation for employee development. This leads to higher-performing employees and improves your company's performance.

HOW DO YOU GET GOAL SETTING RIGHT?

That's a big question, but let's start with the basics.

There is a pretty universal standard on how to write goals effectively, which is called the SMART goal format. SMART is an acronym that stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, role-defined and time phased (there are slight differences by definition around, but these are the fundamentals of a solid goal).

By adopting the SMART foundation, managers and employees can collaboratively agree on realistic, achievable objectives, which can then be connected to key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals can be cascaded down from the corporate level but, often, the most effective way to drive ownership and accountability of goals is for the manager to have a conversation with each direct report outlining key projects and initiatives that directly impact or involve the employee's roles and responsibilities. The direct report would then absorb this information and propose a series of goals for their manager to review, provide feedback and approve.

CREATING A FULL EMPLOYEE GOAL PROCESS: COMBINING GOALS AND COMPETENCIES

Drafting and approving goals are really only the early stages; providing progress tracking, regular updates, competencies and development plans are essential to ensuring a full performance management strategy.



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HR professionals should aspire to create learning environments to help employees understand the competencies for their role.

With new, automated performance management software options becoming available, companies of all sizes have an opportunity to develop their performance initiatives to encompass goals, metrics and plans.

Get the most from new performance tools by educating staff and holding them accountable for their own goals and competencies. Employees must be able to identify and develop their measurable knowledge, abilities and skills, which are essential for business success.

So how can this be achieved? Important questions to ask include:

- Are your staff members assessed on competencies? If not, why?
- Does your organization have an established competency model?
- Have the competencies been communicated to employees and do they understand them?

Addressing these questions and identifying what your company needs to do will be a big driver in a successful move to a system of clarity, ownership and accountability.

A word of warning: technology should never replace conversations but rather orchestrate the administration and paperwork to higher levels of efficiency.

EMBRACE THE PROCESS, RESPECT THE TOOLS AND REAP THE REWARDS

The headaches of traditional reviews can be a thing of the past. Canadian managers in 2014 can easily rate goal achievement and assess performance against job-specific competencies and core company values – but goals must be set with the right foundations and new online tools should be recognized as facilitating tools to streamline, not replace, traditional goal setting and measurement practices. ■

Jilaine Parkes is president of Sprigg Talent Management Systems.

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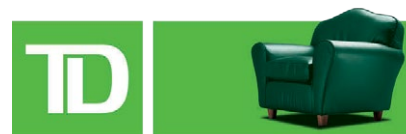
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