

HRMA

# PeopleTalk

## The HR Edge: Performance & Productivity



**What Keeps Heads  
of HR Up at Night?**

**Increasing Engagement  
in Tough Times**

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Robert E. Olson, B.A.  
Director



Ross Gibson, DIPL.T.  
Benefits Consultant



Nancy Pereira, GBA  
Manager



Mary Oishi  
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Account Executive



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Lease contracts	862,763	394,980	276,062	209,999	57,112
Real Estate Contracts	-	-	-	-	-
Swaps	1,068	1,025	2,874	3,789	-
Interest	25,873	24,176	18,600	22,814	-
Exchange	-	-	-	-	-
Derivatives and options	162,025	17,652	17,524	599	-
Change contracts,	-	-	-	-	-
Options	188,966	32,852	28,998	27,202	-
Contracts	29,200	17,500	13,209	860	-
Options	388,921	159,250	36,547	15	-
Contracts	418,121	176,750	39,756	875	-
Options	32,102	2,562	3,256	2,256	-
Options	11,236	25,689	39,456	16,523	-
Amount	\$ 1,513,188	\$ 632,837	\$ 387,528	\$ 256,855	\$ 61,100
(Millions)	Gross amount		Specific allowance		General allowance
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Leases	\$ 53,256	\$ 64,025	\$ 16	\$ 3	\$ 16
Consumer instalment	38,952	35,065	2	3	330
Government loans	63,488	55,265	150	135	550
Leased or purchased	-	-	-	-	-
Agreements	37,098	31,562	-	-	-
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Liability under acceptances	12,532	7,336	-	-	56

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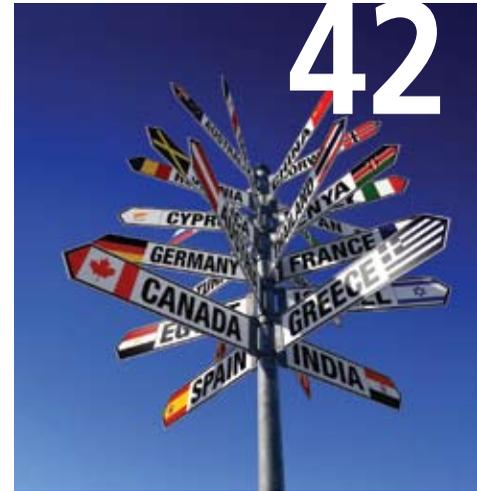
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# PeopleTalk

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“ 60% ”

## The number of Baby Boomers who will have more than one chronic health condition that requires medical intervention

You can't ignore the numbers. With the first wave of Baby Boomers beginning to retire this year and millions more set to retire in the next few years there will soon be an unprecedented flood of Canadians leaving the workforce. Contact us today to learn how we can help your retirees gain the crucial health and dental coverage they need, so they can enjoy the same type of security they enjoyed while working – all at no cost to you and with no administration. After all they've done for your organization, you'll feel better knowing that you've done the right thing for them. And, your bottom line.

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# HR Drives the Value Equation

LET ME BEGIN BY INTRODUCING MYSELF AND SHARING THE 'Coles' notes' version of who I am and what I stand for with respect to our profession. As you may be aware, I am the new president of BC HRMA and I look forward to the work ahead.

I have been in the human resources field over 25 years now and have had the pleasure of working with a wealth of truly dedicated HR professionals - many of whom are long-standing members of BC HRMA. What we have all been working towards in our own way is the continuous improvement of our profession and in my new role I look forward to seeing even further evolution. Many senior HR professionals have worked very hard at this change. It is my belief that while we have made many advances, our work in this area is not done.

Without doubt, in many cases HR is already at the proverbial table. What we continue to strive for, in order to enable the full potential of our profession, is full recognition of our profession at the 'C' level. We have witnessed a vast and welcome change in HR over the recent years: one that is well deserved and requisite to our success. HR professionals are being recognized for providing value-added strategic service to the companies that employ us.

As this issue of *PeopleTalk* is themed towards performance and productivity, how might we relate this to the improvement and recognition of our profession as a whole? In many ways, understanding how these two terms not only differ, but how they interact is very important, especially in these turbulent times.

Most simply, we think of productivity as our output quantity divided by input quantity; this is in its simplest terms. What can drive this equation? This is where performance impacts the result and will increase productivity.

How can we, as HR professionals drive the performance part of the equation? Aligning performance goals and objectives throughout our organizations to drive optimum results is a key to this success. The strategic execution of these performance goals and objectives is through people.

All leaders need to drive organizational effectiveness in order for performance to drive the productivity equation. Human resource professionals will continue to be the 'drivers' in this performance equation. You, as HR leaders, need to promote and enhance a performance-driven culture. It is through this value-added process that we will continue along our strategic path and help drive the optimum results.

So with that, I offer you, our members, my dedication to continue with the fine work of my predecessors in this ongoing improvement of our profession. BC HRMA's new board of directors has outlined many strategic initiatives encompassing a multi-year plan that supports effort. Working from the fundamentals of vision, value and voice, we will continue to introduce and integrate the true worth of HR to businesses and organizations across the province.

On behalf of your Board, I welcome your input and look forward to working both for and with you in these coming years. We have seen many victories and milestones and are on the cusp of even greater things ahead.



Mike Cass,  
CHRP

Mike Cass, CHRP  
President, BC HRMA  
president@bchrma.org



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# Performance, Productivity and Pride

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR HR TO REDEFINE ITS contributions to the bottom line are manifold. Business is examining the people factor in a new light of profitable potential at the same time HR is making itself known as a strategic contributor to the executive table.

Performance and productivity have come under scrutiny as a result. If the key is to unlock the potential of each individual to complement the collective efforts of businesses and organizations, then the question is simple. What are the key catalysts to performance and productivity?

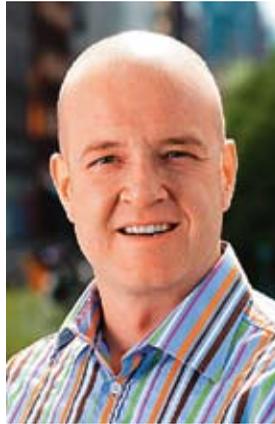
As Donna Howes' cover story (p.18) conveys, passion and pride play a primary role in attaining and maintaining a productive workplace. As opposed to the mantra of 'no pain, no gain', new thinking acknowledges that future work philosophies might be more ably grounded in 'better, faster, easier.' As we no longer live in a paradigm of productivity governed by the number of widgets per hour, the focus of forward-thinking HR professionals is turned increasingly towards aligning people, processes and accountabilities to create cross-functional - and highly empowered - teams.

This same need to evolve new organizational structures was strongly voiced by the participants of a recent survey of HR professionals and summarized within the white paper "What Keeps Heads of HR Up at Night." Other concerns also raised by HR insomniacs include the onus of knowledge transfer and the multi-disciplinary demands of modern HR. The key insights of Ann Leckie and team are excerpted in this issue of PeopleTalk (p.12), but make sure to follow the links online for both the full paper - as well as the four-part video series.

The future only appears to be perpetually around the corner. In "Readying for the Reality of our Aging Workplace" (p.44), Jock Finlayson adds further gravitas to the importance of knowledge transfer. He also points out what those in HR are abundantly aware of - with four generations in the workforce and the boomer bust of retirements looming, HR is called upon to work wonders in a more complex environment than ever.

Fortunately, with this issue of *PeopleTalk*, we look at the question of performance and productivity from as many angles as might be fit in our page count. In addition to tackling the topic head on, we explore other aspects that directly impact productivity in the workplace, ranging from a new national standard for psychological health and safety to the expansive definition of working teams in an era of ever greater interconnectedness, immigration and temporary solutions. In his review of "Smart Swarm" (p.40), Nilesh Bhagat goes so far as to look for organizational wisdoms amongst the birds, bees and bugs.

Inspired by the many contributors, but often unable to fit all worthy material in, we have embarked on a productivity initiative of our own. On the facing page you will find 'Upfront and Online', a new section that connects you with the wider world of online BC HRMA initiatives via HRVoice.org and the realms of social media.



Jason McRobbie

Jason McRobbie  
editor, *PeopleTalk*  
jasonmcr@telus.net

**BC Human Resources Management Association**  
1101 – 1111 W. Hastings St., Vancouver, BC V6E 2J3  
Tel: 604.684.7228 Fax: 604.684.3225  
Canada toll-free: 1.800.665.1961 [www.bchrma.org](http://www.bchrma.org)

- CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER** Simon Evans, CHRP (ext. 102)  
[sevans@bchrma.org](mailto:sevans@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6937
- DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND LEARNING** Ian Cook, CHRP (ext. 110)  
[ijcook@bchrma.org](mailto:ijcook@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6938
- SENIOR MANAGER, OPERATIONS** Christian Codrington, CHRP (ext. 126)  
[ccodrington@bchrma.org](mailto:ccodrington@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6934
- CONTROLLER** Vicki Bauman (ext. 111)  
[accounting@bchrma.org](mailto:accounting@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6931
- BOARD & EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION** Joan McFadden (ext. 113)  
[jmcfadden@bchrma.org](mailto:jmcfadden@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6940
- MANAGER, HR METRICS** Lisa Irish, CHRP (ext. 125)  
[lirish@bchrma.org](mailto:lirish@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6945
- MANAGER, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** Kyla Nicholson, CHRP (ext. 119)  
[knicholson@bchrma.org](mailto:knicholson@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6936
- MARKETING SPECIALIST** Nicola Shaw (ext. 129)  
[nshaw@bchrma.org](mailto:nshaw@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6947
- COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST/PEOPLETALK ASSISTANT EDITOR** Erin Breden (ext. 115)  
[ebreden@bchrma.org](mailto:ebreden@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6930
- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER** Quinne Davey (ext. 104)  
[qdavey@bchrma.org](mailto:qdavey@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6943
- CONFERENCE/ EVENT MANAGER** Erin Engstrom (ext. 107)  
[eengstrom@bchrma.org](mailto:eengstrom@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6933
- EVENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATOR** Clayton Bergquist (ext. 108)  
[cbergquist@bchrma.org](mailto:cbergquist@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6944
- SPONSORSHIP CONSULTANT** Jacques LeBlanc (ext. 106)  
[jleblanc@bchrma.org](mailto:jleblanc@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6935
- MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER COASTAL VANCOUVER** Elizabeth Bonner (ext. 124)  
[ebonner@bchrma.org](mailto:ebonner@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6942
- MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER, SOUTH/CENTRAL, INTERIOR/NORTH** Tim Read (ext. 120)  
[tread@bchrma.org](mailto:tread@bchrma.org) • 250-763-3199
- MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER FRASER VALLEY, GREATER VANCOUVER** Debra Finlayson, CHRP (127)  
[dfinlayson@bchrma.org](mailto:dfinlayson@bchrma.org) • 604-531-5655
- MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER VANCOUVER ISLAND** Carolyne Taylor  
[ctaylor@bchrma.org](mailto:ctaylor@bchrma.org) • 1-866-883-4762
- MEMBER RELATIONS/ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT VANCOUVER ISLAND** Susan Pearce  
[spearse@bchrma.org](mailto:spearse@bchrma.org) • 1-866-883-4762
- CHRP REGISTRAR** Trish Andrea (ext. 105)  
[tandrea@bchrma.org](mailto:tandrea@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6939
- MEMBERSHIP & CHRP ADMINISTRATOR** Nilesh Bhagat, CHRP  
[nbbagat@bchrma.org](mailto:nbbagat@bchrma.org) • 604-684-7228
- DATA MANAGEMENT & IT LEAD** Anita Hales (ext. 116)  
[ahales@bchrma.org](mailto:ahales@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6932

# PeopleTalk

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**EDITORIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL AND CONTRIBUTORS**

Ashley Bennington, CHRP; Amelia Chan, CHRP; Lori Collierman, CHRP; Ian J. Cook, CHRP; Simon Evans, CHRP; Brad Herbert; Donna Howes, CHRP; Kevin Jeffrey, FCHRP; Mandeep Kajla, CHRP; Lindsay Macintosh, CHRP; Neil McEachern, CHRP; Graeme McFarlane; Kyla Nicholson, CHRP; Harv Phandal, CHRP; Garry Priam; Laura Reid, CHRP; Jennifer Scott; Antonio Zivanovic

- EDITOR** Jason McRobbie  
[jasonmcr@telus.net](mailto:jasonmcr@telus.net) • 604-418-9953
- ASSISTANT EDITOR** Erin Breden  
[ebreden@bchrma.org](mailto:ebreden@bchrma.org) • 604-694-6930
- ADVERTISING MANAGER** Ruth Lumsden  
[rlumsden@bchrma.org](mailto:rlumsden@bchrma.org) • 604-868-0607  
Fax: 604-684-3225
- DESIGN & PRODUCTION** Aftaab Gulam  
[aftaab.gulam@gmail.com](mailto:aftaab.gulam@gmail.com) • 604-788-7523

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## Social Recognition Programs: Why They Matter

By **Steven Green**



Fifty-four per cent of organizations involuntarily lost high-performing employees during the first half of 2010, reports *T&D Magazine*. The number one reason people leave their jobs is lack of appreciation. These figures speak to the challenge of talent retention and employee engagement...

<http://www.hrvoice.org/social-recognition-programs-why-they-matter/>

## Making Performance Review Work for Younger Employees

By **Sandra Reder**

Does the performance review hold any value for organizations? The answer is not a simple yes or no. The rapid advance of technology has radically changed how we conduct business. Add to this the fact multiple generations are working together, each with different values, goals and communication styles, and there is no longer a one-size-fits-all type of performance review that meets everyone's needs...

<http://www.hrvoice.org/making-performance-reviews-work-for-younger-employees/>



## Show Them The Love: Affordable Ways to Boost Employee Happiness, Loyalty and Motivation



"People will never admit it, but money is not the thing they desire most from their work. Instead, showing appreciation, respect, and, yes, even love are the three most important ways to make your people feel great about their work," says Todd Patkin, author of *Finding Happiness: One Man's Quest to Beat Depression and Anxiety and—Finally—Let the Sunshine In*. "And happy, engaged employees are the single best way to impact your company's bottom line..."

<http://www.hrvoice.org/show-them-the-love-affordable-ways-to-boost-employee-happiness-loyalty-and-motivation/>

## Vancity Champions Living Wage

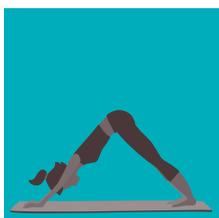
Vancity recently set a precedent as the largest organization in Canada to become a Living Wage Employer. A living wage reflects an income a family provider must bring home in order to meet their basic living needs...

<http://www.hrvoice.org/vancity-champions-living-wage/>



## The Future of Flexible Benefits

By **Dan Eisner**



It seems insurmountable: the complexity of flexible benefits programs and their administration, the need to communicate the value of these plans, and the all-too-common resource crunch in HR. Those who have not done so recently should investigate new options available to provide more effective and lower cost forms of administration and communication...

<http://www.hrvoice.org/the-future-of-flexible-benefits/>

## Online Community Explores Generation Y

BC HRMA's Online Community recently ran a contest asking members to post their experiences and challenges working with Generation Y - along with their questions. The winner 'Catherine Semenick received two tickets to the Power of Women, along with a live video response from facilitator/speaker/coach Jennifer Gerves-Keen, posted to the link below:

<http://youtu.be/8RvBNGbCxVY>

## LinkedIn Discusses CHRP vs. MBA

I'm planning to move back to Vancouver, BC and have over 7 years of solid experience in HR overseas. I was wondering if anyone could help me regarding pursuing a degree towards CHRP designation or MBA (with HRM concentration) since I have no local experience in Canada...

<http://tinyurl.com/3wrzwg5>

## BC HRMA's Top of the Tweets

What makes Millennials click?

[@loyalelectron](http://ow.ly/5MLRy)

Pete Cashmore @mashableDevelop a Company Culture for Remote Teams - <http://on.mash.to/qz8b6L>

RT @dmcgrath: Does your workplace cultivate employee engagement? You may be eligible for Most Engaged Workplaces Award <http://bit.ly/9rNbmM>

RT @sparkandco: Great post, I love the opening: Is Your Elevator Talk Upwardly Mobile? <http://t.co/8ZOHWGp> by @BCHRMA #hrvoice

RT @shauncarpenter: Great article from Nilesch Bhagat at #BCHRMA: *The Facebook Paradox*

RT Tracy Muxlow The benefits of associating the HR and Marketing groups. <http://ow.ly/5CQRu>

RT @fastcompany: America is suffering from an obesity problem. It's called your inbox. Here's the diet plan: <http://bit.ly/kcX0ul>



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# Volunteering in our Virtual World

By Elizabeth Bonner



“WHAT IS THE CITY BUT THE PEOPLE; TRUE the people are the city.”<sup>1</sup> Much the same could be said for any organization about its ‘human capital’. Expanding on this notion, particularly in the not-for-profit realm of professional associations, this extends beyond the core staff team to include the member volunteers. This in turn ranges from front line service providers (the worker bees) to the leadership team (the strategic thinkers) comprising its board of directors.

At the BC Human Resources Management Association (BC HRMA), there is little that we do day-to-day that is not supported by our member volunteers. Understanding what motivates them and the manner in which they choose to network becomes particularly important in the context of the changing ways that we connect with one another – friends, peers, colleagues, business associates – with the advent of social networks.

Clearly the lines have become blurred when we examine the delineation between our roles in our personal and professional lives. This holds true in much the same way when we apply this to our volunteer roles. In *The Forms of Capital*, Bourdieu defines ‘social capital’ as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”<sup>2</sup>

Recently, in a BC HRMA survey of those members who participated in our professional mentoring program, the results indicated a shift away from an emphasis on predominantly extrinsic motivation to that of a more intrinsic intent. Of those surveyed, 67 per cent held their CHRP (Certified Human Resources Professional) designation, yet when asked what their primary reason for participating in the program was,

the same percentage stated it was ‘to give back to the HR profession’. Only 5 per cent responded that it was to ‘gain CHRP credits for re-certification’. Surprising? Yes. As in any association where it is incumbent upon you, as a practicing professional, to maintain and enhance your career development, one might assume that the latter might be higher.

Merrill Associates, in 2008, stated that “volunteers are most satisfied with their volunteer experience when: it is for an issue of personal importance, they feel valued and needed, it is meaningful and interesting work.”<sup>3</sup> I would like to add to that mix with ‘a sense of belonging and giving back’. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, after physiological and safety needs, humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, followed by the need to be accepted and valued by ‘the group’, whatever that may be.

Back to our blurred lines. In a world where the virtual sometimes takes the place of the real, it is curious to note that this shift in consciousness has attached itself to something very tangible, the very real contribution of a mentor’s expertise and knowledge to the development of a fellow professional.

This need for connectivity, to be affiliated with something, is growing in a much larger way and in a less tangible forum as well – social media. We just have to look to our BC HRMA Facebook and Twitter followers, as well as the growing number of members in our LinkedIn group and Online Community to see the dramatic increase in member-to-member

interactions and the support offered from one member to another. In the last *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating* (CSGVP)<sup>4</sup> conducted by Imagine Canada in 2007, after organizing events and fundraising, the top three types of volunteering were: sitting on a board or committee (33 per cent), teaching, educating, or mentoring (30 per cent), and counseling or providing advice (28 per cent).

The other phenomenon taking place is with respect to the manner in which our mentors (member volunteers) and mentees (members) interact. While the preferred method of connecting remains ‘in person’ (91 per cent), fast on its heels are the ‘internet options’ that are readily available (78 per cent). This presents a sharp contrast to the findings of the CSGVP<sup>5</sup> which pegged only 27 per cent of volunteers using the internet in some way in order to perform volunteer activities for a group or organization.

Could it be that as our means of connecting and networking is changing, the manner and type of volunteering that we engage in will change as well? How will we recruit, manage, and support our ‘social capital’? In the meantime, if you would like to learn more about volunteering or mentoring with BC HRMA...you can e-mail, ‘LinkedIn’, ‘Tweet’, or ‘Facebook’ us or give us a call, the old-fashioned way! 

Elizabeth Bonner (ebonner@bchrma.org) is BC HRMA’s professional mentoring program manager and member relations manager for the Coastal Vancouver region.

1 William Shakespeare, “Coriolanus”, 1608

2 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richardson (NY: Greenwood Press, 1986)

3 Merrill Associates, “Understanding Volunteer Motivations”, Charity Village Research, 2008

4 Imagine Canada, “Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating”, 2007

5 Imagine Canada, *ibid.*

# What Keeps Heads of HR Up at Night?

By **Ann Leckie with the assistance of Tanya McCarthy, Nancy Silcock and Tyler Hodges**

**O**NE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES facing HR is finding a way to apply the proverbial 'best practices' within the context of their various businesses and organizations. One of the greatest opportunities would appear to be the ability to develop an HR function from a relatively blank slate - building or rebuilding a business from the ground up, with HR taking a leading role.

As it turns out, these are exactly the challenges and opportunities that answer the question, "*What Keeps Heads of HR Up at Night?*" When confronted with just such an opportunity, Ann Leckie of Teldon Media, turned to the expertise of the wider pool of peer professionals and the resources of BC HRMA's knowledge and research function.

Undertaking a survey of 14 companies with Canadian head offices, the goal was to better understand the current best practices in HR organizational structures, specifically within British Columbia, and gauge the merits and malleabilities of best practices. Connecting with companies ranging in size from 100 to 10,000 employees, they also sought to determine if the HR structures within organizations were promoting the emerging areas of HR expertise: social networking for branding and recruitment, knowledge management, project management of HR programs and data analysis.

The findings, compiled from industries including service, manufacturing, public and non-profit sectors, were compiled into

a white paper "*What Keeps Heads of HR Up At Night*" that can be found in full online at [www.bchrma.org/temp/pdf/hr-structures-whitepaper.pdf](http://www.bchrma.org/temp/pdf/hr-structures-whitepaper.pdf).

What the research team, led by Leckie, discovered makes for interesting reading. They found that most HR groups are not satisfied with their form and are in the process of changing and potentially changing again in a quest to get the right things done, in the right way, by the right people.

## HR's Challenge Not a Small One

So what does keep heads of HR up at night? When probing this question, a sense of the enormity of what is being asked of HR emerges:

- 1 We are worried about turnover (recruitment).
- 2 We are concerned with defining, keeping, and attracting our next leadership team (recruitment, retention).
- 3 We have too many people who are the only people in their areas who know how a specific process works. They are holders of our institutional knowledge and we can't afford to lose them (succession planning).
- 4 We need to recruit to bring in new talent but we are not entirely certain of exactly what roles and work we have for them (organizational design).
- 5 Our workplace is changing and not everyone is keeping up (training and workforce planning).

## Organizational Structure: The Crux and the Key

The survey focused heavily on organizational structure because it is a significant leading indicator of the health of the HR department. Organizational structures reflect businesses' desire to facilitate the "way things get done around here". Thus, although there are commonalities in organizational structures across companies, the differences highlight the unique nature of each company.

HR is strategically involved in business and is demonstrating leadership in a growing number of functional areas. However, HR must have the right structures in place to support business activities and to enable emerging areas of expertise. Effective structures allow innovation and increase of both business activities and professional growth.

Two major challenges were reported. The first is that the design of the HR department was aligned with programs and projects, which encourages the HR business clients to frame their operational problems with a solution in mind. This limits critical thinking and strategic interventions by HR.

What the survey revealed is that the organizational functional chart of HR reinforces the client's understanding of their problem and potential solutions. When clients come to HR with both a defined problem and a clear sense of what type of program or solution they are looking for, they limit themselves and the



To watch the first of four video interviews of Ann Leckie 'What Keeps Heads of HR Up at Night' go to:  
<http://youtu.be/zCQt7088UwM>

organization from finding truly strategic answers.

What is clear in talking to HR departments who are dissatisfied with their organizational structure is that although they have changed the structure in the past and are considering changing the structure in the future, their changes are not working. Their clients are still pre-determining their problems and solutions, and HR knowledge and skills are not being utilized strategically. The typical HR organizational structures are not breaking this pattern, or worse are reinforcing clients' limited definitions of their problems.

A 2008 Corporate Leadership Council Report states that "approximately 71 per cent of organizations have restructured HR within the last three years and 60 per cent of the survey respondents indicate that their organization plans to restructure within the next year."

When organizations make multiple changes to their organizational structure they are indicating that they feel a need to change the "way things get done around here". The number of previous and projected organizational changes in the companies surveyed signify that many HR departments are not satisfied with the way things are getting done.

### **Knowledge Transfer: Keeping the Company DNA**

The second problem is that the structures are proving inefficient at managing issues around the loss of knowledge.

Many companies are experiencing their knowledge DNA being eroded by turnover and retirements. Only one company that participated in the survey was not deeply worried about turnover, succession planning and knowledge transfer. This company has historically had low turnover and clear internal development steps for employees. However, their concerns rested around building the leadership capacity of their next generation of leaders.

In IBM's *CSeries 7 – CHRO* paper, in which hundreds of CHROs (chief human resources officers) were interviewed, the authors found that one of the greatest concerns for the CHROs was: "Effective collaboration and knowledge sharing and application of collective organizational knowledge and experience are essential to building an agile and responsive workforce. Yet many organizations lack the structure and resources to facilitate institutional knowledge sharing and collaboration."

The concerns indicate a paradigm shift in HR. They represent the operation asking itself: Where does our institutional knowledge of who we are, how we approach problems, and how we resolve issues lie? The very DNA of companies is increasingly being called into question with new pressures created by the movement of employees within and outside of the company.

Several companies talked about how their best salespeople have personal relationships with their clients that cannot

be replaced by new customer relationship management (CRM) solutions. These employees have worked for the company for many years, have built long-term trusted relationship with their clients, and have solutions to problems that have not yet been foreseen. When these salespeople leave the organization, the risk to the company is great, immediate and quantifiable.

Other companies discussed the same issues but focused on key employees who worked on a piece of equipment, a process, or a system and who hold key knowledge. The cost of this employee leaving might not be felt immediately but eventually the impact would be clear.

All of these scenarios demonstrate concerns that there are not enough safeguards in place so that when a key employee leaves, the company's productivity and effectiveness will not be harmed. In effect, the question is: How do we capture the company's core knowledge – its DNA – that is currently being held by individual employees or siloed work processes? This concern is not unique to BC and the companies we surveyed.

### **Working Towards Better Solutions**

The organizational structure improvements that HR have implemented to date represent best practices. These developments include Transactional Back Office, Centres of Excellence, and Front Office.

The solutions have worked to a point. However, the Transactional Back Office improvements have been challenged by

the cost of implementation and employees' willingness to circumvent the new systems. Similarly, Centres of Excellence have been challenged by a lack of sufficient resources to enable the managers to attain their strategic goals and Front Office has been challenged by an inability to completely facilitate their clients' needs.

The survey results indicate that HR professionals do not believe that their current HR organizational structures are meeting

operational needs. Seventy-nine per cent of companies interviewed in this survey have reorganized their department in the last 36 months, and approximately half of the organizations interviewed have plans to, or are considering reorganizing their departments in the next 12 months.

Despite being structured, or working towards being structured according to best practices, HR leaders do not feel that their structures are meeting operational requirements.

HR professionals also indicated that they are being required to take on more programs and projects while their budgets are remaining relatively stable. Although some HR budgets are increasing, the increases are minimal and mostly reflective of wage increases. Some HR departments are being cut back but generally few are seeing significant cuts.

Based on these findings, one should question if best practice literature and current organizational design of HR departments are meeting the needs of the fast changing operational worlds in which we work. The level of dissatisfaction with HR organizational structures indicates a discrepancy between the form of HR, the functions they are being asked to own, and what HR departments wish to do.

**HR leaders do not feel that their structures are meeting operational requirements.**

That is not to say that the organizational design is not doing what it is supposed to do. We note in almost every interview conducted that the heads of HR are satisfied that they are directionally moving towards a more effective and efficient system for managing the cornerstone transactional work of HR. They are satisfied that they have implemented significant process improvements and believe process improvements will continue to occur at a rapid pace.

Proposed solutions include changing the structures of HR to be more representative of the collaboration required to fix today's complex business challenges, and HR practitioners increasing their project management skills.

Together, the changes made to date and considered for the future are hopefully signs of an active HR visionary population trying to best serve their client groups. 📍

For the first of four video interviews with Ann Leckie of Teldon Media and more insight into "What Keeps Heads of HR Up At Night", visit: <http://youtu.be/zCQt70k8UwM>



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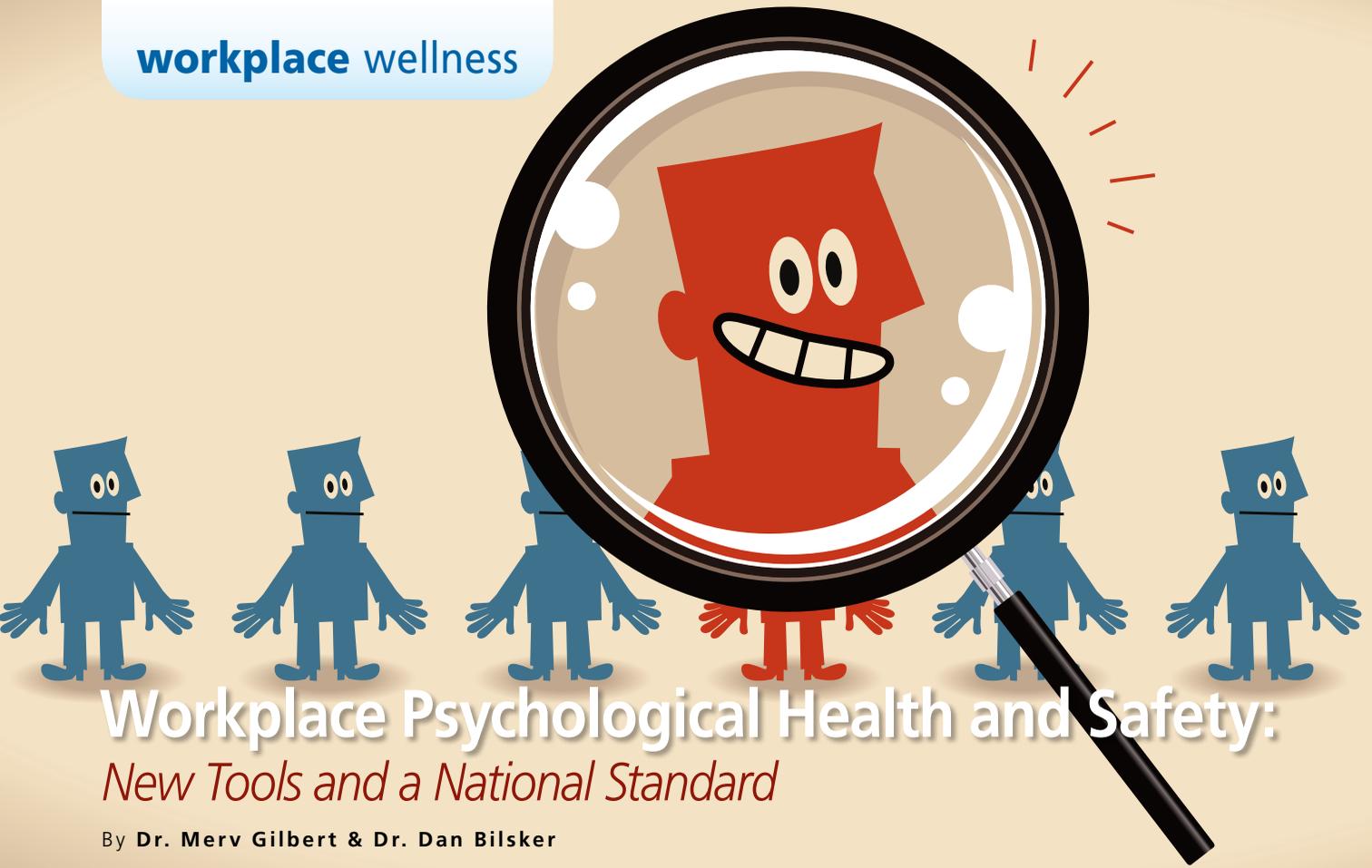
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# Workplace Psychological Health and Safety: *New Tools and a National Standard*

By **Dr. Merv Gilbert & Dr. Dan Bilsker**

**T**HE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND safety of employees will soon get the same attention as physical health and safety. On June 16, 2011, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) announced the intent to create a national standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace.

MHCC is championing the development of the standard, working collaboratively with the Bureau de Normalisation du Québec (BNQ) and the CSA standards. The funding for this is being provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Bell Canada.

Over the next six months a consultation process will occur with concerned parties across the country with the final standard to be completed in 2012. The standard will provide organizations with the benchmark and tools to achieve measurable improvement in psychological health and safety for Canadian employees which will, in turn, enhance engagement, productivity and the bottom line.

This will position Canada amongst a number of enlightened jurisdictions, primarily in Europe and Australia, with similar standards. There are a number of critical reasons employers should attend

to psychological health and safety of their workplace and workforce:

- 1 There is current and emerging case law and legislation that articulates employer responsibilities in this area;
- 2 Success and productivity are primarily dependent on the psychological, rather than physical, skills and competencies of employees; and
- 3 There is a large and growing body of scientific and applied research on the impact of workplace psychosocial risk factors on employee physical and psychosocial health.

**It is a workplace where employees clearly want to be, support each other and really do want to do good work and to be helpful.**

Negligence in addressing organizational psychological safety and health increases the likelihood of increased disability and benefits costs, turnover and risk of grievances and litigation. On the other hand, addressing it reaps benefits in terms of organizational growth, profitability and resiliency.

So what is a psychologically healthy and safe organization? It has been defined as a workplace that promotes employees' psychological well-being and does not harm employee mental health in negligent, reckless or intentional ways. It fosters employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance and productivity.

This is rather abstract; the real evidence is in the day-to-day practices and workplace culture. Most of us know if an organization is psychologically safe and healthy based on our own experience, be it as a staff member, customer, client or as a member of the public. It is a workplace where employees clearly want to be, support each other and really do want to do good work and to be helpful (and not just because it is stated as company policy).

Increasingly, organizations 'get it': workplace psychological safety and health matters. However, they are not sure

what to do (and what it is going to cost)? There are an increasing number of tools, consultants and programs purporting to address some of these factors, but it can be difficult to determine where to start and which of these are effective. An upcoming resource is intended to address this problem. Researchers and practitioners at the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions ([www.carmha.ca](http://www.carmha.ca)) at Simon Fraser University are creating an integrated set of resources to improve workplace psychological health and safety. This will be available to all Canadian organizations – public or private, large or small – across the country at no cost.

A key component of this project is “*Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*”, which is soon to be released. This guide consists of an overall framework and strategy to organize a psychological health and safety initiative and provides a set of accompanying practical and effective actions and resources. While the primary audience for this guide is human resources, the guide will also be of interest to business leaders and managers,

## Increasingly, organizations ‘get it’: workplace psychological safety and health matters.

union representatives and occupational health providers, as well as to employees. The guide is designed to be consistent with existing business practices, relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, including the upcoming national standard. Included in the guide are actions that:

- help plan and implement effective workplace PH&S strategy;
- build resilience and good job fit amongst employees;
- identify and support employees who are at particular risk for, or may be showing early signs of, psychological distress;
- assist employees off work due to a

mental health disorder to successfully return to work; and

- improve effective communication between employers and the healthcare system.

The guide will be made available over the coming months and will also be found online. Further information about the guide and related activities will be published in subsequent articles both in *PeopleTalk* and online at [HRVoice.org](http://HRVoice.org). Stay tuned. 

Merv Gilbert, Ph.D. is a registered psychologist, Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University and a principal partner with Gilbert Acton Ltd, organizational health consultants.

Dan Bilsker, Ph.D. is a registered psychologist, Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University and practicing clinician providing independent employee interventions and assessments.



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*\*BCHRMA members will receive a 10% discount on the fall Negotiation Skills (Victoria), and Mastering Fact-Finding (Victoria) programs.*






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# The HR Performance &

By **Donna Howes**, CHRP

**P**RODUCTIVE WORKPLACES FEEL ALIVE with energy and ideas; proud workplaces take things to a whole new level.

Nearly 25 years ago, Martin Weisbord, one of the world's top ten organization development experts, wrote *Productive Workplaces: Organizing and Managing for Dignity, Meaning and Community*. In it, he defined productive workplaces as "those where people learn and grow as they cooperate to improve an organization's performance."

Today, it is even more true.

**Proud and  
productive  
workplaces are  
everywhere.**

#### **Better, Faster, Easier**

Proud and productive workplaces are everywhere; my Bean Around the World coffee place is a perfect example.

Larissa, a marvelous, multi-tasking, positive force of nature, greets me every morning with a cheeky sense of humour and the same question, "What can I get for you today?" Each time she smiles and then delivers with swift efficiency. That 20-second exchange gives my day a lift

simply because of the infectious pride with which she goes about her work.

One day, I asked her, what a proud and productive workplace meant to her. Without skipping a beat she said, "Things go better...they go faster and they're easier to deal with!" And what else? "Basically it means that you believe in what you're doing... that you do it really effectively, and that you're being true to yourself."

A recipe for us all and a good place for us to begin exploring the connections between performance, productivity and pride in what we do.

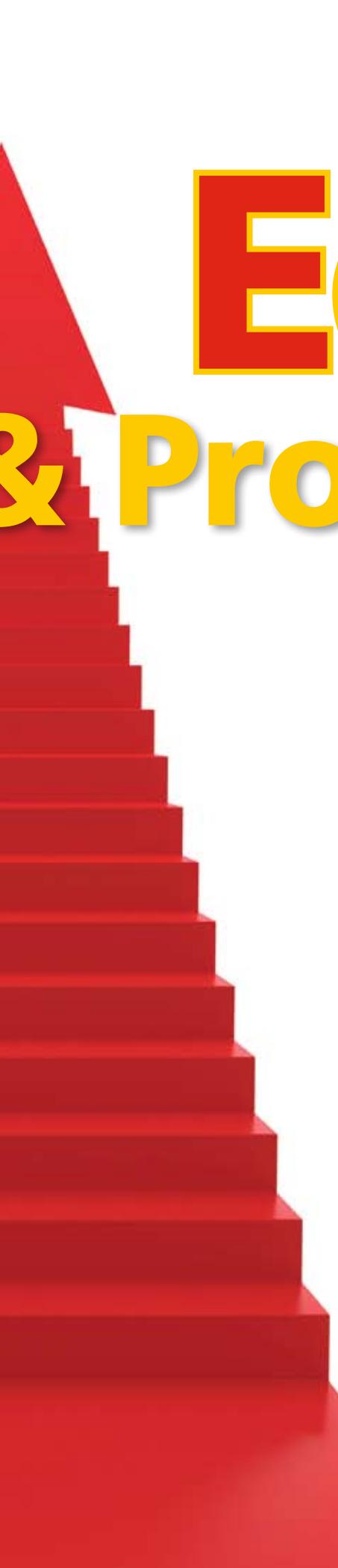
What motivates you? What makes you want to do your best?

What is known from best practice and research into employee engagement is that meaningful work is a basic human need, that we seek out community in the workplace, and that we are a great deal more productive when we find it.

Weisbord, Peter Senge, and other thought leaders have shown that better solutions happen when people collaborate on finding answers; when we throw ourselves into meaningful tasks for a higher purpose, inspired results are more likely to emerge. On our own we cannot build a space station, although many of us, through our ingenuity, passion can.

Understanding what motivates us to want to do our best is present in the DNA of every proud and productive workplace.

Every workshop I ask, "What are you proudest of in the work that you do?" "What values do you contribute to this



# Edge: & Productivity

## Why Proud and Productive Workplaces matter now

In the *2011 HR Trends in B.C. Survey Report*, BC HRMA's Ian Cook highlights that with the return to more stable economic times, organizations are switching their focus from tight management of performance to a more engagement-focused approach.

He highlights that "costs have been a key focus through the latest business phase and this tight financial

view has done some damage to the relationships people have with work, noting that anywhere from 40-60 per cent of people are intending to leave their current employer when it becomes possible.

With a return to more favourable financial conditions organizations are once again faced with retaining people based on trust, rewards and engaging work.

team?" "What do you want to be known for?" "What are the behaviours that contribute to your success?"

Every time, employees say, "Making a difference." "Mattering." "Adding value." "Serving a customer's real need."

In essence, having pride in yourself and what you contribute at work may just be the ultimate team-building exercise and productivity its natural reward.

"Absolutely", blogs Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind and Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*. "The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world." Pink's Webby Award-nominated YouTube

animation on the topic, with close to six million views, is well worth checking out at (<http://youtu.be/u6XAPnuFjC>)

It is a vital conversation for every organization to engage in, and one that is best approached through the power of teams.

### The Power of Teams

The journey to create the new supply chain organization—aligning people, processes and accountabilities—is a major undertaking, one that led Health Shared Services BC (HSSBC) to introduce Supply Chain best practices in the form of Centres of Excellence. "Centres of Excellence are there to ensure that we remain responsive to our Health Authority customers by delivering the right product, at the right time to the right place in manner that is

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consistent and easy for them,” explains Paul Brewer, provincial director, organization development for HSSBC.

“Our Centres of Excellence are essentially cross-functional teams that are empowered to develop end-to-end processes in the most efficient and cost-effective ways. We’ve brought together functional experts from all parts of our business, from warehousing and logistics, to category management, branch and accounts payable. Each individual

maintain consistency, and ultimately, deliver on our mandate to enhance value to the health care system province-wide.”

Changing how strategic decisions are made in real-time within a complex supply chain environment comes with risks. HSSBC addressed these up front through a change initiative led by a newly formed working group given the all-encompassing task of creating the Centres of Excellence best practice and tools for the organization. The working group of 10 began meeting

**The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.**

comes to the Centre of Excellence team with their unique technical and functional knowledge to assess all aspects of an opportunity prior to implementation of a project,” says Brewer. “Their role is to help our organization to make better decisions,

in early 2011 with the goal of developing easy to understand people processes, tools and templates that would make Centres of Excellence real and meaningful to the rest of the organization once they were rolled out. It was action learning at its best and a

## Following a year of research and preparation,

a new health shared services organization (SSO) was formally launched in February 2009 with the full support of the Provincial Government and all six health authorities within British Columbia. Rather than establish duplicate infrastructure and systems when they already exist in the system, in March 2010, SSO operations moved into the Provincial Health Services Authority under a new division called Health Shared Services BC (HSSBC).

HSSBC Supply Chain is now a major contributor to health authorities across the province ensuring they receive the highest quality and most value for every dollar spent. HSSBC Supply Chain is accomplishing this through the power of cross-functional teams called Centres of Excellence.

strong endorsement of the working group as a powerful team.

"At the very first working group meeting we talked about the needs of our customers, the organization, team needs and our own as individuals," Brewer remembers. "Then we talked about what matters most to us, what we are proudest of and what we want to be known for. That's how we established the values that we believe will support the operation of a proud and productive Centre of Excellence."

Being proud means you're committed to the work, you're self motivated and you believe in what you do. It's like saying, 'I'm engaged, this is important my contribution matters and it's making a tangible difference.'

Those four values—respect, collaboration, being responsive and ethical—have energized and engaged the team, and not a meeting goes by without someone referencing them.

"What, if any impact, did this open discussion about pride in the workplace have on productivity at HSSBC?" Brewer believes it was crucial to the working group's success, especially in the early stages when it wasn't possible for members to anticipate all the benefits that the new 'super teams' or Centres of Excellence would deliver to the organization, or to their new roles. "The dialogue around the table created meaning for everyone in the room, and it was an important step in moving forward," said Brewer. "You know, we each make too many assumptions about the best way of working together, your assumptions may be different than mine. So, once we realized we all had a common purpose to make the Centre of Excellence team work, the group really formed well. I was proud when that happened."

The Centre of Excellence toolkit has become a standard operating manual within the HSSBC Supply Chain to help each cross-functional team work as proud and productive self-directing units. In addition to project management tools, the toolkit includes a Team Charter, Team Building, Conflict Resolution and Training materials.

**The Role of Leaders - Living Your Values**  
Leadership of others is truly about self-leadership. That being said, when it comes to creating proud and productive

## Feedback on the initial HSSBC workshop echoes Brewer's assessment of what they achieved as a group...

*"Today was all about integration and creating common goals. It's going to improve my job satisfaction because I'll feel like part of a team and part of something worthwhile."*

*"I have a huge sense of accomplishment. It's been a long time that we've been trying to fix these things and today for the first time, we came together as a team."*

*"I'm proud of our accomplishment."*



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workplaces, what type of leadership does it take to cultivate a culture that values both 'what we do' (the strategic, technical components) and 'how we do it' (the people, values aspects)?

In *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time*, author Margaret Wheatley, suggests successful leaders believe their role is to create relationships. "In organizations, real power and energy is generated through relationships. The patterns of relationships and the capacity to form them are more important than tasks, functions, roles and positions."

This speaks to leaders who understand that how we do things—together—is more valuable than what we do individually. Foremost in building these relationships is the leader's credibility, which is always measured by values such as integrity, trust, being passionate about a goal and 'walking the talk'. People listen to leaders when they talk, and watch closely to decide on a leader's sincerity towards their commitments. Proud and productive environments flourish when these leadership values and behaviours are present.

Passion fuels every proud and productive workplace. It galvanizes the efforts of each individual who wants their future to be a 'better place'; and who believes they have something to contribute to its arrival.

In the non-profit sector, the Minerva Foundation for BC Women is a locally-grown example of an organization that has thrived through its 'passion and purpose'. In keeping with a long line of values-driven leaders, executive director, Eleanor Guerrero-Campbell, understands that the alchemy of a proud and productive organization must first be found in the leader.

"My advice about leadership is to be self aware. Know yourself and what's important to you, and then follow what's important to you in your life. That's what will create your passion, your vision, the inspiration and enthusiasm," said Guerrero-Campbell. "And that's what will make people follow you."

For more than 10 years, the organization has dedicated itself and its extensive network of volunteers, mentors and sponsors to inspiring a movement around values-based leadership for women of all ages and backgrounds, who have a desire to stand for something of value as leaders

within the communities they serve across British Columbia. Since inception, Minerva has supported more than 3000 individuals throughout the life cycle of their careers.

### **Pride and Productivity in the Public Service**

Having made the transition from team member to team manager of a busy science-based division of Health Canada, Dr. Gladis Lemus arranged a full day for her new team to discuss regular departmental business along with some team building activities, including a tour of the Richmond Olympic Oval and a two and a half hour workshop titled, 'Creating a Proud and Productive Workplace Together'.

The workshop was designed to facili-

**"Envisioning the future is a process that begins with passion, feeling, concern, or an inspiration that something is worth doing."**

- The Leadership Challenge

tate an open dialogue on how team members could make their best contributions to the team and the goals/objectives of the department. It was to be the first step toward exploring the values they believe make a positive contribution to their effectiveness as individuals and as a team, and the strengths and skills they bring to their roles.

"It was fundamental. For me to understand what is it that drives them, and for me to support that and acknowledge and give whatever I can," said Dr. Lemus.

"I think it also speaks to the fact that I didn't want to assume that people have the same values and interests and goals that I have personally, and that is about acknowledging and respecting others and their values."

Dr. Lemus explained that the experience allowed everybody to talk about what is important to them, and gave her the opportunity to acknowledge and understand what was important to them as a team. "And then the next step as their manager was to say, 'I heard what is important to you' and to show my commitment to doing my best to support them. So at the end of the day, we set the context for how we as a team work together."

In addition to clarifying their core values, the team identified some behaviours they feel are important in maintaining a proud and productive workplace within the Environmental Health Program. During the workshop, team members reflected on a number of questions about the nature of their work, what they want to be known for, and what they are proudest of. The results of this dialogue are showing up in surprising and tangible ways.

"Being a scientist, I tend to have hard core measures and parameters when determining results. However, I think the best way to quantify a proud and productive workplace is when people look at you and they smile; because they feel that they are in the right place," said Dr. Lemus. "They feel that they are being treated fairly, and that they are acknowledged and valued. From the hard core measures perspective, we all have goals and deliverables we can measure; number of reports, etc., but for me, more than that, it is acknowledging how individuals are being in their teams and what happens beyond what is required."

And that's the part that we usually don't measure Dr. Lemus points out, "What is happening in my team right now is that I have people that are now talking to each other even though they are in different lines of work, saying, 'Hey, can we work on a project together?'" This is something completely new that's needed for our team goals and overarching work goals. It's a different approach to things, and it's completely on the side of their desk. We are truly breaking silos and I credit my team for their efforts on this."

This is important now; because like the

*(continued on page 26)*



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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Communicating Change **NEW**

This practical, insightful webinar will utilize an integrated approach to leading change that has communication as one of the essential dimensions.

*Presenter: Chris Edelow, Founder & President, Sundance Consulting Inc. and Lost Creek Press Ltd.*

### 7th Annual Northern Symposium

The 2011 Northern Symposium, Resourceful Resilience: People-Centered Solutions & Opportunities, was created in recognition that new realities mean something new for Human Resources leadership, whether it's how to increase organizational flexibility, integrate social media, or foster inclusiveness in an increasingly diverse workplace.

*This symposium will engage a range of topics and speakers, see the website for details.*

### Preparing for Collective Bargaining

Whether you are new to bargaining or seasoned in labour relations, this highly interactive and innovative session will give you the tools to put your best foot forward and the confidence to negotiate the deal you need.

*Presenter: Jay Sharun, CHRP, Labour Relations Consultant, Western Industrial Relations*

### Business Analytics for HR: Making Sense of Your Numbers **NEW**

This workshop will show you how to analyze, interpret and present your HR data in a compelling and business-focused way.

*Presenter: Ian J. Cook, CHRP, Director of Research and Learning, BC HRMA*

### Strategic Recruitment to 2020 **NEW**

BC is facing a shortage of 61,500 workers. Will your organization get its share of human capital to survive... *and* prosper? This workshop will bring out the best strategies to develop a predictable supply of top talent.

*Presenters: Kael Campbell, President, Red Seal Recruiting Solutions; Ruth Eden, CHRP, General Manager, Red Seal*

### The Fundamentals of Effective Workplace Investigations

Attend this workshop to gain an understanding of the key steps you need to take, and practical tips for activities such as collecting evidence, conducting interviews, and bringing the investigation to a close.

*Presenter: Taryn Mackie, Associate, Bull, Housser & Tupper*

**For dates, times & locations visit [www.bchrma.org/events](http://www.bchrma.org/events)**

## FEATURED WORKSHOP

### Project Management for the Rest of Us

*Tuesday, September 27, 2011 (Surrey) and Tuesday, November 15, 2011 (Victoria)*

This interactive 3-hour session explores the key elements of project management, all within anyone's grasp. With these tools, we can look at more of our work as projects and reap the benefits of this discipline. Much of this session will be based on your experience, so be prepared for interesting and engaging discussion.

*Presenter: Jim Brosseau, Clarrus Consulting Group Inc.*





#### FEATURED PRESENTER

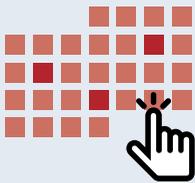
**Diane A. Ross**, passion is to help others gain the confidence she has learned to succeed in challenging conversations and negotiations in all areas of life. Diane is a graduate of Business (Honours) and Law (UBC) with 14 years' experience in litigation; she is a Certified Executive Coach (Royal Roads) and has trained at Harvard Law School's Program of Instruction for Lawyers in Advanced Negotiations: Managing Difficult Conversations and Mediation. She is currently a professional speaker, writer and non-practicing lawyer with the Law Society of BC.

*Dealing With Difficult People — Thursday September 29, 2011 (Vancouver)*

*Succeeding At Challenging Conversations — Thursday October 27, 2011 (Victoria)*

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— Farida, Vancouver, BC



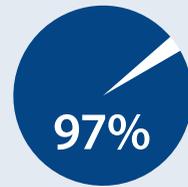
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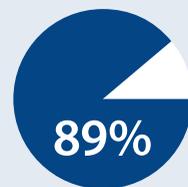
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of attendees to a BC HRMA webinar agree/strongly agree that their expectations were met.

Source: BC HRMA Professional Development Feedback Forms 2009/2010.

(continued from page 22)

rest of Canada's aging workforce, the federal system is undergoing a massive shift in demographics as baby boomers retire, and a new multi-generational cross-section of junior and mid-career level professionals enter from academia, the private and not-for-profits sectors. This new, socially-sophisticated labour force believes that it's not just about getting a paycheque; it's also about having a high level of satisfaction, a sense of purpose and importantly, work-life balance.

For employers then, there is a need to provide compelling reasons beyond the basic 'work for pay' environment to attract and retain top talent. It's not just achieving the work and being paid, but 'what are you going to give us?'

Having made the transition herself from team member to team leader, Dr. Lemus believes what fuels her desire to experiment is connected to encouragement. "Encouragement is a very interesting word because it is related to the word 'heart'. As a scientist, I come with my full brain, full of excellent ideas and techniques for the job, and I also come with

my heart. So I have to acknowledge that I have feelings and motivations and desires,

**In essence,  
having pride  
in yourself  
and what you  
contribute at work  
may just be the  
ultimate team-  
building exercise  
and productivity  
its natural reward.**

and that my team also has them."

This last point, of acknowledging

and accommodating the human 'felt needs' within a workplace, has long been described by organizational and behavioural theorists, beginning with Chris Argyris and Edgar Schein in the 1960s, as the "psychological contract" between employer and employee.

The psychological contract, always just beneath the surface of organizational culture, reflects the deeply significant, changing and dynamic nature of workplace relationships. If we are to lay the foundations for more proud and productive organizations and 'humanize' our work environments, then we must recognize the unique contribution we each bring and welcome an open dialogue about what it means to everyone at the table. **P**

Humanity at Work's (humanityatwork.ca) Donna Howes, BBus, CEC, CHRP is a coach and organization development consultant devoted to creating confident leaders, strong teams and proud, productive workplaces. She is a Certified Executive Coach and VP of the BC Organization Development Network.

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# 10 Ways to Create a Proud and Productive Workplace

1. Conduct a strengths inventory alongside your training needs analysis. Be prepared to be surprised about what emerges.
2. Ask what people are proud of and what they want to be known for. E.g. Start a meeting with each person telling a story about what they are proud of.
3. Create an inventory of key leadership practices and how they align with your organizational, team and individual values.
4. Track employee engagement as well as productivity. Give equal weight to both 'what we do' and 'how we do it'. I.e. "Proud of what we do and how we do it."
5. Encourage trust in leadership by having a dialogue before embarking on your next major change initiative. Give everyone an opportunity to contribute.
6. Identify 'needs' from four perspectives (self, team, customer/client, organization) and link to values, behaviours and competencies.
7. Take an appreciative inquiry approach:
  - Pause, ask more, tell less and reflect on what's working
  - Look at your organizational messaging. How are you telling your stories? (both internally and externally). I.e. "We made our numbers and achieved our targets AND that makes me feel proud."
8. Be open and be fearless in the sense of attempting something different. It may or may not work out; however, you need to try with an open mind.
9. Look back at the path you took to reach your goals and feel good about the way you achieved those goals.
10. Have passion and purpose in what you do; remember leadership of others is truly about self-leadership and believing that a proud and productive workplace is possible.

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## Increasing Engagement in Tough Times

By **Ian J. Cook**, CHRP

**M**OST ORGANIZATIONS THAT CUT staff, reduce pay and reduce benefits would expect to see their staff engagement drop. Whistler Blackcomb had to take these tough actions to survive an array of economic challenges over the past three years - and yet morale has never been better. In fact, the way they handled these steps actually led to an increase in staff engagement and an enhancement in customer service.

We spent a day with Joel Chevalier, director of employee experience for Whistler Blackcomb, to find the powerful and enduring lessons learned from their experience. Dealing with tough economic realities while enhancing their connection to their staff.

### Tough Times

The recession of 2008 was cruel to many organizations. As a destination ski resort, Whistler Blackcomb knew it would be impacted. At the start of the recession, they did not know quite how tough things would become. Initial projections led to a reduction in headcount of 60+ positions. Things did not get any easier and further costs savings became necessary. Whistler Blackcomb reduced salaries by approximately 3 per cent and took away a further 2.5 per cent from the RRSP contributions paid to staff; they also introduced a week of unpaid leave for most staff. These reductions did not happen in one go, but came in waves four to six weeks apart. None of these take-aways has yet been put back into staff compensation.

And yet, this IS a good news story.

On the positive side, since 2008, employee satisfaction has increased by over 13 per cent, customers' ratings of employee service has increased by over 11

per cent and Whistler Blackcomb's already high Net Promoter Score has increased by 6 per cent. These would be stand out results for an organization in good times. Coming on the back of three tough years and a series of reductions in staff and staff compensation, they are even more remarkable.

Just how Chevalier and the executive team at Whistler Blackcomb managed to achieve these numbers provides valuable lessons in terms of effective practices and the ways in which HR can contribute to organizational strategy.



To watch *Increasing Engagement in Tough Times* at Whistler Blackcomb with Joel Chevalier go to: <http://youtu.be/zCQt70k8UwM>

For starters, Employee Experience (HR) is key at Whistler Blackcomb. Chevalier sits as an equal at the executive table and describes his role as facilitating good people decisions rather than driving a specific HR agenda. What this means is that all people decisions belong to the executive team and therefore HR has strong support. Moreover, the Employee Experience (HR) team sees their purpose as enabling the business to thrive through the people. This business-focused approach has led to a deep level of trust between both HR and the executive, as well as between HR and the employees. This type of foundation is not quick or easy to build and

proved a vital component in the outcomes achieved.

### Focus on Strategy

There is substantial research around the impact of forced layoffs - all of which indicates that reducing staff in order to save money does not work. While cost savings may be required, there are several practices that need to be put in place to mitigate the downside of forced layoffs. One of the key practices identified is tying a reduction in staff to a shift in strategy and involving staff in understanding how they bring the new strategy to life.

The way in which the staff reductions were introduced at Whistler Blackcomb followed this practice. There was a high degree of transparency around the economic impacts to the organization and a strong message that the purpose behind any and all the changes was about protecting the unique experience of visiting the resort. Each communication was clear about the realities of their situation and involved letting staff know what they could do to help the situation improve.

This strategic focus was consistent throughout the process of staff take-aways. It was the reason that the organization switched from reducing headcount to reducing salary budget. They recognized that they could not reduce staff any further without doing damage to the experience of visiting the resort. They also recognized that once people had left Whistler it would not be easy to bring them back. So they switched to spreading the pain of reductions across as many people as possible to reduce the impact and they also took the stance that those who were least well compensated at the start would experience the least reductions. This meant that every time a new take-away was announced the

message came from the President and that he could openly say that he and his executive were taking the same...if not, a bigger cut to their compensation than anyone else in the organization.

### Doing It Right

The research on this topic highlights “procedural fairness” as a key strategy in reducing the negative impacts. What this means in practice is that all staff understand and recognize that the process for the decisions, the way they are introduced and supported is fair and that they are involved in understanding how “fairness” was achieved. Within the context of this situation this means being open about the layoffs, providing transition or outplacement support to those affected, providing advice about how to act to those who were not affected, being open about the impacts on all staff and taking a leadership position that demonstrates the executive is being affected too.

There is no one magic phrase or action which creates this understanding. It is developed through consistent and clear communication on both formal and informal levels. Getting this right is very powerful and not easy to do. Success for Whistler Blackcomb has stemmed from many hours of work put into crafting, supporting and delivering effective communication, as well as the full support and involvement of the executive team.

The recession of 2008 caused a lot of change and brought a lot of challenges. Learning from those who have thrived through the challenges enhances our capacity for next time. The lessons from this crisis are well summed up by the words of Joel Chevalier: “We cannot control the economy and we cannot control our customers. The one thing we can affect is how our people feel about working here and we want them to be as excited as we are.” This singular focus and its application through tough times enabled Whistler Blackcomb to make significant reductions to staff and staff compensation at the same time as they increased staff engagement and customer satisfaction. 

A global citizen, Ian J. Cook, MA, MBA, CHRP (ijcook@bchrma.org) has chosen to make his home in Vancouver where he heads the growth of BC HRMA’s research and learning services.

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# Reacting to Riots: Firing From the Hip

By Graeme McFarlane

**O**VERTIME IS FINISHED AND THE home team suffers a heart-breaking loss. The season of hopes and dreams comes to a disappointing end.

Later, the news reports civil unrest and rioting. Images of looting, burning cars and attacks on innocents fill the airways. You feel saddened and angry watching as the behaviour of a few tarnishes your city. As you speak to your friends, you learn that your frustration and feelings are widely shared.

The next day, you arrive at work to a dozen voice mail messages and an equal number of emails. All have similar titles, "Have you seen the front page of the newspaper?" Hurriedly, you rush to the lunch room and pick up a copy. The image makes your jaw drop. Your new apprentice covers the full page, and he is holding a burning lighter to a rag stuffed into the gas tank of a police car. Never did you think that one of your employees would be an active participant in yesterday's madness.

Once back in your office, you start going through your messages. Each has seen the picture and is calling to ask what you intend to do. Some are from customers who are expressing concerns with your company and its hiring policies. Your boss has also called; the tone of her message is crystal clear. You need to do something fast to deal with the situation.

You hastily arrange a meeting with the employee and his supervisor. At that meeting you inform the employee that he is terminated immediately for cause. You show him the newspaper in support of your decision. At that meeting, he denies his involvement, and says the photograph is a fake. You reject his explanation and you send him on his way. As he walks out of the room, he says that this is not over.

About a week later, another newspaper headline gets your attention. It appears that many of the photographs of the so-called rioters were indeed fakes. People

with grudges to bear had cleverly substituted different faces on the actual rioters. The newspaper in question had unwittingly used one of these fake pictures. You've made a dreadful mistake and only wonder what will come next.

The above scenario is not far fetched. It is based on real fact patterns coming out of the Stanley Cup riots. Employers must be extremely careful when reacting to information that comes in from the mainstream media or social media sites. Also, there are additional restrictions on terminating an employee for off duty conduct. Even if an employee acts illegally in his off

**"... where emotional reactions are strong – look before you leap."**

hours, such conduct does not always provide the basis on which an employer may terminate that employee for just cause.

With respect to riot type behaviour, there are three main areas that may affect a business: employees who have been publicly identified as participating in illegal activities; employees who have behaved inappropriately in social media (by blogging, posting, tweeting etc.); or employees who are charged or convicted of a crime.

If an employer is to act when faced with an employee's alleged illegal activity, two things need be done. First, the employer must be able to prove that the employee committed the alleged act. Second, it must be able to show a connection between the alleged act and its business.

If an employer cannot prove that the conduct occurred, it will not be able to sustain a cause for termination. Any court or tribunal will require that an employer investigate all relevant facts before termination. A police investigation is not a substitute for an employer's own. It is extremely important to allow the employee to respond to any allegation.

As in the example above, what seems obvious at first glance can sometimes be illusory. There is rarely a need to act immediately. Take the time necessary to do a thorough job. If you believe that an employee needs to be removed from the workplace, you can suspend that employee pending the results of your investigation. However, compensation may be due if the results of that investigation clear the employee of wrongdoing.

The general rule is that an employer cannot control an employee's off duty behaviour except if that behaviour may significantly affect its business. Using our example as a base, there are two main ways that this nexus could be established. First, the conduct itself is related to the employee's work duties. For example, consider a security guard looting a store or a fireman engaged in arson. Second, the employer's reputation will be damaged if the identity of the rioter is connected to its business.

Given the widespread media coverage regarding riots, it may be easier to prove harm to reputation. However, it must be remembered that the Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination against employees for criminal convictions that are unrelated to their employment.

Even in situations where emotional reactions are strong – look before you leap. **Ⓧ**

Graeme McFarlane is a partner at Roper Greyell LLP which is a firm focused on partnering with companies to find solutions to workplace legal issues.

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Life, health, retirement

# CCHRA: The CHRP People Factor

By **Maureen Campbell**



Team CCHRA heads to the 'Hill': (left to right) exam coordinator/projects manager Stephanie Duff, communications manager Maureen Campbell, administrative assistant Marie Abra, administrative coordinator/board secretary Nazia Bundhoo, and executive director Bill Palamar.

*Change is inevitable in a progressive society. Change is constant.*

Benjamin Disraeli, Oct. 29, 1867

**T**HIS YEAR HAS SEEN A LOT OF CHANGE, especially in the political landscape on Parliament Hill! I for one am eager to see how our new opposition party will fare, but it is clear that what British Prime Minister Disraeli said in 1867 still holds true today. We live in a world where change is constant – from new initiatives and project-based

work to technology to people – all of these things come together to drive change in the way we work. This can sound a little intimidating, as change can sometimes feel, but it is something that we live and grow with, and most of the time, we don't really notice it happening.

Take for example, the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA), which has continued to evolve since it was established in 1994. Its mission hasn't changed, but people have come and gone, and roles have changed. As such, we thought we'd take a few minutes to re-introduce you to the CCHRA staff team and their roles.

Bill Palamar, the executive director, has long been involved with the CCHRA in a variety of capacities. Bill is an ex-officio member of the CCHRA Board and committees, which actively involve him with the major initiatives and activities that support CCHRA's strategic plan. His passion for volunteerism, community, and the diversity of the Canadian federation aligns with CCHRA's core values of integrity, innovation and collaboration. Bill enthusiastically engages with the CCHRA staff and provincial member associations, supporting a national collaborative environment to gain strength in CCHRA and the CHRP designation.

Many of you already know Stephanie Duff. Her role has evolved over time from the administrative coordinator to the exam coordinator and projects manager. She supports the programs and processes related to the CHRP designation and maintenance of the HR profession's body of knowledge, as well as supporting the Standards Advisory Committee and Exam Board. Stephanie manages the administration of the NKE and the NPPA exams nationally by assisting member provincial HR associations with their certification and recertification activities. Stephanie passionately digs into every project, and this, along with her long-standing history, makes her a most valuable asset.

Nazia Bundhoo is the administrative coordinator and board secretary. She provides direct support to the CCHRA Board and numerous committees including the executive, audit & finance, and governance & nominating committees. Nazia also provides all in-house accounting, administers the HR and compensation functions, and manages the day-to-day administration of the CCHRA office. Quite simply, she manages all of the minute details with the CCHRA, the Board, and the staff so efficiently that it appears an effortless task to pull together Board documentation, national meetings or compensation packages without a flaw.

CCHRA also has a part-time administrative assistant, Mary Abra. Mary

provides general administrative support for CCHRA activities including reception duties, answering general inquiries, and assisting with the preparation and distribution of Board and Committee documents. Mary's ability to provide support gives the CCHRA team the confidence required to work, and commit to results, under tight deadlines.

The most recent hire at CCHRA was the communications manager, and that would be me, Maureen Campbell. My primary mandate is to enhance the communications between CCHRA and the member associations such as the BC HRMA, while promoting and ensuring the understanding of the CHRP designation.

**I really do believe  
that this is HR's  
decade.**

I support the national marketing & communications committee, as well as promote CCHRA, including its values, mission and goals, from a federal standpoint; I also develop, implement and monitor our existing and new communications initiatives. In a nutshell, I advocate the value of CCHRA, its Member Associations, and the CHRP designation to a variety of audiences.

Although the team is small, each member is talented. Like any great team, we rely on one another's strengths – be it communication, organization, guidance, adaptability or passion – to reach our common goals. The mutual respect we all have for one another (both within CCHRA and member associations), in addition to our core values, is what sets us apart and changes our working team to a integrated, powerful team capable of almost anything we set our mind to.

Canadian Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier said that Canada shall claim the twentieth century. It is the people that will claim the twenty-first.

Executive director Bill Palamar agrees, "I really do believe that this is HR's decade. CCHRA and the Provincial Associations have the talent and the enthusiasm to move forward and make this happen." 

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Jas Bhupal, Health Care Consultant  
Surrey Centre Safeway Pharmacy  
10355 King George Blvd, Surrey  
Jasvir.bhupal@safeway.com  
604-584-9803

Sarvjit Dhani, Health Care Consultant  
Collingwood Safeway Pharmacy  
3410 Kingsway, Vancouver  
Sarvjit.dhani@safeway.com  
604-439-0092

Bailey Johnston, Health Care Consultant  
Vernon Square Safeway Pharmacy  
4300-32 Street, Vernon  
bailey.johnston@safeway.com  
250-542-0886

# The Importance of Character

By **Bruna Martinuzzi**, CHRP

**C**HARACTER IS, INDEED, WHO WE ARE when no one is looking.

Nowhere is this more crucial than for those who hold leadership positions. Years ago, I read a line in a book which said: “When in doubt, act like the Chairman would.” Leadership is a privilege and with it, come certain obligations, one of which is that leaders need to instill trust in people that they will do the right things, regardless of whether or not they are being watched.

In *Leadership from the Inside Out* the late Kevin Cashman makes a powerful distinction between character, the essence of who we are, and persona, the external personality we have created to cope with our everyday life. A leader who leads through character is guided by authenticity while the one who leads from *persona* is guided by image.

The former has trust and compassion as foremost guiding principles, while the latter is concerned about fear and self-interest. The leader who leads through character is focused on creating value and contribution rather than winning at all costs. Such a leader values openness and inclusion, shunning control and exclusion, the hallmarks of the leader who is driven by image.

Here are a few tips to inspire you in your leadership journey:

## 1. Make values actionable

Living your values every day is an important aspect of character in action. Companies go through considerable expense having consultants craft value statements that, unfortunately, end up being nothing more than motherhood statements hanging on the wall in the reception lobby. Prevent this from happening by making values actionable. “We value open communication” is vague and left to interpretation. Consider what happens if you clarify this

by adding: “There are no sacred cows in this team.”

## 2. Be known as a promise-keeper

In *The Leadership Challenge*, authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner consider “Model the Way” through personal example and dedicated execution, as a foundational practice for admirable leaders. One way to put this into action is to keep your promises, to do what you say you will do. No matter how small the promise is, no matter who the promise is made to, strive to keep your word. While events may well prevent us from honoring commitments we made, don’t let a commitment slip by without getting back to people to let them know why you can’t fulfill your promise. Resolve to handle your word as precious currency and watch how your value rises in everyone’s eyes.

## 3. Don’t take shortcuts in quality

As Henry Ford put it: “Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.” Do you preach to your team that quality is an important value, yet when there is a crisis, you find yourself telling people to take shortcuts at the expense of quality in order to get the order out the door? Every time you do this, it erodes your authenticity in the eyes of your constituents. Eventually, when you speak about quality, they will discount it as lip service.

## 4. Be consistent in your dealings with others

Do you treat some people in your organization or team better than you treat others? For example, do you unwittingly complain about a member of your team to other team members? While we can easily slip into such behavior, especially when we are tired

and frustrated by the day’s events, consider that this chips away at your integrity as a leader.

## 5. Audit your decisions

At the end of every week, get in the habit of going over each decision you made. Did your focus on the bottom line cause you to forget the impact on some people? Did your biases affect the objectivity of your actions? Are you proud? Do your actions reflect positively on you as a person of character? What could you have done better? Every action we take, no matter how small, has our character stamp on it.

There exists a theory that one of the reasons we are more civilized when we know we are being watched is due to concerns about our reputation. Reputation is the quality or character that other people attribute to us; it’s the surface layer. It’s our carefully crafted profile on Facebook; it’s the multitude of recommendations that are posted on our LinkedIn profile.

Character, on the other hand, is what is deep inside us; it’s who we are on a daily basis, when things go well and when things go wrong. It’s who we are in the boardroom as well as in our living room. We have reason to be proud when both reputation and character are a mirror image of each other. Abraham Lincoln put it this way: “Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.” 

Bruna Martinuzzi is the president of Clarion Enterprises Ltd. ([www.clarionenterprises.com](http://www.clarionenterprises.com)), a firm that specializes in emotional intelligence, leadership and presentation skills training. Her latest book, *The Leader as a Mensch*, explains how you can become the kind of person others want to follow.

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# The Impact of Culture on Productivity

By **Neil McEachern**, CHRP

IF ONE WERE TO POSE THE QUESTION OF whether culture has an impact on productivity, the answer would undoubtedly be: 'yes'. However, the question one should ask is what the impact of different cultures is on productivity.

To answer this we must first define culture; in this sense, culture is made up of what are considered to be societal norms of the workplace (corporate culture). For our purpose, let us simplify all cultures to their root origins, which would be those that are hierarchal in nature and those that are flat in nature. While objectivity is the key, from an HR perspective it would be easy to concede that most of us in the profession would prefer the flat-based

cultures, as these are likely to be the least restrictive in nature and thus allow us the most freedom to conduct HR policy that is the most beneficial to the overall productivity of the firm.

**The reality is that culture does have an impact on productivity.**

Nevertheless, there is a time and a place for both cultures throughout the

history of an organization; this can often be seen in technology firms as they grow from humble beginnings into full-fledged corporate heavyweights (from a flat culture to a hierarchal one).

"Work expands so as to fill the time available for completion." This quote is what is known as Parkinson's Law and fits well as it was within an article critical to the ever-expanding nature of the British bureaucracy at the time. Fast forward to the 21st century where this quote is still relevant and can still be readily applied to the hierarchal workplace.

Indeed, little separates most large corporations from inflated bureaucracies in terms of culture. One only has to think of

how difficult it seems for anything to be accomplished in the workplace and compare it to getting something done at their local municipal office. For our purposes, what one could infer from this quote is that if an employee is expected to be at work for a set duration of time, it is highly unlikely that he/she will be at high levels of productivity for the duration. This relates to hierarchal organizations as they are likely to be less flexible about work hours and how tasks are completed due to strict policies. In addition, much like the aforementioned quotation, an individual is likely to find something to fill time, and that may not necessarily be work (taking extended coffee breaks, frequent trips to the bathroom, checking email/Facebook).

that customers are totally satisfied as the bulk of their business comes from returning customers and their referrals).

The fact of the matter is Zappos has a culture that reduces the gap between the employees and the employer and fosters a more relaxed culture that stresses not only results but also fun. Now while there may seem to be many similarities between hierarchal and flat firms, one of the distinguishing factors is the freedom that is afforded in a flat culture, meaning when an individual is able to use his/her own initiative to determine the best way to complete the task that have been assigned. This freedom is clearly a form of employee empowerment and has a positive impact on employee productivity. Returning to Zappos, we can see that one defining ele-

**...if an employee is expected to be at work for a set duration of time, it is highly unlikely that he/she will be at high levels of productivity for the duration.**

One of the main concerns regarding hierarchal workplaces is that their rigid nature often imposes a state of fear as employees are penalized according to strict guidelines and policy; this has an inverse relationship to productivity. For example, when was the last time innovation came out of a top-heavy organization? Think of an organization like Microsoft or any large tech company; the fact of the matter is that innovation is often through acquisition.

Zappos is by now one of the most famous companies in terms of having a quirky workplace, which at the same time has proven to be an extremely productive one. This productivity can be seen through its explosive growth in the early 2000s, to its acquisition by Amazon in 2009. Now, though one may argue that Zappos' success comes from other factors such as consumer greater acceptance/usage of e-commerce (an important factor), one cannot discount the impact that the flat culture has had on the company. Another key to Zappos' success has also been its superior customer service, enabled by their culture and the freedom to get the task done (in this case, ensuring

ment of their culture is fun, and while this may not be a key factor that all flat cultures necessarily revolve around, flat corporate cultures are definitely more relaxed by structure alone. This is important as it means employees are enabled to focus more on getting the job done instead of being overly stymied by hierarchical permissions and policies. The irony of a hierarchal culture is that employees are often losing time filing the proper paperwork instead of being a productive employee.

The reality is that culture does have an impact on productivity and while there does seem to be a persuasive argument for flat-based cultures, there is a time and place for both. We must also remember there are certain industries where a flat could likely never happen, such as manufacturing, municipalities, and large corporations, as the resistance to this change would be monumental.

In conclusion, we must remember as HR professionals it is our mandate to recommend how to use the limited resources we have at hand to engage our colleagues to be more productive, regardless the workplace culture in which we exist. **PD**

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# Tapping into the Talent of Temps

By Sandra Miles



**I**N A RECOVERING ECONOMY, COMPANIES must discover new ways to strategically build a competitive edge. HR practices and employee management have become the focal point of this changing strategy. As Kinko's cofounder Paul Orfalea once said, "Everyone has good machines. Our coworkers are the only tie-breakers for us". To bolster a new employee strategy, more and more companies are turning to the use of temporary workers. Temps act as an effective HR strategy and can allow companies to move ahead of competitors.

The use of temporary workers may not be a revolutionary HR practice; however, how these employees are being implemented into teams is a new strategy. Temps are increasingly offering a diverse skill set which makes them a high-performing add-on to any team. As a result, the company view and treatment of temps is also shifting. Temps are now being viewed as an integral part of an overall team structure, not just a supplemental fix.

Statistics show that the use of temps by organizations is growing, with over 80 per cent of companies worldwide employing temps (CIETT). In Canada, one of the fastest growing job opportunities over the past year has been through temporary or contract work (Statistics Canada). In the U.S., \$7.9 billion of the staffing industry's \$61.4 billion in sales in 2009 were generated from temporary and contract staffing (American Staffing Association).

Temp workers along with freelancers, consultants, and independent contractors make up a significant part of the North American workforce. The benefits of temp work make it an attractive option for many individuals. Highly-skilled workers often prefer the flexibility and opportunities to expand work experience that comes with non-traditional employment.

For organizations, the benefits of using temps are plentiful. Temps allow businesses to scale the workforce on an as-needed basis. The perfect example is the arrival of the summer months which has companies scrambling to cover employees booking vacation times. The flexibility of temps allows the employer to skip the financial and time commitment of a permanent hire, a commitment which many employers are still wary to do in a recovering economy. Temporary workers are a viable solution that enables employers to bridge the gap.

Additionally, using temps allows organizations to essentially 'preview' an employee before they are in a position to make a permanent hire. With the average tenure of temps being three to four months, hiring managers are able to assess the performance and fit of the temp. In a 2011 CareerBuilder survey, 31 per cent of small businesses planning to hire contract or temporary workers expected to transition some temporary staff into full-time, permanent employees.

Most significantly, temporary workers are going beyond the assumed clerical or administrative roles. While temp support in these areas is common; temps are now being considered for mid and even senior-level positions. The increase of temps in higher positions is a result of the diverse skill set these employees offer. Whether administration, accounting & finance, IT, industrial, or a project management position, temps can satisfy a wide range of staffing needs. Mores so, they have the past experience, depth, training and skill set to perform highly on the job.

When looking to hire temporary staff, there are several considerations. One important consideration that cannot be missed is how the company will recruit and hire the most qualified temporary worker for an open position. Working with a staffing agency can be an extremely cost-effective and time-saving solution for this consideration because of the pre-existing relationships agencies have with available, professionally screened and qualified temporary workers. The agency handles the entire employee on-boarding, payroll processing, government remittances, WCB and T4 processing.

Beyond being cost-effective, staffing agencies can help delineate the line between temporary and permanent staff to avoid legal issues. To ensure a smooth working relationship with the agency, select an agency's whose approach and culture aligns with the company's.

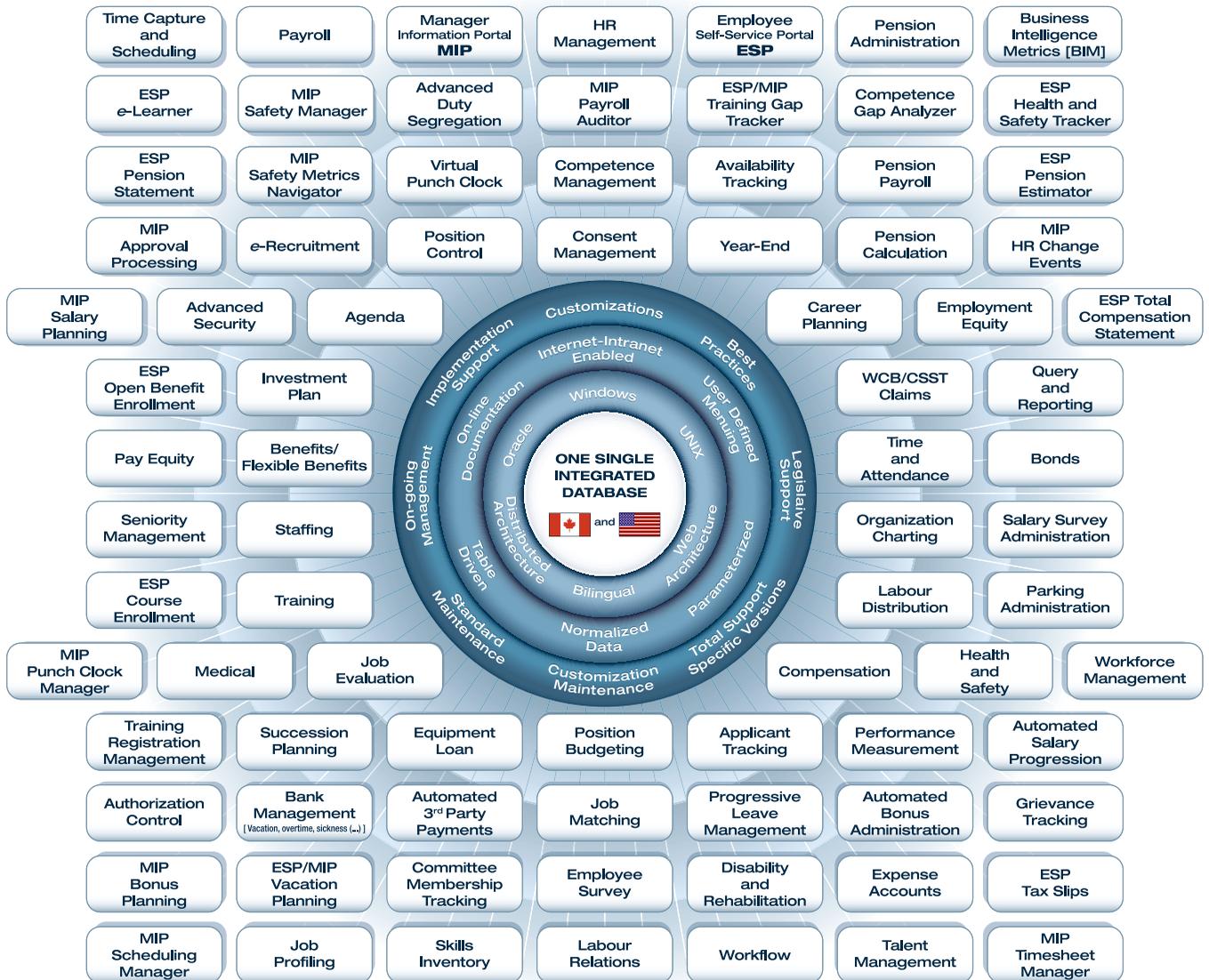
Given the diverse skill set and flexibility that temporary workers offer, the view of this sector of the workforce is shifting. Organizations are considering and treating temps more as members of an overall team to build on existing strong human capital. Think of temporary staff as spokes of a company. While upper-level staff are the nucleus, temporary staff are the spokes that move in and out of the picture as staffing needs shift. **P**

Sandra Miles is President and CEO of Miles Employment Group ([www.miles.ca](http://www.miles.ca)) and can be reached at [sandra@miles.ca](mailto:sandra@miles.ca).



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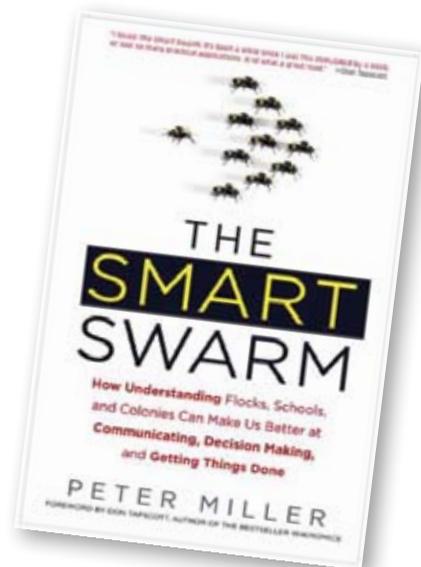


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# Smart Swarm:

## Birds, Bees and Better Business



By **Nilesh Bhagat**, CHRP

**W**HAT CAN BIRDS, BEES AND FISH teach us about the way we do business?

The constraints of the organizational hierarchy common in today's economic landscape are incompatible with the emergent norms and values of the modern market. What's needed is a more adaptive system which appreciates the flexibility and responsiveness of individuals working dynamically together to realize goals. What we need is a smart swarm.

In *Smart Swarm (How Understanding Flocks, Schools and Colonies Can Make Us Better at Communicating, Decision Making and Getting Things Done)*, author Peter Miller asks and explores how the complex adaptive systems of other life forms have evolved to generate effective, organic collective behaviors. He praises their wisdom and hints that we, as humans, can take cues from their models.

Miller defines a smart swarm as 'a group of individuals who respond to one another and to their environment in ways that give them power, as a group, to cope with uncertainty, complexity, and change'. What we as humans have forgone is the understanding of this interwoven and connected type of system – this smart system – as an optimal driver for productive behavior. In its stead, we have convinced ourselves that the hierarchy – with its command, control and predictability – is the model upon which productivity *must* be built.

Miller illustrates, via voyages through ant colonies, termite hills and schools of fish, that the smartest system of all is not the hierarchy of top-down control. It's the complex adaptive system where less

is more – wherein one must paradoxically forgo control for the externalities of connectedness, adaptability, responsiveness and flow that arise from the bottom-up systems that fuel evolution.

The smart swarm operates through four principles: indirect collaboration, adaptive mimicking, self organization and diversity of knowledge. Miller shows

**'The smart swarm operates through four principles: indirect collaboration, adaptive mimicking, self organization and diversity of knowledge.'**

how species are able to navigate their social environments to create successful complex adaptive systems with the principles of a smart swarm at work.

For illustration's sake, let's consider the diversity of knowledge, which says that greater sources of information lead to strengthen the collective judgment. The key here is to minimize the influence of outside factors which could taint each input. At work, this means reducing

irrational collective behavior by removing polarizing stimuli like power and titles inherent in today's organizational hierarchies.

Miller argues that the reason we are so susceptible to these external influences is because we have 'caveman brains'. Biases hinder our ability to make accurate individual judgments because our individual brains haven't evolved to deal with decisions in complex situations on their own. However, as a growing list of scientists and researchers believe, our collective brain is more than able.

As Miller illustrates, bees seemed to have mastered this collectively genius approach to problem solving. Scout bees use waggle dances to help hives determine their future nesting spots. Many scouts perform dances in favor of many different nesting locations, but the intensity and duration of the dances act to influence and persuade others to move. No title or rank at play, just diverse scouts free to justify their opinions for the collective good.

This illustration also highlights the dark side of smart swarms with a word of caution if we are to shift our systems from top-down to bottom-up. For the principle of diversity of knowledge, subtle influences, like power and rank, can introduce biases into these so called 'smart' systems, rendering them counterproductive. Illustrated further, Miller uses the principle of adaptive mimicking in the context of locust swarms to illustrate how subtle changes in the environment can sway the collective behavior to its detriment. For locust swarms, a change in temperature can alter the way each individual insect perceives local information, leading to

aggressive collective behavior that endangers the swarm's long term survival (crops are quickly devoured, depleting a food source necessary for the locusts and other co-inhabitants of the environment).

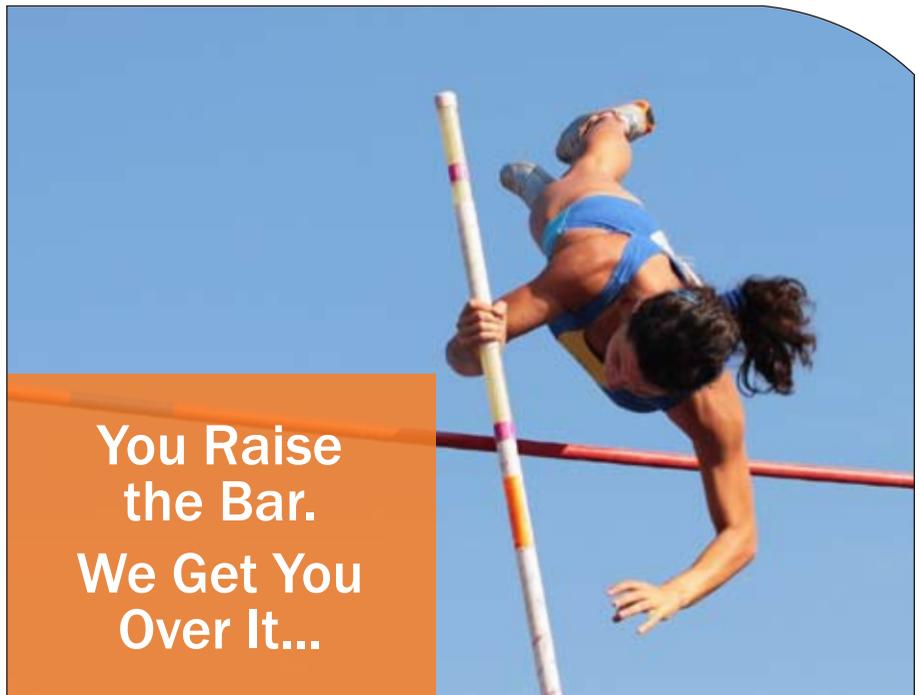
Cautions aside, Miller's analysis and interpretation of nature's organic adaptive systems hints at the type of evolution organizational leaders should be striving to understand as we move into the next great economic paradigm. Authors Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, in *Wikinomics*, describe this economic shift as having the qualities of openness, transparency and collaboration. With these values, the need to tap the wisdom of crowds in the context of our organizations is becoming increasingly important in the race to create value and stay afloat in the hyper-competitive landscape.

## Biases hinder our ability to make accurate individual judgments...

Thus, Miller's exploration of nature's complex adaptive systems becomes paramount to understand as we enter new social and economic frontiers. Though we have an advanced cognitive set, we can take at least some of our cues from our planet's co-inhabitants as we strive to keep up with this increasing complexity.

In our economic environment, the hierarchal organization, with its rigid communication channels and sluggish response, is ill-equipped to handle feats of accelerating adaptability and change. The flatter, organic organizations, much like the smart swarms of nature, are better prepared to step up to the challenges of the modern, wired economy.

Natural systems have evolved to interconnect and create super-organisms. Using the same guiding principles, we can evolve the economic institutions we devote our lives to from being mere organizations to super-organizations. 



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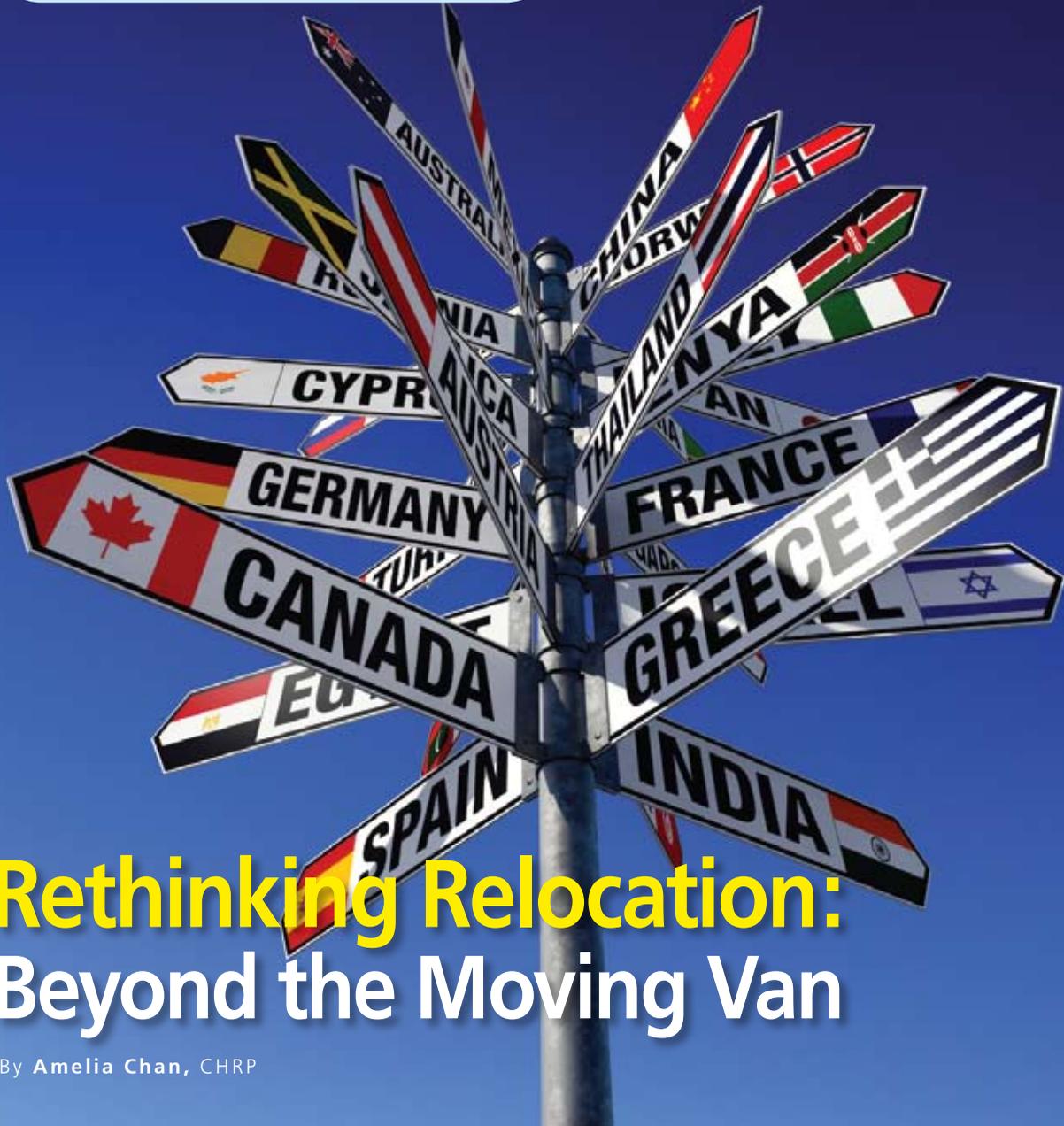
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# Rethinking Relocation: Beyond the Moving Van

By Amelia Chan, CHRP

**I**N BUILDING A PRODUCTIVE, TOP-PERFORMING team, finding the right fit is essential. Sometimes that fit is found abroad and relocation is required to bring your newest team member to the table. As with international temporary work assignments, and often to the surprise of employers unfamiliar with the process, there is far more involved than a moving van and a start date. The subject of relocation can become quite complex when you look below the surface.

Does every business need a relocation policy? Probably not. What needs to be done is a proper review of the relocatee's circumstances, the organization's support system and the ultimate objective(s) for the relocation itself. It is

more than the immigration paperwork and the implications and impact of rash short term actions that can affect your organization. There is a whole industry and area of specialization called 'global mobility' which encompasses relocation issues, immigration policy and expatriate matters. Much like recruitment it is often misunderstood.

Too often, the immigration process takes centre stage and relocation (as a discipline) doesn't come into play. Human resources officers and other operations professionals often concentrate overly in applying due diligence to the immigration paperwork process to the detriment of the bigger picture. As a result, whether the organization is relocating one person

or a whole department, the immigration process overshadows the relocation matters. Unfortunately, this can leave employers both unprepared and unaware of the potentials and pitfalls - all of which directly impact performance and productivity beyond the individual(s) involved. What are these relocation issues that do not get enough attention?

- **Cultural Fit** - Has the employee (or newly hired individual) been assessed for suitability on the larger scale for the organization as well as for the regional fit? Even though you may be moving an existing employee familiar with our overall company culture, each office may have a different personality. In the case of a new employee, the

onboarding and orientation is just as, or more, important than hiring for a local position as the usual internal HR support systems may not be available or on place.

- **Management Training** - Do the supervisors losing or receiving the relocatee understand the additional concerns of their diversified team? If the relocatee is a supervisor, this requires additional consideration.
- **Operational Application** - The practical impact of costs, policy implications such as salary bands and cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and possible repatriation a few areas which require some attention.
- **Employee Engagement** - What is the career impact of this relocation? How involved is the family behind the scenes? These will affect your assignment/move dynamics.
- **Organizational Philosophy** - Is relocation in line with the overall company philosophy? Is this a part of the succession plan and career development and/or might it be met with internal resistance.
- **Temporary or permanent** - What is considered short term may vary between organizations. Is there any impact on the longer term (and possible repatriation) of the employee?

As evidenced from even the short list of considerations above, the budgetary aspects aside, relocation yields many ramifications for consideration.

Adding breadth to the due diligence duties reveals the more subtle ramifications of relocation.

Employees and their managers look to human resources for guidance not only for the expense reimbursement part but for all the questions that inevitably come up as they realize the depth of what is involved. A good savings offer from a

**While in many ways, the world is smaller than ever before, the scope of the workplace has become global.**

moving company is of little reassurance if your potential relocatee's real estate market is less than favourable. Similarly, the individual who was excited about his/her career advance opportunities may soon realize that their spouse cannot resume their career at the destination so must consider whether to undertake the move at all. As with all primary people issues, the relocation is complex at its core. Fortunately, simple forethought is most often all that is required to forge and win-win scenario.

These are the types of issues that arise when I talk to people new to the concept of global mobility. For the most part, my colleagues are unfamiliar with the extent of the challenge until their first international relocation. Others who are more familiar in this area often approach it from an ad hoc perspective with results that resultantly vary.

The truth is that no organization has unlimited resources or time to anticipate every issue, but proactive forethought can save human resources professionals from putting out small fires before they take on a life of its own. While in many ways, the world is smaller than ever before, the scope of the workplace has become global. As the quest for talent reaches ever further, so too must our grasp of global mobility. We can't see into the future, but in the age of mergers, acquisitions and the global organization, it is prudent to see beyond the paperwork.

While a full blown policy might not be required for those only occasionally moving employees between locations, what is required is forethought; it is vital to think through the issues that will impact your business and the individual's productivity. **P**

Amelia Chan, CHRP is the principal of Higher Options ([www.hr-options.com](http://www.hr-options.com)), a boutique consulting firm specializing in HR management, operational excellence and immigration services.

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# Readying for the Reality of an Aging Workplace

By Jock Finlayson

**T**HIS YEAR MARKS AN IMPORTANT milestone for BC baby-boomers, as the leading edge of this large generation reaches age 65. There are hundreds of thousands more who are poised to follow the front-end of the boomers out of the work force over the coming decade.

While the ranks of retiring British Columbians are bound to swell, there will also be more boomers who – by necessity or choice – remain in the work force once they hit 60 or even 65. This is consistent with increasing life spans. Since 1960, life expectancy at age 65 has risen from 13 to 17 years for men, and from 15 to 20

years for women. With longer life spans, more people approaching the “normal”

**the economy has shifted increasingly toward services and ‘knowledge-intensive’ work.**

retirement age are interested in staying employed. And indeed, the data for the past several years shows an appreciable increase in labour force participation rates

among both men and women aged 60 and over. The trend is gaining momentum for at least four reasons.

First, people aged 60 or 65 today are typically healthier and more active than their predecessors 20 or 30 years ago. Second, the proportion of jobs that impose heavy physical demands on employees has diminished, as the economy has shifted increasingly toward services and “knowledge-intensive” work. Third, changes in public policy and the evolution of legal standards have combined to narrow the scope for mandatory retirement in most occupations. Finally, the declining role of defined benefit pension plans in the

private sector, coupled with generally disappointing equity market returns over the past dozen or so years, has added to the financial pressures facing significant numbers of households contemplating retirement.

For BC employers, all of this points to a more complex environment for managing human resources. Not only will many current workers be moving into retirement, but in most industries the average age of those still on the job will creep steadily higher. Workforce aging is already quite visible in industries like health care, utilities, forestry, mining, transportation and education.

The impact of aging varies by occupation as well as by industry. In 2009, the average age of those in "senior management" jobs in BC was 47, while for "middle managers" the average was just

Organizations committed to retaining older employees will need to look at providing more flexibility in job schedules, work arrangements, and access to non-wage benefits. For some businesses, managing a multi-generational workforce comprised of individuals ranging in age from their early 20s to their mid-60s is apt to pose some rather novel challenges.

Traditionally, economists and human resource professionals were united in believing that once workers reach approximately 50, productivity generally declines. This reflects both a loss of physical capacity as well as some diminution in cognitive abilities. However, the view that aging necessarily reduces worker productivity has been undermined by an expanding body of research that highlights the continued positive contributions made by older employees in many occupations.

## How will employers respond to the reality of an aging labour force, particularly at a time when finding qualified employees is likely to become harder?

under 44. This compares to an average age of 40.7 across all occupations. Occupations with relatively old workforces are found throughout the natural resource industries and in health care and public administration. In contrast, occupations with younger age profiles are mainly in the services sector – notably food services, tourism, and retail trade – and in some segments of advanced technology.

How will employers respond to the reality of an aging labour force, particularly at a time when finding qualified employees is likely to become harder? Succession planning and initiatives to facilitate knowledge transfer are sure to assume greater importance in many organizations. Some employers are already thinking about how to retain experienced staff. In a recent global survey of CEOs by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), 60 per cent of the Canadian respondents said they intend to boost efforts to recruit and retain older workers<sup>1</sup>. Four in five Canadian CEOs are worried about a limited supply of people to fill key positions, with most of these respondents keen to hold on to older employees with valued skills.

Nor should it be forgotten that mandatory retirement has wider social costs that spill beyond the boundaries of the organization itself. When workers are encouraged to retire earlier than they wish, there is a negative collateral impact on tax revenues, the financial health of pension plans, and overall economic growth. This helps to explain why some developed countries – although not yet Canada – are gradually increasing the age at which people qualify to receive the maximum public pension. The United States, for example, is on track to establish 67 (rather than 65) as the age for full Social Security entitlement; a few European countries have committed to a similar path.

As population aging accelerates and skill shortages become more common in an era of growing talent scarcity, society clearly has an interest in finding ways to encourage more people to extend their productive working lives. 

Jock Finlayson is the Executive Vice President of the Business Council of BC.

<sup>1</sup> PWC, 14th Annual Global CEO Survey (2011).



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## Kara Biles: Rising Star 2011

Since winning the 2011 BC HRMA Rising Star Award, Kara Biles, CHRP has continued to epitomize the excellence for which she has been recognized. Now, the HR coordinator at Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (Canfor), she carries with her an impressive array of skills from her HR work within the BC Public Service. Having left her learning and development career as an e-learning specialist, she continues to evolve her professional experience while pursuing her dream of teaching HR in a post-secondary program at the College of New Caledonia. Biles is also a Regional Advisory Council member volunteer of BC HRMA.

### As a BC HRMA Rising Star Award winner, what do you consider as the most rewarding aspect of your HR career thus far?

At this point in my career, my goals gravitate around growing, giving back and making a difference. As part of this, my mission is to passionately serve the HR profession, contribute to causes and committees that I care deeply about in my community and continue to use my emergent knowledge to strengthen others. I've been blessed to have so many wonderful mentors who have helped grow my capabilities and strengths and I now strive to do the same for others. The personal rewards that are felt when you take the time to develop and teach others - and see them flourish - are truly astonishing.

### As an e-learning specialist, how might HR be making more innovative use of technology? What tools do you consider essential for the HR 3.0 toolkit?

It is so important for all HR professionals to understand that never before has a generation entered the workplace using technologies so far ahead of those adopted by its employer than it is today. We need to be able to appeal to, attract, interact, communicate and cater to all generations of employees, not just the older generations.

Technology now makes it possible to obtain, use and integrate talent from around the world and connect with anyone, locally and globally to collaborate on documents, meetings and other HR related matters.

Many HR professionals are now using social media to attract, motivate, connect with, engage, develop, retain, and listen to employees. Newer generations, such as the Millennials, expect social networks, online forums and websites to facilitate their first contact with potential employers. Social media presents the greatest avenue available for establishing an organization as an employer of choice. We should be utilizing blogs, wikis, just in time learning and social networks. The day may not be here yet, but the competent HR professional is absolutely going to have to know how to use social media tools, or they're going to be left behind

### How might those pursuing an HR career more purposefully convey the business impact of HR?

Strategically speaking, HR is becoming increasingly important from a competitive advantage perspective, especially in growing knowledge-based industries. We all know that our talent pools are shrinking and that organizations will need the best and brightest to survive. As the global economy continues to evolve, it's necessary for HR professionals to understand a number of factors that affect organizations today and not just traditional HR practices.

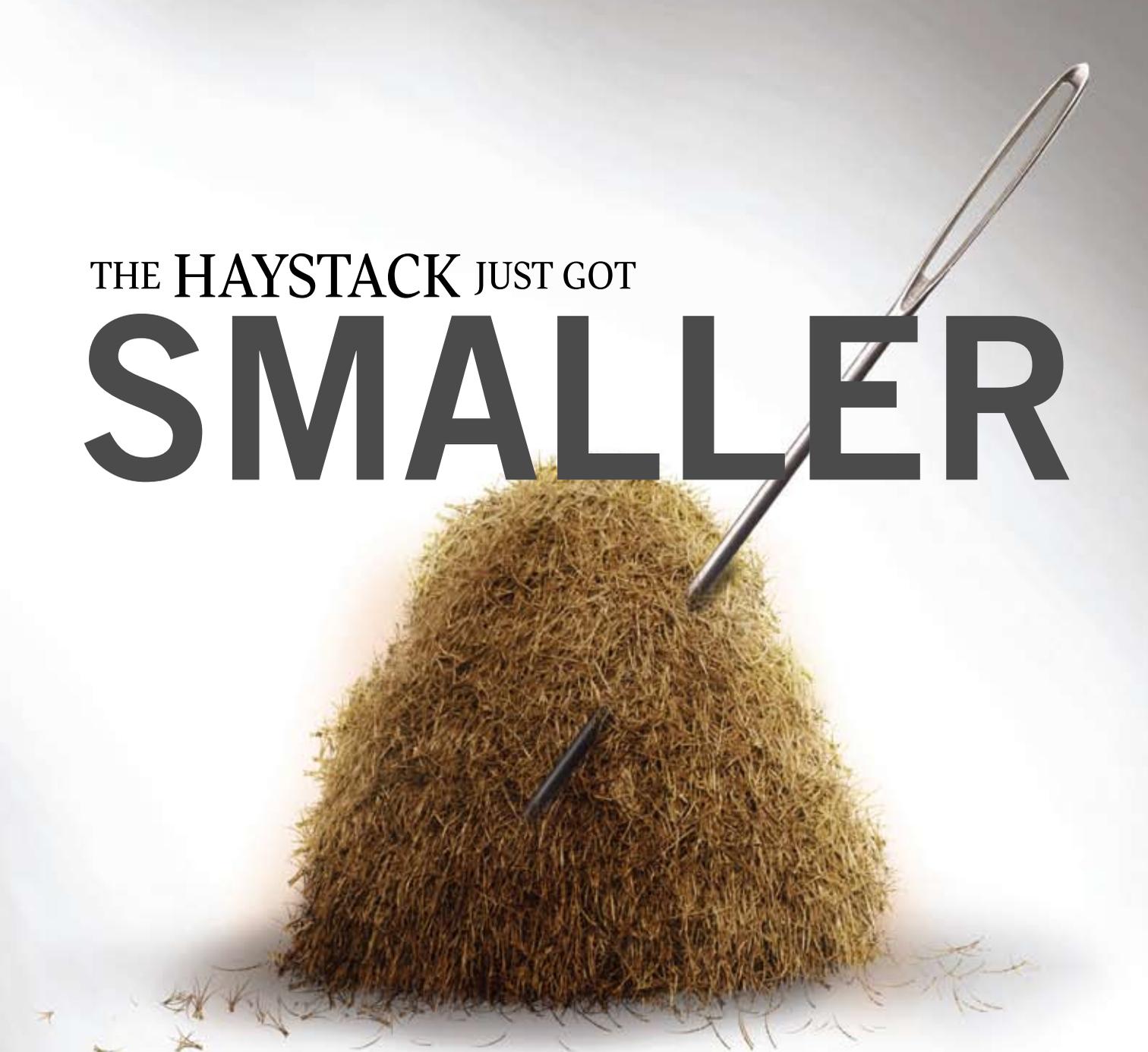
Knowing and truly understanding the industry in which you work, grasping the impacts of globalization, technology, changing demographics and continuous improvement will all assist HR in conveying our impact on the business' bottom line. It's crucial for HR professionals to form effective relationships with

supervisors and managers to truly understand our organization's priorities and operations, and the impact these factors have upon the organization's success. This knowledge then allows us to mold and align our HR practices, policies and procedures to drive the organization forward.

HR professionals must clearly define what is critical to the organization and measure what matters most to our executives to more purposefully convey the business impact of HR.

### What are those challenges that have you most inspired about the future of HR?

I've been reading a lot of HR resources lately that focus on shrinking talent pools and changing demographics. Every study projects increased numbers of Millennials and decreasing Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generation X, while at the same time, we are going to be experiencing a shriveling labour force. The challenge that companies will face focuses around a war for talent, and creating new strategies to deal with, communicate with, develop, motivate and engage the members of each generation. Understanding the generations will be critical to creating a workforce development plan for the coming years. HR professionals will also need to become creative with their recruitment strategies in order to develop untapped labour markets and partner with multicultural organizations. The increased focus on talent will make the HR function within organizations more integral to an organization's future success and that challenge definitely inspires me. **D**



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