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THE MAGAZINE OF HUMAN RESOURCES THOUGHT LEADERSHIP | MARCH/APRIL 2015



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## IN THIS ISSUE

*Big Data is not only a recent business buzzword – it is a powerful tool that can add tremendous value to organizations by making tasks easier, faster and more insightful. While HR has been lagging behind in using Big Data in its function areas, CEOs and CHROs are beginning to see how workforce analytics can lead to better talent decisions and better business results. To learn more about Big Data applications and implications for HR, flip to page 14.*

# contributors



## **WILLIAM DANN**

William Dann spent 13 years as a CEO before launching his consulting business, Professional Growth Systems, LLC, in 1981 – a company that has served over 200 organizations in the U.S. and abroad, using proprietary solutions to accelerate performance with as little time and resources as possible. Additionally, Dann has taught for several years at the graduate level at Boston University and is also the founder of BoardGrowth.com, a website devoted to advancing the effectiveness of governing boards. Dann currently resides in Anchorage, Alaska with his family. Read his article about ensuring onboarding processes for new hires are as effective as possible, starting on page 35.



## **CHRISTINE BURYCH, MHRM, CPC**

As the president of StarlingBrook Leadership Consulting, Christine Burych comes with a strong background in mental health, leadership and organizational development. She works with leaders and their teams to create collaborative, inclusive and mentally healthy workplaces. She is a trainer, facilitator and coach. Her career has spanned 25 years, starting from a frontline community mental health clinician to acting vice president of human resources and organizational development at Canada's largest academic mental health facility. Read the article she co-authored about the benefits of internal vs. external coaches, starting on page 39.



## **SARAH McVANEL, MSC, CHRL, PCC, CSODP**

Sarah McVanel has been in the fields of organizational development, training and communications for 14 years. A perpetual student, most recently she earned her Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL) designation, became a certified professional coach in 2013 and received her senior organizational development professional designation in 2013. Following a senior leadership role in healthcare, she founded Greatness Magnified, helping coaching and consulting clients leverage the greatness within themselves and their organizations every day. Read the article she co-authored about the benefits of internal vs. external coaches, starting on page 39.



## **JEFF FERNANDEZ**

Jeff Fernandez is the cofounder and CEO of Grovo, a learning platform that's closing the growing digital skills gap with 60-second training videos. Grovo's microlearning method enables professionals to learn the digital skills required to perform better at work. Organizations in 190 countries use Grovo's video lessons and assessments to train teams on the Internet tools, cloud services and professional topics their employees need to know. Read Fernandez's take on the potential of microlearning in today's business environment on page 48.



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## TALKING TAKEAWAYS

**A**s I write, we're coming out of the HRP 2015 Annual Conference & Trade Show, and what an event it was. From invigorating and inspiring sessions to impressive keynote presentations to a bustling trade show floor, I experienced several key takeaways, two of which I'll share with you now.

Firstly, HR is continuing its push as a strategic business partner. By engaging business leaders and aligning HR initiatives with business goals, HR shows its criticality to an organization, and more and more businesses are realizing what a key role HR plays. As the theme of this year's conference, this message really hit home on a number of different levels. To resume the conversation, in this issue of *HR Professional* we've included an article from The Conference Board of Canada about HR's strategic business role; flip to page 37 to read about how HR can move from talk to action in realizing its strategic potential.

The second takeaway I experienced from the conference was that Big Data is here to stay. From the numerous vendors in the trade show to different keynotes to a bounty of sessions focusing on different facets of Big Data and analytics, it was a topic that received well-rounded coverage at the conference. It's fitting, then, that the March/April issue of *HR Professional* is our Big Data issue, and we've focused our feature articles on different data applications in HR. Flip to the cover feature, starting on page 14, to delve deeper into why HR needs to embrace Big Data in 2015.

In conclusion, it was wonderful meeting so many readers – as well as past and future contributors – and hearing your thoughts and feedback on the magazine. I encourage you to give me a call or send me an email any time you would like to share ideas or comments about *HR Professional*, or connect with me on Twitter by tweeting to @HRProMag. As always, you can access the digital edition of the magazine by visiting [www.hrpatoday.ca](http://www.hrpatoday.ca).

Happy reading,



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VOLUME 32 / NUMBER 3 MARCH/APRIL 2015

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*HR PROFESSIONAL* is published eight times per year for the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA).

### PUBLISHED BY LESTER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

701 Henry Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3E 1T9  
Phone: 204-953-2189 | Toll-free: 866-953-2189 | Fax: 204-953-2184  
Email: [info@lesterpublications.com](mailto:info@lesterpublications.com) | [www.lesterpublications.com](http://www.lesterpublications.com)

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**Subscriptions:** (Prices include shipping and handling)  
\$49/year in Canada; \$79/year in the U.S. and International.

Publication Mail Agreement #40606022  
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Lester Communications Inc.

Printed in Canada on FSC Certified paper and polybagged with biodegradable plastic. Please recycle where facilities exist.

# Are CHRO Qualities Key to the Corner Office?



By Philip Wilson, CHRE

**A**s an HR professional, do you ever aspire to head up an organization as CEO?

It's an aspiration that was largely unthinkable up until a few years ago, when most senior HR professionals reported to the CFO and the role was seen as a cost centre overseeing administrative tasks like payroll and benefits.

But it's not so unfathomable these days, when more organizations are relying on their chief human resources officers (CHROs) for insight and strategy around talent management and culture to achieve sustained success.

In 2015, having some HR experience is definitely an asset for anyone considering the top job.

In fact, a recent study by influential HR thinker David Ulrich and executive recruiting firm Korn Ferry shows the CHRO role is more important than ever before. (In fact, in terms of monetary value, the study found CHROs are typically the third highest paid executives in the C-suite, behind CEOs and COOs – largely because they are so hard to find.)

Not only are CHROs seen as taking a critical advisory role in the C-suite – acting as a confidante and sounding board for

the CEO – but many actually share the same characteristics as chief executives.

The study looked at leadership qualities – things like leadership and thinking styles, how executives behave in group settings and how they deal with things like ambiguity, pressure and risk taking.

Ulrich and his team then assessed the prevalence of these qualities among different types of executives and compared the results.

Guess what?

Besides COOs – whose responsibilities often overlap with the CEO's – the executive whose traits were most similar to the CEO was the CHRO.

**NOT ONLY ARE CHROs SEEN AS TAKING A CRITICAL ADVISORY ROLE IN THE C-SUITE – ACTING AS A CONFIDANTE AND SOUNDING BOARD FOR THE CEO – BUT MANY ACTUALLY SHARE THE SAME CHARACTERISTICS AS CHIEF EXECUTIVES.**

## tips from dispute resolution experts

### What's more important: getting a good deal or keeping a good relationship?

The answer is that you can rarely get a good deal without maintaining the relationship. When you have a good relationship and the other person trusts you, you can reach deals that you just can't reach if the other person is your adversary.

### Can you negotiate issues such as salary with your boss?

Of course. A negotiation with a boss is no less a negotiation than one with a client. While you will rarely be in a position to make a demand, you can have a discussion using objective criteria and standards of fairness, as long as you show you're open to their proposals.

### Should you keep your emotions quiet while negotiating?

A lot of people think that we should try to keep our emotions quiet during a negotiation – that emotions make you a worse negotiator. But it's often impossible to 'not be emotional'. And being emotional may help you. The best negotiators use emotion to their advantage rather than trying to stifle it.

### Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Workshop dates:

**Toronto:** April 14-17, May 26-29, June 23-26

**Ottawa:** March 3-6, October 27-30

*"The ADR Workshop was by far the best course I have attended in my 30+ year career in HR. A must attend for HR Professionals. I have used the tools on a regular basis."*

- Dan Heard, HR  
Ministry of Community & Social Services, Bleinheim

*"Each day was packed with information. The role playing method of instruction was much more effective than the normal lecture format of other seminars."*

- Gerry Walsh, HR  
AOC Resins and Coatings Company, Guelph



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The corollary, of course, is that CHROs make great CEOs.

As Ulrich said in the study, in modern business, attracting the right talent, creating the right organizational structure and building the right culture are essential for driving strategy.

And executive HR experience makes a leader more likely to succeed at those tasks.

In my current role as CHRO for the last six months, I have been primarily focused on helping the CEO develop the strategic plan looking at all the aspects of building a sustainable business into the future. This has entailed organization design, culture change (as we move to a more client-centric model), change management, employee engagement and reviewing and aligning our total rewards strategies.

The biggest challenge for the organization is talent management, in terms of ensuring that "the right seats are filled by the right people on the bus." This is why the board decided to hire a CHRO who had significant experience in talent management.

We would not be talking about this 20 years ago, and it's amazing how the profession has changed.

Today, HR provides guidance on business strategies, talent management, leadership development and cultural transformation that delivers competitive advantage – and, ultimately, profits – to our organizations.

It's precisely this change that necessitated a radical overhaul of the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA)'s competency framework.

Our new framework was developed over 18 months in partnership with HR academics, senior business leaders and HRPA members at all levels.

The result is a completely modernized snapshot of HR practice in the 21st century.

It defines 213 functional competencies and 15 enabling competencies at each of three levels of HR practice – entry, professional and executive.

And it's these enabling competencies – things like business acumen, critical thinking, negotiation, decision-making and ethics – that are going to not only build more effective HR professionals at all levels, but place more of them in the corner office. ■

# UPFRONT

## EMPLOYERS SEE ROI WHEN HELPING EMPLOYEES DEAL WITH PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES

A study conducted by the Morneau Shepell research group found that every \$1 invested in an employee and family assistance program (EFAP) translates into a return on investment of \$8.70 through a combination of improved productivity at work and less time away from work.

“One of the most critical factors for business success is employee productivity; it impacts an organization’s bottom line,” said Paula Allen, vice president of research and integrative solutions at Morneau Shepell.

The *Return on Investment for Employee and Family Assistance Programs* is the largest Canadian study to assess the impact of employee and family assistance programs on employees and their productivity. It is based on data collected from 80,000 cases in Canada of Morneau Shepell’s EFAP, the largest program in the country.

EFAP users completed a questionnaire at their first EFAP session after seeking help and another questionnaire at their last EFAP

session, providing information on changes in productivity or absenteeism at work.

- 63 per cent of employees said their productivity at work had been negatively impacted in the four weeks before they contacted their EFAP because of the issue that led to them calling.
- Employees seeking help through their EFAP recorded a 35.9 per cent increase in productivity at work, compared to their productivity just before seeking help.
- Employees using their EFAP recorded less time away from work after getting help through the EFAP.
- 46 per cent of employees reaching out to the EFAP said they would have lost time from work were it not for the support they received through the EFAP. In addition, one-third of those employees also said they would have been off work for more than 20 days were it not for the support they received through the EFAP.

“An EFAP is a highly cost-effective and easy-to-implement step for an organization seeking to support its employees and protect the company’s productivity,” said Allen.

## THE COSTLIEST PART OF A BAD HIRE ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK

As expensive as it is to replace a bad hire, the money isn’t what concerns employers most. In a Robert Half survey, chief financial officers (CFOs) said the single greatest impact of a poor hiring decision is lower staff morale (41 per cent), followed closely by lost productivity. Monetary costs came in third.

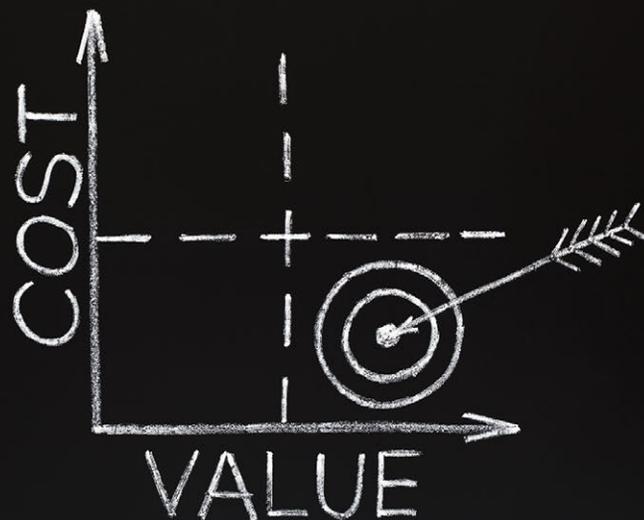
The survey was developed by Robert Half, the world’s first and largest specialized staffing firm, and conducted by an independent research firm. The survey is based on interviews with more than 270 CFOs from a random sample of Canadian companies.

CFOs were asked, “Which one of the following, in your opinion, is the single greatest impact of a bad hiring decision?”

Their responses:

Lower staff morale	41%
Lost productivity	34%
Monetary cost	19%
Other/don’t know	6%

ONE-THIRD OF THOSE EMPLOYEES ALSO SAID THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN OFF WORK FOR MORE THAN 20 DAYS WERE IT NOT FOR THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED THROUGH THE EFAP.





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Hiring a bad fit or someone who lacks the skills needed to perform well has the potential to leave good employees with the burden of damage control, whether it be extra work or re-doing work that wasn't completed correctly the first time

"In the current hiring environment of talent shortages, employers may feel pressured to cut corners in order to speed up the hiring process," said Greg Scileppi, president of Robert Half, International Staffing Operations. "Although acting with a sense of urgency is important, following a clearly defined hiring process and using the right resources can help prevent unnecessary headaches often associated with rushed decisions. Engaging experts such as HR professionals and recruitment specialists can help substantiate the process of following through with reference checks and ensuring that candidates not only have the technical expertise needed to fulfill the role, but that they are also a cultural fit for the organization."

An ill-fitting hire can bring several adverse consequences to an organization.

"A bad hiring decision can often cause a negative ripple effect through the organization," said Scileppi. "Hiring a bad fit or someone who lacks the skills needed to perform well has the potential to leave good employees with the burden of damage control, whether it be extra work or re-doing work that wasn't completed correctly the first

time. The added pressure on top performers could put employers at risk of losing them, too."

---

## WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AREN'T KEEPING PACE WITH PROGRESS

According to the third annual Women Shaping Business survey conducted by Randstad Canada, the gender divide has been shrinking in today's workplace. As salary continues to be a discussion point when it comes to gender equality, the survey revealed a decrease in the perceived salary gap between men and women – 65 per cent this year in comparison to 78 per cent last year. Other areas where women have also seen progress include better work-life balance and flexible working arrangements.

### Climbing the corporate ladder

Women have reported seeing an improvement in equal opportunity for promotions as well as seeing more focus by CEOs and media on women in leadership. But, when it comes to women aspiring to pursue a management or senior executive role,

nearly 30 per cent of Canadian women are undecided about wanting to move up the ranks while 48 per cent don't aspire to hold these senior positions.

### Family obligations a deterrent for moving up the ranks

If women say they believe it's getting better, what could dissuade them from seeing their name plate on the door of the corner office? It may well be that stale perceptions are holding some women back. Despite the acknowledged progress, half of women fear absences due to family obligations would prevent them from advancing in senior roles and 51 per cent of women are worried about their maternity leave having an effect on their ability to move up.

"This year's survey reveals women still have hesitation when it comes to their employer understanding and accommodating home obligations and work obligations. And when it comes to moving up the ranks, women who may be juggling family life alongside their career may view the road to the corner office as a bit too steep," said Faith Tull, senior vice-president, Human Resources at Randstad Canada. "Organizations need to acknowledge these concerns and further enhance their offerings beyond maternity leave, to alleviate stress related to managing family obligations and make the pursuit of leadership opportunities stimulating and attractive for women. And it starts with nurturing a work culture of flexibility, openness and empowerment. In order to remain competitive, to attract top talent and promote gender diversity in more senior roles, Canadian employers need to create and promote efficient and accessible support programs, foster the development and amplify the voices of the female leaders they have and demonstrate how career opportunities are as attractive for women as they are to men."

---

## MODEST ECONOMIC GROWTH LIMITS SALARY GAINS IN 2015

Canadian organizations are planning moderate base salary increases for 2015 in response to Canada's sluggish economic growth. The average pay increase for non-unionized

employees is projected to be 2.9 per cent next year, one percentage point higher than the forecasted inflation rate for 2015, according to The Conference Board of Canada's *Compensation Planning Outlook 2015*.

"The good news is that most Canadian organizations are planning salary increases for 2015. However, employers remain cautious about Canada's economic performance and are opting for the same modest wage increases seen in the past few years," said Ian Cullwick, vice-president, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada.

Salary increases vary considerably depending on region and industry. Once again, Saskatchewan and Alberta employers will lead the nation with projected average increases of 3.6 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively. The lowest average increases are expected in the Atlantic provinces at 2.3 per cent, followed by Ontario at 2.5 per cent.

"Although more organizations are starting to report challenges recruiting and retaining employees, we're still not back up to pre-recession levels, when close to three-quarters of organizations experienced difficulty in this area," said Cullwick.

Sixty-four per cent of organizations say they are experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining employees this year, up from 58 per cent in the previous year.

This is the 33rd edition of the *Compensation Planning Outlook*, which summarizes the results of The Conference Board's annual compensation survey and forecast conducted in June 2014. The findings are based on the responses of 382 organizations across Canada. ■

**SIXTY-FOUR PER CENT OF ORGANIZATIONS SAY THEY ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES THIS YEAR, UP FROM 58 PER CENT IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.**

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### Correction

Due to a file transfer error, some text in the February edition's article "Compassionate Care Leave: Giving care to caregivers," which begins on page 32 of the February issue, appeared incorrectly. To view the correct version of the article, please visit [www.hrpatoday.ca/article/compassionate-care-leave.html](http://www.hrpatoday.ca/article/compassionate-care-leave.html).



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### Imagine an organization where:

- Teams easily connect and collaborate across boundaries
- People contribute to projects that truly excite them
- Success is measured by the ability to learn and innovate

The era of centralized governing systems and rigid hierarchies is over. Work fundamentals are shifting and the organizational frameworks that worked in the past no longer serve us. The world at work is changing ... are you?

Queen's University IRC (Industrial Relations Centre) invites you to the **2015 Workplace in Motion Summit** on April 16th in Toronto. Join your colleagues for invigorating conversations about how we can amplify talent and reinvent our organizations to thrive in the future economy.

Optimize the value of this experience to your organization by bringing colleagues from HR, LR and OD, as well as current and future leaders who will leave inspired to lead change together based on this foundational opportunity.

Don't be left behind wondering what just happened. Join us at the Summit to reflect, re-think and re-imagine your workplace. See you in the new world of work.

Get  
ahead of  
the **shift**



<http://irc.queensu.ca/workplace-in-motion-summit-2015>

# Improving the Health of Your Workplace Culture

## POOR CULTURE CAN BE A LIABILITY

By Sheryl Johnson

**D**iscussions in the HR field concerning workplace sexual harassment were renewed in the fall of 2014 when sexual harassment allegations against Jian Ghomeshi were raised by a number of women, including some former co-workers at CBC, and when two Canadian liberal MPs were suspended from caucus after sexual harassment allegations were raised against them by two MPs of another party.

Surprisingly, there has been very little examination of the impact that workplace cultures, such as CBC's, had on the organizations' responses – or failures to respond – to such complaints. While it is yet to be seen what the fallout will be for CBC and its manager's failures, we can see at least one lesson to be learned from CBC's workplace culture: the need to assess, analyze and take ongoing,

proactive measures to ensure that your organization's culture is healthy and effective.

Workplace culture is the foundation of an organization. It is the environment that surrounds employees at work. It powerfully influences the organization and its actions as well as those of its employees, including their work enjoyment, relationships and actions. It is an organization's personality made up of the values, beliefs, underlying assumptions, attitudes, perceptions and behaviours shared by employees as influenced by the organization's executives and management (i.e., through their practices and the way they organize work). It is the behaviour that results when employees over time arrive at a set of unspoken rules for working together. While not visible, it can be seen or felt through its manifestations at work. It is not static.



**THE LAW AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH FAILURES ARE EVOLVING SO THAT ORGANIZATIONS WITH UNHEALTHY WORKPLACE CULTURES CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO TURN A BLIND EYE ON MISCONDUCT.**

## AN UNHEALTHY WORKPLACE CULTURE

Ghomeshi's *Q* broadcasts were unprecedentedly successful and high profile. He was considered a "god" in the workplace. Such success led to a "culture of complicity" concerning Ghomeshi's workplace misconduct. Under this culture, neither management or the union took rumours or specific complaints concerning Ghomeshi's workplace sexual harassment seriously and failed to take adequate steps to address either. Under this culture, CBC employees generally did not report experienced, and certainly not witnessed, incidents of workplace sexual harassment. In short, CBC had a workplace culture that enabled Ghomeshi. Specific examples of this complicity include: a co-worker not speaking up when he witnessed Ghomeshi grind his pelvis into a female *Q* employee at work; a CBC executive "reminding" a female CBC employee complaining about Ghomeshi's workplace conduct to be more "malleable"; *Q*'s executive producer advising another complainant that "Ghomeshi was the way he was"; and CBC's justification of its inactions by stating that prior to the October 2014 allegations, no workplace sexual harassment complaints were filed.

CBC is not the first and won't be the last employer with an unhealthy or "complicit" workplace culture – a culture that fosters a toxic work environment wherein high producing, successful employees' workplace misconduct, particularly towards other employees, is condoned, until the point when it can no longer be ignored (i.e., when the "god" becomes a liability). This is an old story; however, the law and the consequences of such failures are evolving so that organizations with unhealthy workplace cultures can no longer afford to turn a blind eye on misconduct.

## THE NEW STORY

In addition to facing liability arising out of human rights applications and constructive dismissal lawsuits (i.e., the old potential damages story), employers and managers may now also face significant liability for damages in negligence to victimized employees. In extreme cases, such employees could be awarded damages equal to the replacement of their employment income for the remainder of their presumed working lives.

Additionally, damages arising out of a botched investigation or failure to investigate are no longer extraordinary. We further know that employee health, which includes a healthy working environment or culture, is strongly connected to organizational productivity and effectiveness, employee satisfaction, attraction and retention, improving an organization's public image and profile as well as offers the chance to curb organizational health costs.

What proactive measures can you utilize to improve your workplace culture?

### 1. Conduct objective evaluations of workplace culture

Implement periodic employee surveys and/or conduct random audits to assess your employees' workplace experiences and the effectiveness of your policies, programs and practices. Additionally, walk through and objectively observe and evaluate your workplace on an ongoing basis. Test your employees' knowledge of and willingness to use your policies and programs.

Important observations to consider:

- Emotions and conflicts as indicators of values
- How are employees attired?
- What are employees' rituals and routines?
- How is space allocated, where and to whom?
- What is placed on walls and desks?
- Treatment and use of common areas; the language and symbols used; the content of bulletin boards and newsletters
- How do employees collaborate? How do employees interact during meetings? How do employees communicate (i.e., method and tone) internally and externally?
- How are goals achieved?
- How are employees rewarded or recognized?

In short, analyze what your operating norms are, whether they are effective or ineffective in supporting the organization's goal achievement, progress and success and then establish improvement goals. Thereafter, regularly analyze the success of these improvement goals and whether they need to be modified or replaced.

### 2. Practice what you promulgate

Do the organization's leaders demonstrate through their comments and actions a commitment to a healthy working environment? For example, does your organization equally apply its policies, programs and practices to all employees from top to bottom of the organizational chart?

If this is not currently being done, you will need to republish and retrain your employees making it clear that the policies, programs and practices will now be consistently applied to all employees, regardless of position, past experiences or organizational lore. If you don't, your policies and programs will not be effectively utilized.

### 3. Have trained HR employees to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to complaints under your policies and programs, including any necessary investigations

If the size of your organization does not permit for this, ensure you have a trusted legal adviser to assist you in appropriately responding to complaints in a timely manner.

### 4. Acknowledge that workplace culture is learned behaviour from workplace interactions

When a behaviour is rewarded or condoned, it is repeated and the association eventually becomes part of the culture. Assess what behaviour your organization is encouraging.

### 5. Recognize that establishing and maintaining a healthy workplace culture or effecting a positive culture change involves an ongoing commitment

Workplace culture, by definition, is deeply ingrained into the fabric of an organization. As such, changing and influencing it is rarely a quick and easy process. ■

*Sheryl Johnson is a partner in Fogler Rubinoff's employment and labour law practice area.*

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# BIG DATA ANALYTICS

OPENING THE DOOR FOR NEW HR INSIGHTS



By Peter Smit

**B**ig Data and analytics has been a popular topic in the business press lately, and for good reason: it is a powerful tool that can add tremendous value to organizations by making tasks easier, faster and more insightful. By pairing Big Data with imagination and creative thinking, unexplored concepts can be developed to boost organizational effectiveness and productivity.

## HR AND BIG DATA

While many business functions are increasingly making good use of Big Data analytics (a recent survey found two-thirds of organizations are increasing Big Data spending and have applications in production), HR has been slow to make use of this new tool.

However, CEOs and CHROs are beginning to see how workforce analytics can lead to better talent decisions and better business results. Indeed, applying Big Data to workforce behaviours and data is the next step in the evolution of workforce

analytics (which started with 1950s “time and motion” studies and later applied to office workers with 1990s-era “Business Process Re-engineering” initiatives).

People accept that companies like Google, Netflix and Amazon gather massive amounts of data to service “us” better. And, in *The Decoded Company*, authors Segal, Goldstein, Goldman and Harfoush argue that many companies now know more about their customers than they do about their own employees. But with employee-related expenses representing more than half of an organization’s costs (over 80 per cent if you factor in office space and IT), businesses should be leveraging Big Data to learn more about how they can make employees more effective and productive.

## BIG DATA: WHO DOES WHAT?

Many organizations struggle with where to place Big Data responsibility. Who owns it? The business? IT? Or the business functions that use Big Data?



Organizations must recognize that Big Data is a tool to provide new or better insight. It is an *enabler*. Initially, most organizations hire “data scientists” to gather data and explore questions. Typically, these specialists possess skills in math and statistics; programming and databases; domain knowledge and soft skills; and communications and visualization skills.

The challenge is that once hired, these individuals need to learn the intricacies of the organization’s business and culture. To be effective, they need to be teamed with other individuals with deep business and process knowledge, and together they will develop the hypotheses to be tested. Generally, organizations test hypotheses and over time, those that provide good value will be brought into production.

### DECISION-MAKING AND WHO WILL USE THE BIG DATA?

People make decisions differently. On one extreme are those who rely on their intuition or “gut feel.” Their decision-making is based

on a combination of their experience and their own opinion. The opposite are those who rely on evidence-based analysis. They do not question data, evidence or the rules they have previously used to make their decisions.

Between these two groups are those who apply intuition to facts and data. They are the “collaborators” – individuals who gather both opinions and data from different sources and make their decisions. If the decision goes contrary to established process, they will question and possibly push for change. Although in most organizations, this group is not yet the majority, they are increasing their numbers and more and more organizations are including this dynamic when hiring and training their people. More HR professionals are recognizing that it is these people who will drive better, faster and less costly decisions and solutions. It is this group who will be Big Data users. (For more on collaborators, see sidebar: *Measuring organizational collaborative performance*)

# cover feature

## HOW DOES CULTURE IMPACT BIG DATA INITIATIVES?

Warning: before embarking on a Big Data initiative, be sure to know where your organizational culture sits on the spectrum. Where your organization is on this spectrum will determine the possible side effects of a Big Data initiative, especially if it involves HR-related data.

On one end of the spectrum are organizations which are closed, do not share, are unaligned, secretive and where lone efforts prevail. On the other end of the spectrum are organizations that have strong leadership, are open, trusting, sharing and are collaborative in nature. How a Big Data initiative is perceived will be very different depending on where you are on that spectrum.

In the “negative” environment, any initiative using HR data will be received as too much “Big Brother” and be seen as a weapon to control and punish, and also be viewed as a loss of privacy.

In a more “positive” environment, it will be seen as a tool to help improve the organization’s effectiveness and boost productivity – something that’s part of the organizational learning journey and that will improve employee engagement. ■

*Peter Smit is the founder of Collabogence, an organization that uses Big Data analytics to measure collaborative performance on multiple levels.*

*The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) is in the midst of a thought leading research project with Collabogence and with the sponsorship of Cisco Canada. The resulting White Paper, documenting the findings and conclusions, is scheduled to be published in spring 2015.*

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF A BIG DATA INITIATIVE, ESPECIALLY IF IT INVOLVES HR-RELATED DATA.**

## A NEW HORIZON FOR HR: *Measuring organizational collaborative performance*

**M**ore and more organizations are recognizing the importance of collaboration, not just within teams, but also team to team and across departments.

Many organizations recognize collaboration as a collective skill that is critical to improving organizational effectiveness and boosting productivity – but they wrestle with what it is, and why it does and doesn’t happen.

Organizations striving to benchmark the collaboration performance involved in different projects must do so through costly and lengthy consultations. It’s a complex challenge as collaboration spans many facets: how well does an organization use its collective experience, expertise and knowledge, not just within a particular team, but also team to team or across departments? How frequently do people communicate and how – one-on-one or in groups? Is information being made accessible, are people searching for available information for their decisions and does the organization have

the appropriate tools to facilitate information exchange? Does the social environment encourage connections and exchanges?

### BIG DATA AND COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

This is where Big Data enters the scene. Typically, most organizations use four or five primary collaboration tools: email, telephone, document repository, social/community, web-conferencing and perhaps a project management app. Each of these applications maintains an activity log recording who did what, when and who else was involved.

This “metadata” functions as the basis on which individual, team and department collaborative performance is measured. Each interaction, by each individual, is “mapped” against the four collaboration quadrants: sharing, communication, social and search. The nature, intensity, direction and balance of each element between individuals will lead to the identification

of Collaborator Types \*(an example of which is a “remote catalyst” – an individual who is able to initiate and drive a team remotely).

Being able to measure collaboration would have great value for organizations:

- Benchmark their performance against other organizations
- Assess how well collaboration takes place within teams and from team to team
- Assess how, and how well, IT tools are being used and where additional training or functionality is required
- Optimize where people sit, and in which areas remote workers who come into the office from time to time should sit (to the point of even making them aware of where their collaborative network is in the office)
- Configure team membership optimally in order to ensure the team will collaborate effectively and immediately (based on previous collaborative working relationships and different “collaborator types”)



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# Diversity Details

## DIVERSITY MEASUREMENT CAN ENLIGHTEN ORGANIZATIONS

By Cathy Gallagher-Louisy



In 2013, the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (CIDI) published Canada's first and only publicly available research report on diversity measurement in Canadian organizations, *What Gets Measured Gets Done: Measuring the Return on Investment of Diversity and Inclusion*. The research found some counterintuitive results.

Nearly 80 per cent of Canadian employers who responded to the survey indicated that diversity and inclusion (D&I) is considered a strategic initiative within their organization. However, less than one-fifth reported that they measure the impact, efficacy or ROI of their diversity initiatives.

This was puzzling. This finding begs the question: is D&I really a strategic priority? How many other strategic initiatives do organizations *not* measure?

Given the significant resources some employers invest in D&I initiatives, why would the majority of organizations not measure something they consider to be a strategic priority? How can they know whether their efforts are effective or making an impact?

Furthermore, the research found that surprisingly few organizations conduct even the most basic of measurements.

### **NEARLY HALF OF CANADIAN EMPLOYERS DON'T COLLECT BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Just over half of survey respondents had conducted an employee census or asked employees to self-identify based on demographic categories. Of those that were collecting this information, 32.7 per

cent were legally required to do so. Thus, only 20.2 per cent were collecting basic demographic data voluntarily.

And most alarmingly, nearly half of organizations that responded were not even tracking basic demographic data about their workforces.

Why does this matter?

Gathering employee demographic data is widely considered a basic practice and a vital first step for organizations dedicated to improving inclusion. According to the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks, collecting basic demographic data is among the lowest levels of benchmarks for diversity management activity.

After all, if you don't understand who is in your organization, how can you develop strategies that respond to the needs of your people?

Measuring the demographics in your organization is instrumental for identifying gaps in representation and determining inclusion issues and barriers to advancement so that you can set goals, establish appropriate programs and initiatives and measure results – ensuring that you are building a talent pipeline of the leaders of tomorrow, and bolstering your organization's ongoing sustainability.

Put more simply, measuring the demographics of your workforce is an essential first step toward improving inclusion within your organization.

Recently, a number of firms in Canada's legal profession have realized the importance of diversity measurement and have completed extensive demographic measures of their workforces.



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## D&I IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

D&I has been a hot topic in the Canadian legal profession lately. In 2011, a group of Canadian General Counsel from coast to coast established Legal Leaders for Diversity (LLD), a working group with the objective to encourage greater D&I within their own businesses and co-operate to foster these same values throughout the legal profession and the larger Canadian business community.

Additionally, in the past year, we have seen major companies begin to request diversity demographics from law firms they do business with. It is expected that this trend will continue as more organizations use their financial influence to encourage D&I amongst their suppliers.

Nearly two years ago, 16 Canadian law firms joined forces to demonstrate their commitment to improving D&I within their organizations by creating the Law Firm Diversity and Inclusion Network (LFDIN). The LFDIN has been growing ever since.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Since 2013, CIDI has helped over a dozen organizations measure the demographics of their workforces, including several law firms. One law firm, Cassels Brock, shared the benefits they derived from the experience.

Cassels Brock is a Canadian law firm with over 500 employees in two offices – Toronto and Vancouver. In 2014, they utilized CIDI's Diversity Census Tool to measure their workforce.

Conducting a diversity census involves asking all employees to participate in a voluntary self-identification census questionnaire. Cassels Brock, along with many other firms, also chose to complete an inclusion survey at the same time as the census. The inclusion survey asks questions similar to those you might see on an employee engagement survey – but they go deeper into specifics about how employees view the management of diversity and the inclusiveness of the organization.

## DIVERSITY JOURNEY

In 2013, Cassels Brock's executive committee adopted a diversity policy for the firm and established a formal diversity committee. Conducting an employee demographic census and inclusion survey was one of the committee's first major initiatives.

"The history around this type of employee demographic measurement in Canada is completely different than in the United States," said Kristin Taylor, partner and chair of Cassels Brock's diversity committee. "In Canada there has been reluctance to even ask the questions. Internally, we had to assuage people's fears about why the data was being collected, where it would be stored and what we were going to do with it."

Even though the census and survey were voluntary, Cassels Brock was delighted to achieve an almost 82 per cent response rate from their workforce.

"The level of participation has been extremely helpful in how we view the results," said Taylor. "The information is meaningful, which allows us to establish legitimacy and credibility in what we are trying to do."



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## feature

### EYE-OPENING EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

After the data collection and analysis process, Cassels Brock received a highly detailed report on the demographics of their organization, as well as the responses to the inclusion survey questions, cut by demographic group. Prior to participating in the Diversity by the Numbers project, the firm was not collecting demographic data beyond gender and age. The level of detail of the information they received has proven extremely valuable.

"To go from a complete void to having so much information has been completely eye-opening," said Taylor. "The information has also revealed how important it is not to make assumptions, especially with regard to inclusion."

Cassels Brock is using this information to create data-driven, informed strategies and initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion within the firm.

"It's the start of a very important dialogue," said Taylor. "It has helped us to identify certain priorities and areas that we need to pay more attention to. Although receiving so much information at once can be overwhelming, in order to be effective we are trying not to tackle everything at once. We have identified our top three priorities for next year, which include training, communications and outreach to certain groups to better understand their experiences in our firm. Also, additional attention will be directed toward recruitment, especially for lawyers."

Collecting and interpreting the data will have impacts for the organization in the immediate future as well as in the coming years.

"There will be changes to HR initiatives and policies," said Taylor. "We will continue to measure and gather more information and do additional outreach. Priorities will adapt and shift as we move along our diversity journey and as the information we receive changes as well. We don't know if we will ever be perfect, but we are definitely striving to be better."

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MEASUREMENT

The importance of measurement cannot be overstated. Most HR professionals already know that the most important initiatives within an organization have robust measures associated with them.

Yet, many organizations do not dedicate the resources to properly measure their employee demographics or other areas of their diversity and inclusion initiatives.

However, organizations can't afford not to measure. Measurement is key to understanding your workforce, improving inclusion and showing the value of D&I initiatives. The bottom line in any organization is that what gets measured gets done. ■

*Cathy Gallagher-Louisy is director, Knowledge Services at the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. In 2015, the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion and the Canadian Centre for Diversity merged to form the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) – a national charity focused on diversity and inclusion in both places of learning and places of work.*



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# A Cut Above

WORLD-CLASS HR ORGANIZATIONS OUTPERFORM AT LOWER COSTS – HOW ARE THEY DOING IT?

By Heather Hudson

**W**hat kind of department requires 32 per cent fewer full-time employees, delivers services at a 23 per cent lower cost and outperforms their peer group by up to \$10 million in cost savings for a typical large company?

The world-class HR organization.

That's according to research from The Hackett Group Inc., a strategic business advisory and operations improvement consulting firm.

"World-class HR organizations show an unrelenting commitment to operational excellence," said Harry Osle, The Hackett Group's global HR transformation and advisory practice leader.

Osle says a well-designed service delivery model (SDM) focusing on operational excellence is one key to how world-class HR organizations are more agile and operate with a better understanding of business needs. They also turn to HR metrics and analytics to provide better data on the company's human capital and more effectively quantify the value HR brings to the enterprise.

He points out that, by contrast, half of all typical HR organizations do not even measure the result of change initiatives or produce any type of functional scorecard.

"They understand the importance of process optimization and the strategic use of shared services," he said. "They focus intensely on talent management and have a clearer understanding of what skills need to be developed or acquired for their business to succeed. And they use analytics to derive superior business insights from HR data and information, which helps earn them a 'seat at the table' with senior leadership."

One HR organization that turned the heads of The Hackett Group researchers is Canadian juggernaut Rogers Communications. Anne Berend, senior vice-president, Human Resources, Consumer, Customer Experience, Brand and Corporate, says that one of the keys to its success lies in the way it's organized.

"Every senior team has an HR executive embedded in it," she said. "There's a strong business acumen, which we've worked hard to build in the HR business partner community. And our HR strategy is simple and focused on driving improved business performance. I've been [at Rogers] for three years and it's got to be the most exciting place to work in HR."

According to the research, what really sets apart the world-class organizations from their peers is a focus on three core areas.

## UNRELENTING FOCUS ON OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

While components like HR business partners, a common technology platform, shared services, project management offices and centres of excellence tend to be present in world-class organizations, it's the right leadership that sets the tone when it comes to operational excellence.

"You have to have a leader who's committed to proving to the rest of the executive suite that HR is a critical enabler for everything else in the organization," said Osle.

Berend says that's certainly her experience at Rogers. When Guy Laurence joined as president and chief executive officer in 2013, a new energy was infused into the HR organization.

"He declared that every employee would have an accountability template: one page that would capture the accountability of each and every one of us. He did that thinking about operational excellence to help call out what each person is responsible for to avoid shadow organizations and duplication of effort and to ensure that we had everything we needed to run the company and win in the marketplace," she said. "If we're going to be nimble, agile and efficient, we all need to understand what everybody does in the organization."

Operational excellence also includes discipline around process design and optimization. World-class organizations typically feature plans like benefits, compensation and training that are less complex than the average organization.

"They don't just take on work for the sake of doing it. They only do it if it fits with what they're trying to address strategically," said Osle.

World-class models also have fewer people, with a ratio of 1:100 HR professionals to associates. Rogers employs a workforce of 29,000. The HR team makes up 260 of them.

World-class HR organizations also focus on operational excellence using things like employee and manager self-service and HR business partners to drive the more strategic aspects of the work.

A telecommunications company like Rogers has no trouble using smart technology to get the job done, but Berend says it's the fact that HR is embedded in the business.

"In addition to having a full suite of enabled self-service technology, we've got more than 100 HR business partners who aren't sitting in a cordoned-off HR area and are with the lines of business," she said. This combination is an effective way of supporting a fast paced business environment.

Another hallmark of the world-class HR organization is constant evolution, which includes consistently reviewing processes and eliminating activities they don't need and don't add to the work included in their strategic plans. They're always looking at integrating technology.

"They don't bring up systems management without integrating it with HRMS," said Osle.

## MANAGING TALENT STRATEGICALLY

Strategic workforce planning is critical to launching the HR organization up to the next level, says Osle. It involves things like solid recruiting processes, defining competencies and developing skill sets, but it's nothing without a robust measurement system.



**“YOU HAVE TO HAVE A LEADER WHO’S COMMITTED TO CHANGING THE MINDS OF THE REST OF THE EXECUTIVE SUITE THAT HR IS IMPORTANT AND AN ENABLER FOR EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE ORGANIZATION.”**

– HARRY OSLE, GLOBAL HR TRANSFORMATION AND ADVISORY PRACTICE LEADER, THE HACKETT GROUP

“World-class HR organizations make sure their talent management systems include HR analytics,” he said. “It’s key to integrate all of it into the HRMS, which will ensure accurate data on a timely basis and allows you to be very clear about head count, skills and talent, the recruiting pipeline, retirement cycle, turnover and so much more.”

These analytical insights help HR leaders make sound decisions when doing strategic workforce planning. With the right information they can help the organization understand what skills they’ll need two to three years down the road and maintain a good inventory of competencies and skillsets.

At Rogers, a huge focus of HR resources is the talent agenda.

“We want to make sure that we have the right people in the right seats, and that we are building strong leaders and teams,” said Berend.

She says an important distinction here is that the talent process is led by the CEO, not the CHRO.

“It’s important that the CEO piece is the price of entry to great talent process. If the CEO isn’t leading the talent agenda, it’s not

going to do what it needs to do because it won’t get the attention of the line,” she said. “The CEO says this is front and centre for us because if we don’t have great talent, we can’t deliver great business results.”

Laurence is actively involved in head count investment decisions they make to support business strategy, which is something new he’s brought to Rogers.

Another component is a conscious effort to move their “rising top talent” across the organization to build capabilities across all of their business lines. The ultimate goal is to make the company and the HR organization more seamless.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH THE BUSINESS**

HR organizations cannot enhance the performance of the business without working closely with business leaders charged with formulating strategies and drawing up execution plans.

That’s why Rogers’ model of HR business partners “in the field” is once again a strategic win for the company. And they’re not alone: 60 per cent more world-class HR organizations have



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**WORLD-CLASS ORGANIZATIONS FOCUS MORE THAN OTHERS ON WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO MEASURE, AS OPPOSED TO WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO MEASURE.**



leaders involved in processes tying together business and people strategies. More than 70 per cent are proactively engaged by company leadership to partner with them on strategic business opportunities.

Rogers is even making design changes over the next year to bring all lines of business closer together.

“It makes a whole lot of sense. And it’s not just physical changes. We want employees to understand what collaboration and working together means,” said Berend.

And integration doesn’t just apply to people. Measurement and analytics are

increasingly important HR competencies. World-class organizations focus more than others on what is most important to measure, as opposed to what is possible to measure.

The Hackett Group research shows that dramatically more world-class organizations publish HR scorecards with standard performance metrics and publish them quarterly. This emphasis on measuring and frequently communicating performance helps HR build visibility and trust with executive stakeholders throughout the organization.

And finding efficiencies while measuring is always top of mind for world-class organizations.

“If you’re doing performance measurement using specialized software tools, for example, you need to ensure it automatically gets a feed from the HRMS and performance review system. It could loop in individual goals and performance reviews so that data is now part of automation,” said Osle.

## **IS YOUR ORGANIZATION ON THE ROAD TO WORLD-CLASS?**

The research indicates that world-class HR organizations are distinguished by their commitment to operational excellence, their mastery of strategic talent management and their ability to act as true partners to the business. They get more value from investments in technology and process improvement and do better at leveraging key capabilities such as strategic workforce planning and developing the business skills of their staff.

In the bustling hive that is the Rogers HR organization, Berend says they consciously work every day to push the needle even higher.

“Our HR team looks at everything through the lens of the CEO and we only do things that will build a better business. It sounds simple, but we improve internally with the goal of helping the business to be better.” ■

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# Who Cares for the Carers?

## CANADIAN WORKPLACES ARE STARTING TO ADDRESS THE COSTS OF CAREGIVER BURNOUT

By Sarah B. Hood

Canadians are facing an increasingly heavy burden in caring for others due to long-term illness, disability or aging. About 35 per cent of our workforce is now providing care to a family member or friend – not counting normal child-rearing duties or care for temporary illnesses or injuries.

On January 20, 2015, about 150 Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) conference registrants attended an expert panel discussion and workshop on caregiver-friendly workplaces to hear seven unique perspectives on this pressing topic and contribute to a breakout session on applying caregiver-friendly workplace models within their own organization.

The panel, moderated by Moderator Kathryn A. Butler Malette, CHRL, former chief human resources officer for the House of Commons, included a broad spectrum of participants.

Dr. Donna Lero, a professor at the University of Guelph's Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, pointed out that Canadians over the age of 45 saw a 20 per cent increase in caregiving between 2007 and 2012. However, "A growing body of research indicates that there are benefits to employers that do address this issue."

Marcella Daye, a senior policy analyst with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, discussed the legal implications: most Human Rights Codes prohibit discrimination on the basis of family status. "If an employer has a rule that prevents accommodation, that could be a legal problem."

Dr. Jack Watters, vice president of external medical affairs at Pfizer Inc., described the pharmaceutical company's programs, including one that enables e-visits so employees can be virtually present with relatives at doctors' appointments, and GetOld.com,

which offers resources and encourages dialogue. "It just makes sense morally, ethically, culturally, economically."

"You have to look at this an employer and say, 'How can we help?'" said Stephen Shea, managing partner, Talent at Ernst & Young. Shea chaired an Employer Panel for Caregivers convened by the Forum of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors, which has just released *When Work and Caregiving Collide – How Employers Can Support their Employees Who Are Caregivers*, a report highlighting best workplace practices. "I would encourage everybody to think about how to increase the awareness in their own organizations."

Caterina Sanders, vice president of Habanero Consulting Group, says her firm prizes flexibility and employs the self-determination theory of human motivation. "Hire the right people, because then you can step back and let people find good common-sense solutions."

University of Toronto Professor of Psychiatry Dr. Joel Sadavoy is Pencer Chair and Head of Geriatric Psychiatry at Mount Sinai Hospital's Reitman Centre for Alzheimer's Support and Training, which carries out research and trains caregivers to change their own behaviour to reduce stress through the Working CARERS Program, delivered nationally through EAP provider Ceridian.

BMO joined the Working CARERS Program, which is "led by trained professionals who provide training, but also emotional support," said Natalie Scott, managing director, Global Benefits & Recognition for BMO. "We've spent a lot of time really breaking down the stigma of what it means to ask for help. We can't leave it up to the managers alone."

A digest of this panel will be published at a later date. ■

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# Growing the Next Gen

IT'S TIME TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT FILLING THE HR EXPERIENCE GAP

By Lisa Gordon

**B**usy senior HR professionals have a lot on their plates. With teams to lead, deliverables to meet and metrics to measure, it's not surprising that there isn't a lot of time to step back and consider the future of human resources as a profession. But, like many other industries that are facing the same reality, today's HR professionals need to think about who will fill their shoes in the future, and how they will pass along a lifetime of accumulated industry knowledge to the next generation.

Good, full-time HR jobs are hard to come by these days. People aren't retiring at age 65 as they used to, and the economy isn't generating many new jobs in the field. It can be difficult for recent graduates to get their careers rolling. That makes it a good time for

those who have enjoyed successful careers in human resources to think about giving the next generation a hand.

"We have to figure out a way to fill the experience gap," explained Sandra Smith, vice president, Our People and chief HR officer at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket, Ont. "We need to think differently about ways of involving new grads in the industry, even when they don't yet have a job."

In her current role, Smith oversees policies that affect the hospital's 3,000 staff members, 600 physicians and 1,000 volunteers. During her 15-year HR career, she has always tried to look at the big picture. She believes that applying creative talent management and workforce planning solutions to help the next gen can be relatively inexpensive.

## Top 3 tips for nurturing the next gen

- 1 Think creatively – can you implement paid internships or project-specific work for new grads?
- 2 Establish an internal mentoring program, either within HR or expanded to include other line leaders.
- 3 Encourage new grads to join HRPAs and explore the benefits, including networking through a mentorship program.

“Most of the new grads are flexible; they’re usually willing to do a few jobs at once,” said Smith. “Full-time jobs would be best for them; but if they aren’t available, what else can we create? Well, we can look at creating paid internships or project-specific jobs for new grads. Most departments have those foundational projects such as basic recruitment or job evaluations, or other projects for which new grads would have the theoretical foundation. It would give them really good experience, but it would also provide very good value for companies.”

Stephanie Canito knows the value of practical on-the-job experience. While she was enrolled in the human resources program at George Brown College, she completed a co-op placement at Southlake Regional Health Centre in 2010. After graduation, she was offered a job at the hospital as an HR adviser.

“My co-op was a wonderful learning experience. I was exposed to the different disciplines within Southlake’s HR team, and I’ve had the privilege of continuing to learn and grow with them,” said Canito.

While workplace integration is crucial, Smith also believes the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) has an important role to play when it comes to introducing the next gen into the workforce, particularly when facilitating connections between seasoned industry pros and eager young newbies.

“We’re a newer profession; we’re evolving as strategic partners in our organizations,” she said. “As a provincial body under HRPAs, we need to work strategically and consider how to build in mentoring and knowledge transfer.”

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

HRPA has long been a supporter of mentoring within the profession. Its annual conference has traditionally been a good place to connect, but the association has also worked to deliver a more structured networking program for its members. Almost two years ago, HRPAs contracted a Toronto-based firm named MentorCity to provide an online member service that enables mentor/mentee matching. Today, more than 2,600 HRPAs members have participated in the program.

“Each of HRPAs’s 28 chapters has its own MentorCity website,” explained company president Shawn Mintz. “As an example, I can log in and look at profiles of people in my chapter that I would like to connect with, and then I can send them an invitation. It’s like eHarmony but for mentoring.”

Mintz added that MentorCity doesn’t just make the connection; it also guides participants through the program once a match is made.

“We provide all kinds of tools and resources to make it work, from suggestions on how to set up that first meeting to providing

a template mentoring agreement, and guiding them through the process.”

It’s not always about matching a senior mentor with a junior mentee.

“We do peer-to-peer mentoring as well as senior-to-junior mentoring,” said Mintz. “For HRPAs, it’s really about transferring knowledge within the profession and member engagement. Mentoring is one of the top benefits the membership is looking for.”

### GAINING PERSPECTIVE

In addition to making external contacts, there is general agreement on the value of a defined internal mentoring program as well.

As managing director of the Talent and Leadership Development Practice at Knightsbridge Human Capital Solutions in Toronto, Vince Molinaro recommends that companies establish formal mentoring within the human resources department, or with other line leaders, to broaden the perspective of the young HR practitioner and make them more marketable.

“HR has so many discrete and well defined sub-specialties,” said Molinaro. “One of the immediate ideas is providing lateral opportunities for people to broaden their skills. I find that some of the HR practitioners who are really strong in their craft have spent a good chunk of their career in the business, learning what the company does and taking on some of those line roles, to come at it with a very different perspective.”

Canito agrees with him.

“To promote knowledge transfer, the industry should look at establishing HR models within organizations that promote mentorship and coaching, and allow for information sharing and practical exposure,” she said. “I think the one thing the next generation is eager for is the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge.”

Smith added that integrating HR’s next gen is not about reinventing the wheel, although it is necessary to challenge the status quo.

“Many other professions have evolved in this area, and we can learn from them,” she said. “For example, the Ontario government sponsors the Nursing Graduate Guarantee Initiative, a program that links new nursing grads with employers and provides funding for them to gain practical experience that will make them employable. So, when we look at HR as a profession, are there opportunities to lobby for different funding mechanisms to provide our new grads with experience?”

“We need to create a strategy and work for our future,” concluded Smith. “I have been very lucky in my career; I need to give back. Most of us want to do that, I think.” ■

# Personal Liability

WHEN DOES AN EMPLOYEE'S PRIVATE LIFE BECOME AN EMPLOYER'S BUSINESS?

By Sarah B. Hood

Some of the biggest news stories of recent months have involved prominent Canadians whose jobs were put at risk by aspects of their private lives. Toronto's former mayor Rob Ford is a notable example, as is radio host Jian Ghomeshi, dismissed by the CBC following allegations of violent sexual behaviour.

But conflicts between work and private life are no longer limited to those in high-profile jobs. The explosion of social media now puts almost every employee in

the public spotlight. For instance, Sunith Baheerathan, an employee at a Mr. Lube outlet in Vaughan, Ont., was fired in 2013 when he used Twitter to call for drug dealers in the vicinity to drop in on his workplace. (Unfortunately for "@Sunith\_DB8R", the tweet went viral after York Regional Police spotted the message and responded "Awesome! Can we come too?")

Two Toronto firefighters, Matt Bowman and Lawaun Edwards, were fired for tweeting sexist comments; last November, arbitrators

recommended that Edwards should be reinstated, but upheld Bowman's dismissal.

Where should employers draw the line regarding unacceptable behaviour outside the workplace?

"It depends on the position and the type of business that the company is engaged in," said Kristin Taylor, partner with Cassels Brock and Blackwell LLP. "If you have somebody on the manufacturing floor who's posting pictures of himself drunk on weekends, but he comes in sober to work,





RN/Shutterstock

that's okay. But maybe if he's drinking Budweiser and he works for O'Keefe, that's a problem; it all depends on context."

Taylor is seeing "a lot of cases" involving employees venting feelings about an employer or their coworkers on Facebook.

"That kind of posting has an impact on the workplace and can constitute cause for

termination," she said. "Using Facebook to complain about your manager isn't going to protect you any more than if you were in the lunchroom, and it's not good enough to take it down when the damage has been done."

Also damaging, she says, are cases "where employees have said they're off

due to injury and then post themselves drinking in Mexico." Taylor's best advice for employees is never to post anything on social media "that I wouldn't want my mother to read – or my manager."

But issues are not always clear-cut.

"Ideally, you would be able to draw a very bright line between your personal life and your private life," said HR consulting expert Susan Hodkinson, chief operating officer at Crowe Soberman LLP. "However, in the age of social media, there's really no bright line anymore."

For instance, when it comes to expressing political opinions, "If you are a management person and you make it clear that you have very strong political positions, does someone who's reporting to you feel compelled to support the same parties or to hide their own political beliefs? These aren't black-and-white issues; they're very tricky for management," said Hodkinson.

Hodkinson also says that one of the frequent uses of social media is to either praise great service or, more often, criticize poor service. She recalls a situation in which a staff person at a law firm "blasted the poor service they received," unaware that the company they were complaining about was an important client of the firm.

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One area where there is no room for negotiation is “[behaviour] associated with any kind of criminal conduct.” Employers should protect themselves with a policy and an employment agreement stating that “a criminal conviction is cause for a termination,” said Taylor.

“The one thing that has to be considered is that there are different laws that may protect people who have criminal convictions, depending on where they are in Canada,” she said. “In British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, [the criminal offence] has to be specifically related to employment. Ontario does not have that requirement, so you can discriminate according to criminal conviction if they have not been pardoned; I frequently see employers in Ontario go beyond what would be considered work conduct in terms of any kind of criminal behaviour that could affect [the company].”

She cites a decision involving Linamar Corporation of out of Guelph, where an employee was fired for cause after being charged but not convicted with possession of child pornography. The court decided that “the charge in and of itself constituted cause for termination because it reflected and prejudiced Linamar’s interest in that community. That’s probably the leading case in completely off-duty conduct [affecting job status],” said Taylor.

“[For employers seeking to protect themselves,] there are, broadly, three important issues,” said Hodkinson. “The first is to actually have articulated policies with respect to what is acceptable behaviour in the workplace and the use of social media in the workplace. If a particular industry or company has very specific requirements [such as security or confidentiality], they need to be articulated.”

Second, she says, these policies must be extremely clearly communicated throughout the workplace. Finally, there has to be a management commitment to upholding the spirit of those policies.

“All organizations, certainly in Ontario, [have been] required to have policies that prohibit workplace harassment since June of 2010,” said Taylor. “When something is brought to HR’s attention, they need to follow back the rumours, referencing the policy and assuring employees that if there

**“IDEALLY, YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO DRAW A VERY BRIGHT LINE BETWEEN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE AND YOUR PRIVATE LIFE. HOWEVER, IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, THERE’S REALLY NO BRIGHT LINE ANYMORE.”**

– SUSAN HODKINSON, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND HR CONSULTING EXPERT, CROWE SOBERMAN LLP

is a problem, it will be dealt with. You always have to give the person a chance to explain themselves; due process and fairness are absolutely essential.”

Is there a likelihood that former employees will sue for wrongful dismissal?

“Unionized employees can’t sue, but they can bring a grievance,” she said. “Non-unionized employees can always sue for wrongful dismissal, regardless of whether there’s any merit – with the proviso that if

they are found responsible, they are responsible not only for their own legal costs but also for a share of their employer’s.”

Essentially, organizations need to be sure to have written policies that are communicated and understood by their employees.

“The key for small business is to have these policies in place,” said Hodkinson. “There are lots of people who do this work. It’s a small investment; it’s like buying property and casualty insurance.” ■

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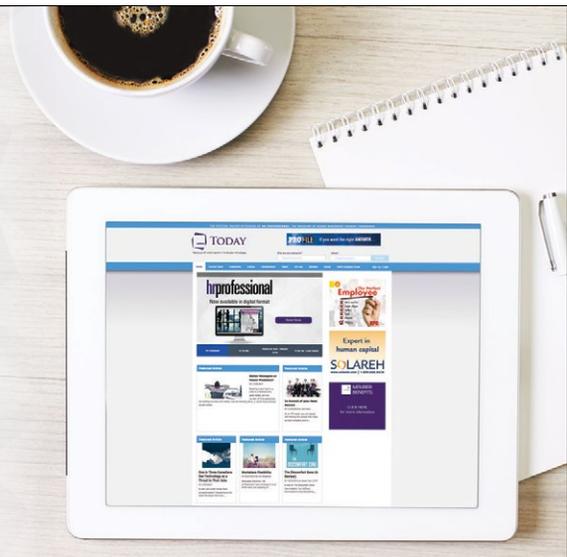


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## HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR ONBOARDING PROCESS?

By William Dann

**P**eople tend to love new starts – a new relationship, a new friend, a move to a new city and, more to the point, a new job.

The importance of a quality orientation for new employees can't be stressed enough. Despite its importance, few organizations and supervisors do this well. The reasons for this are numerous, including the press of today's work and the tendency of supervisors to avoid "insulting" the new employee and so assume that the new employee, given their resume, will know what to do.

Thus, new hires can be disappointed in the onboarding process and come to feel

as if they have been set up to make mistakes that could have been prevented. Organizations consistently fail to take advantage of the "honeymoon" period for new employees – characterized by high motivation, a positive attitude, openness to new experiences, willingness to learn, commitment to produce at a high level and to offer suggestions for how to make things better.

In addition to the usual tour of facilities, introduction to benefits and policies from HR and meeting fellow employees, what should be in the onboarding process to overcome this disillusionment and maintain high commitment?

### **CLEAR EXPECTATIONS**

What are the results or final outcomes the employee needs to produce? Most job descriptions talk about what one should do, and skip describing the expected results. To ensure clarity, define jobs by products as well as activity.

### **WHAT DOES GOOD PERFORMANCE LOOK LIKE?**

Different organizations, managers or supervisors may have differing ideas as to what good performance entails. Communicate with new hires exactly what a top performer in their role looks

# training & development

like, including necessary tasks and final outcomes.

It can also be beneficial to discuss with new hires any workplace behaviours or strategies that are unfavourable to a particular organization so the employee isn't caught off guard in the future. However, keep the conversation as positive and constructive as possible.

## CLARITY ON HOW PERFORMANCE WILL BE MEASURED

What data, if any, will the supervisor be looking at to determine level of performance? Evaluations should be as objective as possible, which means they should be data-driven. Communicate clearly to the new hire how their manager will be assessing their performance.

## AUTHORITY

What decisions will the employee have autonomy on? What decisions require consultation with a manager (at least in the short term)? Informing new employees how much authority they have will empower them to make decisions on their own where they're able to, and gives them more concrete guidelines for when they should be reaching out for assistance from their manager.

## AGREEMENT ON FUTURE ACTIONS

After laying out all of the above, go back through the expectations and assess with the employee what assistance they need to be successful in the short term. Decipher the employee's expectations in terms of training, coaching, consultation and managerial support. Discuss a training schedule and offer support in terms of reviewing draft products and setting up meetings to review progress.

If the new hire feels they have the confidence of the management team as well as support for when they have questions or concerns (and have experienced a culture where it's encouraged for them to voice concerns), their "honeymoon" period should continue well into the future.

How long does the onboarding process take? While there is no definitive answer, it doesn't end until the employee unequivocally understands the concepts above. Managers and HR professionals can check in with the employee periodically to ensure that the onboarding process is progressing as expected.

It is important to establish early on that as a supervisor or HR professional, you view your job as partnering with the new employee for their success. For employees who have previously felt judged or not supported, this can make them feel comfortable and valuable to a new organization and avoid future recruitment requirements. The rewards in terms of motivation, performance and quality of working relationship are huge. ■

*William Dann is president of Professional Growth Systems and author of the book Creating High Performers: 7 Questions to Ask Your Direct Reports.*

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# HR as a True Strategic Business Partner

## MOVING FROM TALK TO ACTION

By Katie O'Brien and Donna Burnett-Vachon

**G**iven the dynamic nature of today's national and global economies and the importance of organizational agility to drive competitive performance, the HR function must be business-oriented and led by CHROs who understand this strategic context and champion related value-add. In this regard, it is interesting to note that at progressively managed Canadian organizations, CHROs are indeed executing business-oriented HR strategies and practical front-line value.

This progressive approach is being driven by a number of factors. First of all, boards of directors and CEOs recognize that human capital is a key enabler of organizational success and performance, and therefore HR must be a top strategic priority. In a recent Conference Board of Canada global survey of CEOs, human capital was identified as the number-one challenge facing organizations. Issues such as succession planning, workforce productivity, employee development and engagement are top of mind to executives as well as HR.

Given the demographic profiles of western countries, tight labour markets for knowledge-intensive and skilled workers and

recognition that workforce productivity is a true strategic differentiator, we are truly entering the emerging talent decade. As this decade progresses, the HR agenda and functions are being recognized for their strategic importance.

Arguably, the 1990s were the "Dot-Com/Technology Decade," culminating in Y2K. The 2000s were the "Finance Decade," coming to an end in the fall of 2008 with the global financial services meltdown. The current decade is the emerging Talent Decade, and business and HR leadership can control how it evolves.





**A CONTEMPORARY HR STRATEGY IS ONE WHERE HR LEADERS ARE BUSINESS LEADERS, WITH A PROVEN MIX OF BOTH HR AND OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE, AND THEY ARE ABLE TO TRANSLATE BUSINESS ISSUES INTO PRACTICAL HR FUNCTIONAL SOLUTIONS.**

A convergence of key strategic factors is driving the talent decade.

**Demographics** – Impending retirements and younger generations entering the workforce are leading to a shift in workforce demographics and related career and workplace expectations.

**Labour markets** – Beyond 2015, retirements accelerate while the number of new employees joining the workforce declines. Additionally, a shortage of critical skills in some sectors and changing regulations for foreign workers are having a significant impact on labour markets, according to research.

**Leadership preferences** – CEOs have a stronger focus on people, engagement and culture.

**Workforce productivity** – Increasingly, businesses are focusing on optimizing the performance of all employees and ensuring greater alignment to business strategy and accountability for organizational performance.

**Overall economy** – A volatile global economy is leading to increased pressure to create nimble and agile organizations.

**HR governance** – There is currently a stronger emphasis on HR and compensation at the board level – both reporting and oversight. In a recent Conference Board study of board practices, many publicly traded companies now have either an HR or Compensation Committee on their boards of directors.

**HR strategy sophistication** – Workforce segmentation and variability of needs are influencing more strategic choices about where to focus HR strategies and resources.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF AN HR BUSINESS PARTNER STRATEGY

It is against this background that CHRO leadership and a true HR business approach is one that is moving beyond debate and pushing forward to execution.

A contemporary HR strategy is one where:

- The CHRO is an active participant on the executive team, and a core part of strategic conversations.
- Key strategic HR priorities (productivity, wellness, diversity, etc.) are an active part of the conversation at the executive table.

- HR leaders are business leaders, with a proven mix of both HR and operational competence, and they are able to translate business issues into practical HR functional solutions.
- The organization truly understands and executes a portfolio-based HR strategy. When it comes to HR strategy, one size no longer fits all.
- HR measurement and analytics are now recognized as core business practices and a priority value for the HR function.
- The HR service delivery model has become more specialized and flexible. HR advisors are allocated to specific business unit clients, supported by centralized shared services such as call centres for high volume service delivery support, and centres of specialized expertise and advice.
- HR strategy is understood and applied at all levels of the organization from the executive level down to front-line managers and employees. Further, all stakeholders have clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities for HR strategy and performance success.
- Organizations that embrace all of the above have a dedicated HR team that provides oversight and inspiration to the human capital agenda.

## CONCLUSION

Do we talk about the finance function needing to be a strategic business partner? Generally not.

It is time for HR to stop talking about being a strategic business partner and simply go and do it. In this day and age, anything less will not be value-added, let alone accepted by executives, line managers and employees. In the emerging talent decade, HR needs to act as a true business partner with HR programs, policies and systems that are aligned and integrated with the business. ■

*Katie O'Brien is manager, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada. Donna Burnett-Vachon is associate director, Leadership and Human Resources Research at The Conference Board of Canada.*

# Are You In or Out?

## THE BENEFITS AND CONSIDERATIONS OF HIRING AN EXTERNAL COACH VERSUS USING INTERNAL COACHING CAPABILITIES

By Sarah McVanel and Christine Burych

Successful companies have learned that to sustain and grow in today's competitive marketplace, they must leverage their most valuable resource: their people. Coaching is one of many ways to do this. To be clear on what coaching is and isn't, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) states that coaching is "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." The focus is not on advice giving or "fixing" the individual (among the ways coaching differs from related fields like training, mentoring, consulting and counselling), but a key vehicle for drawing out the client's wisdom and resources from within.

Organizations leverage coaches for a variety of reasons, such as to help new leaders successfully and expeditiously transition into a new role; prepare high potential employees for more senior positions; and support existing leaders through transition points and change. Too often, coaches are sought after as a way to fix performance issues. Some advice for the leader is to manage the performance of the employee with support from a coach or HR advisor, and use the support of a coach for developmental, not punitive, purposes.

Now, the decision is whether to use internal coaching resources, hire external support or a combination of both. There are benefits and potential drawbacks to both internal and external coaches, but the best choice for a particular employee will depend on the requirements of the organization as well as the individual.

### INTERNAL COACHES

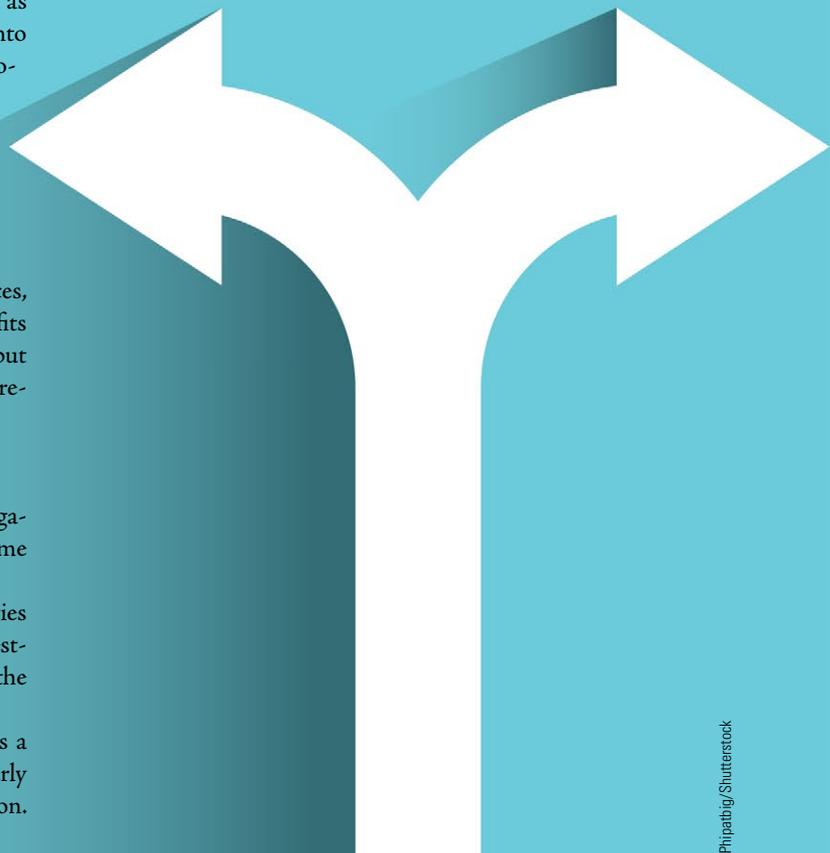
There are many benefits of having internal coaches within organizations, whether it is part of an existing role(s) or a full-time position.

**Getting started** – Pairing coaching with other responsibilities allows organizations to start small in their coaching journey, testing the waters of what works and growing awareness about the virtues of coaching.

**Credibility** – Awareness of organizational culture positions a coach as a knowledgeable and trusted resource; this is particularly helpful for supporting new leaders transition into the organization.

**Accessibility** – A larger pool of people at various levels of the organization may have the opportunity to tap into coaching resources, exposing more people to the benefits of coaching earlier in their career.

**Sustainability** – Brief, focused coaching can be woven into core programs, such as leadership development curriculum, to reinforce key concepts and facilitate authentic learning transfer.





# HR Career Paths: Gerald Wu

## TALENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

By Lisa Kopochinski

**G**erald Wu is truly a global citizen. Born in Hong Kong and educated in the UK from the age of 12, Wu moved to Toronto nearly 20 years ago with a plan to land a human resources position. But things didn't quite work out that way initially.

"I was not able to find an HR position," he said, "so I decided to learn about the banking industry."

Armed with an impressive education that includes a Master of Arts degree in hotel and catering management from the University of Dundee, Scotland; a Master of Science from Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland; and an MBA from the University of Warwick, he began his banking career as a part-time teller with Canada Trust (now TD Canada Trust) before moving up to financial advisor and then manager of customer service within four years. During that time, he was able to build a great deal of fundamental, transferable skills that became critical to his success in HR.

In 2001, he was hired by CIBC in the staffing department to support telephone banking before once again moving up the career ladder to become a senior HR consultant. He then left HR to become a director of integration and organization effectiveness within the technology group in CIBC, leading large, complex transformational organization programs, followed by an opportunity to work in Hong Kong for HSBC as regional manager of the Career Path Program supporting Asia Pacific.

"This was a great experience for me to go back to my hometown and work for a large, international organization. However, I didn't like the lifestyle of Hong Kong so I moved back to Canada two years ago and rejoined CIBC as the director of human resources supporting technology business," said Wu. "I also recently completed my Master of Science degree in health economics, policy and management from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and am currently a chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and a Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL)."

*HR Professional* recently caught up with Wu to talk about why HR, and talent management in particular, is such a passion.



**As CIBC's director of talent management, what are your main areas of responsibility?**

**Gerald Wu:** I am responsible for the development and implementation of CIBC's talent management framework across Canada. The objective of the framework is to attract, develop and retain a strong leadership pipeline to deliver on the company's future strategic goals.

My key tasks include executive recruitment and talent management; providing developmental and career coaching to senior leaders; partnering with HR business partners to support senior leaders in managing talent; and participating in talent discussions and developing talent strategy.

**What was your motivation for choosing an HR career and talent management as a specialty?**

**GW:** People are a critical ingredient for an organization to gain a competitive advantage. I wanted a career where I could apply my business knowledge with my passion for people to help organizations be successful. I believe HR is a critical strategic function that



Sergey Nivens/Shutterstock

# career paths

has tremendous opportunities to make a difference at both the organizational and individual employee level.

As for specializing in talent management, this is a growing field within HR and both an art and science. The work allows me to match an organization's needs with an employee's aspirations and potential.

## What do you love about your job?

**GW:** I love becoming a trusted advisor to leaders in terms of supporting them in meeting their business objectives and personal needs by becoming a coach. I like having an impact on both business and personal success.

## Tells us what a typical day at work looks like.

**GW:** My days normally involve quite a few one-on-one meetings, either providing advice on career development for leaders or conducting interviews for an executive position. I am also involved in a number of strategic initiatives as well as some thinking time, which allows me to plan how we can advance the talent agenda for CIBC.

## What are some of the challenges you experience?

**GW:** I would say my biggest challenges are balancing strategic and day-to-day priorities and how to ensure ownership of talent management. There are a lot of urgent things that need to be done, such as recruiting for an open vacancy or conducting a development conversation. However, at the same time, we want to ensure

we spend enough time thinking about longer term talent management priorities, such as how to enhance the overall capability of our leaders in managing talent as well as mature in our talent management practices. It's about finding the delicate balance between the roles and responsibility of talent management activities. For example, what is HR accountable for vs. the business leaders?

## What skills do you possess that make you a great fit for your position?

**GW:** I am able to connect with a wide variety of people. Coaching, active listening and questioning skills are critical. I also have a strong knowledge of business and the ability to implement ideas.

Ultimately, I would like an HR role where I can provide a strategic impact and help an organization gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

## What advice do you have for others interested in pursuing a career in talent management and for those who are already in the field looking to move up the ladder?

**GW:** For people pursuing a career in talent management, it's important for them to improve their business knowledge to ensure they have a good understanding of the business and the ability to translate those needs into talent needs.

For those wanting to move up the ladder, be sure to improve your strategic and critical thinking capabilities so you have credibility with senior executives. Keep up-to-date with talent management practices, and definitely practice your coaching skills. ■

**rh**

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# MEET THE HR INFLUENCERS: Nan Oldroyd, MA, CHRE



## HARD WORK AND POSITIVE THOUGHTS

By Lisa Gordon

**F**rom the time she was old enough to put on boots, Nan Oldroyd learned the value of hard work.

Growing up on her family's farm near Stratford, Ont., there were many opportunities to learn on the job – and there was certainly no shortage of work to do. So, it's no surprise that Oldroyd brought that energy and adaptability into play when she launched her HR career 23 years ago.

Since then, she's held a series of progressive human resources positions at top companies such as The Home Depot, Tim Hortons and, finally, Loblaw Companies Limited, where she is currently the vice-president of human resources for the market division and emerging business. *HR Professional* spoke to Oldroyd about her rewarding career and how simply believing in herself has helped her maintain focus and overcome obstacles.

### How and when did you decide upon an HR career?

**Nan Oldroyd:** I hadn't considered human resources as a potential career path. In fact, my career assessment in high school indicated

that I should consider the marketing, legal or ministerial fields. From early experience, I realized that I enjoyed leading and inspiring people to achieve business results. I did some career research and human resources piqued my interest.

### What was your first HR job?

**NO:** I was a human resources manager at Costco Wholesale. I had my university degree and my operations experience, but no formal HR training or education. I was hired for my customer service skills and my ability to achieve financial results, so HR was something I learned on the job. In this hands-on environment, I was exposed to all facets of HR.

### Describe your current job.

**NO:** I am the vice-president, Human Resources for the Market and Emerging Business Divisions at Loblaw Companies Limited. I am a business partner to two divisional presidents and their teams. The market division has a food focus, while on the emerging business side, we have wholesale stores and other services. I



# IN A NUTSHELL

- **First job:** Taking care of animals and crops on the farm I grew up on. As soon as I could put boots on, I was put to work!
- **Childhood ambition:** To be a psychologist.
- **Best boss and why:** I've been fortunate enough to have many wonderful bosses! One showed me how to be calm when extreme crisis happens; one taught me to never put my authenticity on a dimmer switch; one taught me how to be courageous even when you stand alone. The best bosses teach life lessons that apply at work and beyond!
- **Current source of inspiration:** The people around me – my team, clients, peers, friends. I know so many smart, talented people who tell it like it is and inspire me. I made an early decision that I would never collect things, but I would always collect people, because they challenge you to think differently and be better at what you do.
- **Best piece of advice:** I had a VP of HR who always said that to manage your career well, you need three things to happen. First, own your career path and deliver great results. Second, have a champion who will speak well of you to others. Third, be open to chance – sometimes, it is simply about being in the right place at the right time.
- **Favourite music:** Everything that my husband plays on his guitar in the evenings for me at home.
- **Last book you read:** *The Why of Work: How Great Leaders Build Abundant Organizations That Win*, by Dave and Wendy Ulrich and Marshall Goldsmith.
- **How do you spend time away from work?** I volunteer on the board of directors for The Stop Community Food Centre ([www.thestop.org](http://www.thestop.org)), and I'm also a member of the School of Retail Management advisory board at Ryerson University. Outside work, I host dinner parties at home with friends or go out to restaurants, art galleries or the theatre; I also enjoy walking around Toronto and exploring its diverse, eclectic neighbourhoods.

**CULTURE IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHANGE, AND IT CAN TRUMP STRATEGY IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE CHANGE STICK. IF A COMPANY'S CULTURE IS NOT OPEN, READY AND WILLING TO SEIZE A CHANGE, IT JUST WON'T HAPPEN.**

have a talented team of more than 40 HR professionals who support 500-plus locations and more than 33,000 employees.

### **What do you love about your job?**

**NO:** Loblaw Companies Limited is a great company with a proud history and a very strong purpose – helping Canadians live life well. The pace is unbelievably fast and that energizes me! The last year has been an exciting one, with the Shopper's Drug Mart acquisition, international expansion of Joe Fresh and SAP rollout. The brilliant and collaborative people here are one of the things I love the most. Helping someone reach their potential or do something that they didn't think they could do is hugely fulfilling, so I take a lot of pride in leading and coaching my colleagues.

### **What are the challenges you experience in your job?**

**NO:** I don't view challenges in the conventional sense; I see them as opportunities, because they are a chance to think about and do things differently. One of our biggest opportunities is planning for, managing through and successfully sustaining change. Culture is the foundation of change, and it can trump strategy in an effort to make change stick. If a company's culture is not open, ready and willing to seize a change, it just won't happen. At Loblaw, we recognize that culture is at the core of our business plan.

### **What's key to leading HR during a difficult time for a client organization?**

**NO:** My quick answer is having the belief that one can succeed, along with resilience and optimism. These characteristics are important for business leaders and essential for HR. They help you believe you can weather the storm, stay focused on what must be achieved, overcome obstacles and be positive while it is happening. It's also important to stay well connected to your head and your heart. When difficult times occur, we often rationalize the situation, but it is also crucial to recognize and understand the emotional impact of corporate decisions. A sense of humour is essential during tough situations, too. You have to be able to laugh at yourself when appropriate.

### **What skills are important for success in HR?**

**NO:** An absolutely essential skill for success in HR is being "stractical." This means having the ability to generate a strategy, but

also being able to make it practical enough for implementation. Another one would be business awareness. You must understand how your business works, why it works that way, who is part of it and what it needs to deliver to whom. The last thing I will mention is having a courageous voice. Sometimes, this means having the courage to stand alone for what's right. If you are stractical and know the business, your courageous voice is even stronger and more convincing when you need to use it.

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

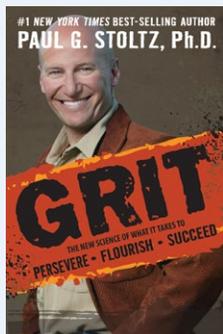
**NO:** The first thing I would say is that it isn't so much a ladder anymore; it is more of a matrix. Organizations are becoming flatter, and people are looking at multiple career paths based on transferrable skills. Growth is often about moving across, as well as moving up. We certainly see that at Loblaw, which is Canada's largest employer. There are so many roles and areas of focus to sink into; it's become a wonderful place to broaden and grow. So, think about what interests you and what would round out your skills. Having a career in HR is as much about height and depth as it is about breadth of experience! Don't forget to get your HR degree or certification. After that, network with other professionals you know or join the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) as a way to establish your network. Finally, jump in – there is no other better learning in HR than to do it!

### **What's the future of HR?**

**NO:** As technology continues to shape our businesses, our role evolves to that of a more proactive strategic partner, a greater critical change agent and a bigger culture champion – all because of the insight that Big Data provides. Technology has the power to turn annual performance reviews into immediate feedback, while recognition programs can become online platforms. Technology will also usher in a new era for accessible training that can be taken anywhere, anytime, in any language; while virtual resumes and interviews will become the norm. Employees will use apps to find out about their work, their total rewards, their schedules and more. I think as HR practitioners, we're on the path to a new and thrilling era which will be great, as long as we keep the "human" in human resources! ■

# OFF THE SHELF

By Alyson Nyiri, CHRL



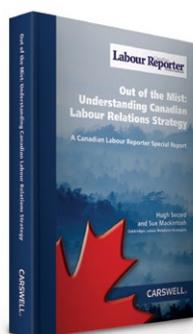
## GRIT: THE NEW SCIENCE OF WHAT IT TAKES TO PERSEVERE, FLOURISH, SUCCEED

Paul G. Stoltz  
Climb Strong Press, 2014

GRIT builds on Stoltz's earlier research on adversity where he developed the Adversity Quotient® (AQ), which measures how effectively we respond to adversity. This score predicts an individual and enterprise's performance, innovation, resilience, agility, energy, problem solving and health. If your AQ is about how you respond to adversity, GRIT is about what it takes to go for it and to make your goals happen, and is defined as our capacity to dig deep, to do whatever it takes – especially struggle, sacrifice, even suffer – to achieve our most worthy goals. GRIT drives organizations, teams and individuals to outlast, outperform and succeed over their competition.

### Talking point

Designed with punchy graphics, visual cues and a pullout map illustrating the full GRIT model, GRIT offers an accessible way to delve into finding the inspiration to reach individual, team or organizational goals.



## OUT OF THE MIST: UNDERSTANDING CANADIAN LABOUR RELATIONS STRATEGY

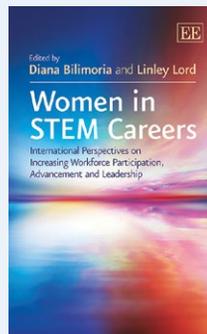
Hugh Secord and Sue Mackintosh  
Carswell, 2014

As the global economy continues to influence the nature of business, a more sophisticated approach and greater focus on managing industrial relations for competitive advantage is critical.

Developing an industrial relations (IR) strategy is more than merely cumulative. The IR strategy involves paying attention to all elements that build a business culture, such as multi-stakeholder culture engagement, union-management culture alignment, management rights and flexibility, employee enablement, wages and benefits to create a force multiplier that goes beyond driving improvements in single areas.

### Talking point

The study and practice of IR has been obscured for some time by the more dominant field of strategic human resources. Despite years of progress in HR, the authors argue, the function has not matured to include the fuller study of all industrial relationships. Can solutions be found? Yes, in a more strategic view of industrial relationships and their power.



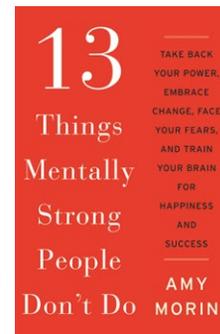
## WOMEN IN STEM CAREERS: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCREASING WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, ADVANCEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Diana Bilimoria and Linley Lord, eds.  
Edward Elgar, 2014

While opportunities exist for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), studies consistently show few women in STEM careers. A substantive collection of research outlines why the proportion of women in these professions remains low and unchanging, largely identifying factors such as lack of role models; assessment, recruitment and promotion systems that favour men; hostile work environments; and extreme job pressures.

### Talking point

Examining why women have not flourished in STEM careers is complex and is best addressed through an analysis of women's career development and the organizational context of the workplace.



## 13 THINGS MENTALLY STRONG PEOPLE DON'T DO

Amy Morin  
Harper Collins, 2015

The fields of positive psychology and neuroscience gave us powerful new ways of thinking and being, radically transforming how we cope and thrive in our lives. To reach our full potential, however, it is equally important to identify our bad habits to root out those thoughts, behaviours and feelings holding us back. To do this, argues Morin, we need to be mentally strong.

We all possess mental strength to a degree and Morin shares 13 habits mentally strong people avoid, and why this gives them the edge to achieve their goals. What is innovative in this book is how mental strength is described. Mental strength, for example, is not synonymous with mental health.

### Talking point

How can mental strength be used to bolster employee engagement or support return-to-work programs? ■

# Bite-sized Learning

## NEXT-GEN TRAINING FOR RAPIDLY CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS

By Jeff Fernandez

The Association for Talent Development (ATD) reports the average time spent training is over 30 hours per year per employee (higher for larger companies), and that's actually five hours *longer* than it was a decade ago. And even when trainers strive for brevity, their aim has been to consolidate content down to a day instead of a week, or reduce to 90 minutes what used to be a three-hour-long training session. That's quite a bloated meal for an audience who'd do better with snack-sized content they can take back and consume on the job.

Simply put: attention spans are dwindling, video consumption is up and technology is turning over so rapidly that traditional L&D training methods can't keep pace. Why? Old school training is expensive, time-consuming and simply can't be produced fast enough to react to a constantly changing work environment. Not only do digital skills need an upgrade every few months, they

need an overhaul every few years: Deloitte recently estimated digital skills have a half-life of just 2.5 years for any given role.

Microlearning – defined as learning in short, digestible, bite-sized units – is next-gen training for an audience seeking curricula that matches their own rapidly evolving tastes: short, necessary and results-oriented. Microlearning is all of these things, and it's beneficial to both learners and trainers in a variety of ways.

For learners, the chunks are easily understood and consumed on a worker's own time, facilitating "just in time" learning (i.e., when a worker needs it, when it's relevant to their work and when they're the most receptive). Because if you need immediate, on-the-job training, you can't interrupt the work for long – which means it's just as viable as a performance aid as it is a training tool.

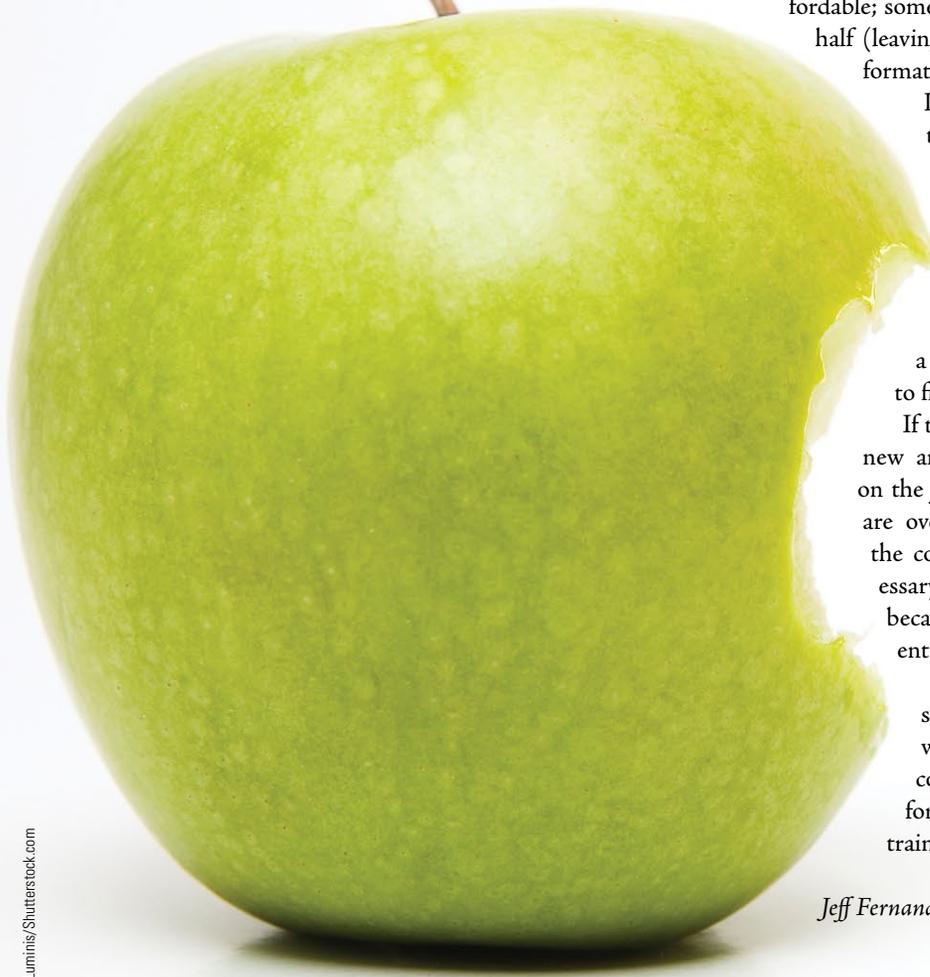
It's also ideal for trainers, because the content is quick to create, manage and distribute – and perhaps most excitingly, far more affordable; some estimates say you can cut your training budget in half (leaving plenty of room for experimenting with different formats and far higher production value).

Last and best of all, microlearning is more effective than traditional models. Distributed practice aids in retention (or, if you think of it in terms of nutrition, aiming to eat fairly well at every meal is far better than a weekend of crash dieting). And while traditional training often yields few long-term takeaways (90 per cent of new skills are lost within a year, research suggests), estimates say a microlearning methodology consistently yields four to five learned takeaways per *course*.

If that's not enough, microlearning works well for both new and veteran workers, since the longer somebody's on the job, the more directed their learning requirements are over someone new (they can orient themselves in the course content, only spending time on what's necessary). Microlearning is also ideal for global training, because small segments are easily translated for different cultures.

With workplace technology moving at the speed of sound, HR professionals need a way to ensure their workforce is at the forefront. Microlearning allows companies to adopt the specific techniques needed for their own organizations to streamline any and all training programs. ■

*Jeff Fernandez is the cofounder and CEO of Grovo.*





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