

HRMA

# PeopleTalk

## Hire Standards: Better Fit

**Are Your Hiring Practices Preventing You From Finding the Right Fit?**

**The Expectation of Excellence:**  
Creating a High-Performance Culture

**A Healthy Cynic's View of Social Media Recruiting**

**Supply and Demand:**  
The Market for Talent



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... Contracts				
... swaps	1,068	1,025	2,874	3,789
... interest				
	25,873	24,175	18,600	22,814
... exchange				
... and options	162,025	7,652	7,524	599
... change contracts,				
... ns	188,966	32,852	28,998	27,202
... racts				
	29,200	17,500	3,209	860
... ns	388,921	159,254	36,547	15
... contracts	418,121	176,754	39,756	875
	32,102	2,562	3,256	2,256
	11,236	25,689	39,456	16,523
... ount	\$ 1,513,188	\$ 642,837	\$ 387,528	\$ 256,855
... llions)				
	Gross amount		Specific allowance	
	2008	2007	2008	2007
... gages	\$ 53,256	\$ 64,025	\$ 16	\$ 3
... umer instalment	38,952	35,065	2	3
... ernment loans	63,488	55,265	160	135
... ed or purchased				
... ements	37,098	31,562	-	-
	192,794	185,917	178	141
... ty under acceptances	12,532	7,336	-	-

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# PeopleTalk

CONTENTS

V18 | N4 | Winter 2012



## cover story

**20** **Hire Standards: Better Fit**  
By Brenda Jacobsen

## association news

- 7** president's message
- 8** editor's message
- 9** contributors

*"You're only as good as the people you hire."*

—Ray Kroc

*"First-rate people hire first-rate people; second-rate people hire third-rate people."*

—Leo Rosten

*"We hire people who want to make the best things in the world."*

—Steve Jobs

## departments

- 11** **upfront and online**  
HRVoice.org, LinkedIn and Twitter highlights
- 12** **people and perspectives**  
What has been the best recruiting experience for your organization?
- 14** **members' corner**  
BC HRMA Conference 2013: Six Tips to Inspire, Influence, Innovate  
By Erin Engstrom
- 16** **leadership**  
Yesterday's Model? (New Modes of Thinking Required)  
By Jennifer Gervés-Keen  
  
The Expectation of Excellence: Creating a High-Performance Culture  
By Eitan Sharir
- 30** **researchVOICE**  
Supply and Demand: The Market for Talent  
By Ian J. Cook, *CHRP*
- 32** **recruitment and retention**  
Are Your Hiring Practices Preventing You From Finding the Right Fit?  
By Karen Zukas
- 34** **training and teambuilding**  
Northern Symposium Highlights New HR Realities  
By Isabelle St-Jean
- 36** **workplace wellness**  
Shifting the Perception of Disability in the Workforce  
By Karen Lai and Mark Gruenheid
- 38** **CHRP update**  
CHRP Growing Brand Recognition  
By Maureen Campbell
- 40** **raising the bar**  
Policy, Property and Privacy: Employer-owned Computers  
By Graeme McFarlane
- 42** **peopletech**  
A Healthy Cynic's View of Social Media Recruiting  
By Dawn Longshaw  
  
Data-Driven Approach Helps Find Employees Who Fit  
By Doug McCann
- 46** **bottom line**  
Skills Mismatch a Growing Concern  
By Jock Finlayson  
  
Maximize the Value of Total Rewards in Your Hiring Process  
By Peter Saulnier, *CHRP* and Vincent Chow
- 50** **voice and vision**  
Lang Knows Her Business (and Yours)  
By Jason McRobbie

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# The Art of the Hire

WELCOME TO OUR WINTER EDITION OF *PeopleTalk*. I HOPE you took the time over the holiday season to enjoy the special time with family and friends. It sometimes seems we get so 'busy' during the year that the holidays serve as a reminder of just how valuable the people in our lives truly are—even for those of us in HR!

As they say, quality time with family and friends is truly 'priceless'. That said, there is a definite price tag attached to finding and keeping quality people in the workplace. As per the cover, "Hire Standards: Better Fit", our focus is fixed on recruitment, one of the base tenets of any strategic human resources plan.

In thinking about this very important element, one could play on words a bit and say "Higher Standards: Better Fit", but I wonder if 'smarter' is more appropriate. I have discussed recruitment processes with many HR professionals and a lot of small business owners over time and it amazes me that there are still so many businesses out there that do not have a robust standard for base recruitment—to say nothing of factoring 'fit' into the equation.

How do you go about ensuring the fit for your organization? The use of psychological testing has had its proponents and opponents over the business cycles, but how does one really measure personality traits? More elementary to the successful fit of any recruit is considering those traits which best define the core character of your business. Especially for critical hires, such as senior leadership and team vacancies, fit is a key component.

Ultimately, finding the right fit is more of an art than a science. There are those who will roll their eyes at this statement and I recognize the challenges to the statement. True, there are demographics to consider, economics to factor and technologies to be advantaged. Nonetheless, there is an art to targeting and ensuring the ongoing success of the right hire. As explored within, that art is most definitely tied to organizational culture. What defines your culture?

Finding out your present state in your demographic base is fundamental; then the challenge is to determine your desired future state. What lies between that future and organizational success are smart hires.

As we all know, while people are an organization's greatest asset; the opposite holds equally true. Every hire carries costs and consequences; each potential hire represents one of the most critical decisions you will make—for better or worse. While some roles are more directly related to business success, all impact your business.

What's your story and how does it impact your recruitment efforts? It's a question worth keeping in mind as you enjoy the articles in this issue.



Mike Cass, CHRP

Mike Cass, CHRP  
President, BC HRMA  
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# Fit for Future Success

WHEN THE RECRUITMENT THEME FOR THIS ISSUE WAS TABLED, it was agreed that "Hire Standards" was a clever play on words. There was more concern about the word 'fit' and absolutely no idea what would anchor our cover at the time. As with every New Year, each issue of *PeopleTalk* brings its learnings and I now have a syllabus of substitutes for 'fit'. None of them sprung to mind when Ziptrek's photos arrived.

It fit. Better yet, it works.

Thanks to Ziptrek's senior zipline guide Victoria Lopez for so obviously loving what she does; it's hard to imagine a more winning employee endorsement. As for the visual metaphor? It takes "Hire Standards: Better Fit" to higher level, and marks the welcome return of a smiling face to the cover of *PeopleTalk*.

Call it recruiting happiness, call it what you will, but, rest assured, the time taken to define 'fit' as it best works for your business is time well spent. The tie between clearly communicated culture, recruitment and success is serious business. As explored in Brenda Jacobsen's cover story (p. 20), while the vocabulary varies, the recruitment results speak volumes for those who live the practice.

As per the regionally-rooted input that fills this issue's People and Perspectives (p. 12), HR may have a greater recruitment toolkit than ever, but the challenges remain. As for those now looking for the perfect picture to post to Facebook, Dawn Longshaw offers "A Healthy Cynic's View of Social Media Recruiting" (p. 42). While the technologies continue to evolve myriad opportunities, the core of recruitment remains intact.

Those organizations whose narrative success is organic set both a benchmark and serve as a bellwether for better business models. As per Eitan Sharir's article, "The Expectation of Excellence" (p. 18) is just the beginning of creating a high-performance culture capable of attracting A-team calibre recruits.

For all of us, there is work to be done, much of it requiring fresh perspective. In other cases, geography and demographics create a distinctly different challenge - finding anyone to work at all. And while Jennifer Gerves-Keen and Jock Finlayson approach the topic with different tones, that "Skills Mismatch (are) a Growing Concern" (p. 46) is a knowing truth. "New Modes of Thinking Are Required" (p. 16)—especially regarding the more outlying regions of the province.

Without a doubt, money matters as much as narrative. Since there are many ways to communicate the value of any offer, Peter Saulnier and Vincent Chow provide a road map to "Maximize the Value of Total Rewards in Your Hiring Process" (p. 48). Moreover, as tracked by HR metrics and explored by Ian Cook, the matter of "Supply and Demand" (p. 30) as it relates to 'time to hire', shows seasonal variance.

How does all of this impact your organization?

Admittedly, there is no silver bullet, no magic formula for recruitment. Regardless—you're likely to find something that fits.



Jason McRobbie

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## PeopleTalk

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## contributors

Each issue of *PeopleTalk* draws upon the HR expertise of our Advisory Council and the editorial acumen of thought-leading professionals. Here are just a few of the contributors whose insights and efforts bring a higher standard to Winter 2012.



### Jennifer Gervès-Keen "Yesterday's Model: New Modes of Thinking Required" p. 16

Jennifer Gervès-Keen, M.A. (jgkonline.com) is a talented facilitator, speaker and professional coach with over 15 years experience helping organizations and individuals become more effective.

Using a variety of delivery methods, Jennifer is highly successful in resolving workplace issues through an organizational development and coaching approach, and helping organizations, teams and individuals become aligned to themselves and their strategic goals. She is the President of the Board of the Canadian Women Voters Congress, and is a Board member of XYBoom, a non-profit dedicated to intergenerational research and action.



### Eitan Sharir "Creating a Culture of Excellence" p. 18

Based in Vancouver, BC, Eitan Sharir is a highly respected business advisor, corporate culture and leadership coach, accomplished keynote speaker and founder of Dynamic Achievement

Group (dynamicachievement.com), an organization committed to corporate leadership excellence. Eitan provides clients with a distinctly unique approach to corporate culture and leadership management, ultimately leading to higher levels of leadership performance. Since 1994, Eitan has worked with thousands of corporate leaders and their respective teams in various industries all over the world. His methodologies and corporate programs are proven to be highly effective, as is evidenced by extraordinary results and countless, appreciative testimonials.



### Maureen Campbell "CHRP Growing Brand Recognition" p. 40

Maureen Campbell, communications manager at CCHRA (cchra.ca), advocates the value of the CHRP designation from a national standpoint by promoting and ensuring the understanding of the designation and of CCHRA, including its values, missions and goals. With more than 15 years in marketing and communications, Maureen has worked in both the public and private sectors in a variety of roles including marketing and communications manager, creative director, webmaster, and graphic designer. Maureen has been writing for *PeopleTalk* since she joined CCHRA in 2011.

### Dawn Longshaw "A Healthy Cynic's View of Social Media" p. 42

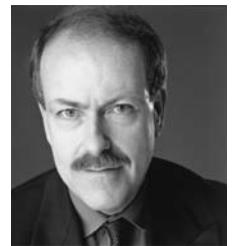
Dawn has been a professional recruiter since 1989, bringing a wealth of sales and marketing experience gained from her prior career to the table at Vertical Bridge (verticalbridge.ca). As a Vancouver-based recruitment consultant, she takes pride in building synergistic long-term relationships; getting to know the nature of her clients' businesses and the issues they will face in order to provide a comprehensive solution in the human capital component necessary for their corporate success. An accomplished speaker, Dawn is active in many professional associations, including as a mentor with the Minerva Foundation for BC Women.



### Jock Finlayson "Skills Mismatch a Growing Concern" p. 46

Jock Finlayson is executive vice president and chief policy officer at the Business Council of British Columbia (bcbc.com), an organization representing 250 large and mid-size BC

companies and affiliated industry associations that together account for approximately one-quarter of all jobs in the province. In this capacity he directs the Council's work on economic, fiscal, tax, environmental, regulatory and human capital issues of interest to the province's business community. Jock previously served as vice president of research at the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. Since 2007, he has served on the Board of Directors of the Bank of Canada.



### Peter Saulnier, CHRP and Vincent Chow "Are You Maximizing Your Total Rewards?" p. 48



Peter (Peter.Saulnier@LoganHR.com) and Vincent (Vincent.Chow@LoganHR.com) are partners with Logan HR Management Inc., a consulting firm specializing in career transition (outplacement), compensation, and performance management. Peter has consulted in many areas of human resources, specializing in career transition, compensation, and organization development. He has consulted in the US, Europe and Asia, and speaks regularly on a wide range of HR and business issues. Vincent has worked in human resources for almost 20 years, with a focus on compensation, career structure development, and performance management. He was previously the Director Total Rewards for a large, diverse North American company which received numerous top employer awards.



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## Team Building Won't Fix the Team

By **Pam Paquet**

Managers commonly seek out “team building” sessions for their staff. They want a fix for low morale, falling productivity, strained working relationships and tension; but team building is not the key to better productivity and team interaction. What is needed is team alignment.

[hrvoice.org/keeping-workers-at-work-managing-absenteeism-in-the-workplace/](http://hrvoice.org/keeping-workers-at-work-managing-absenteeism-in-the-workplace/)



## Employees Are Not Responsible for Theft

By **Robert Smithson**



The B.C. Employment Standards Act restricts the range of permissible payroll deductions. Aside from the so-called statutory deductions (income tax, Canada Pension Plan premiums, and Employment Insurance premiums), the range of permissible deductions is very narrow.

[hrvoice.org/employees-are-not-responsible-for-theft/](http://hrvoice.org/employees-are-not-responsible-for-theft/)

## Managing Smart Phone Use in Today's Workplace: A Five-Step Process (Part One)

By **Robert Wendover**

Employers, large and small, are struggling to understand and navigate the ubiquitous use of mobile devices and worker expectations that being in touch, regardless of the environment, is an inalienable right. Considering that cell phone use, let alone smart phone technology, has only proliferated in the past several years, it is understandable that managers have been taken by surprise with its demand and invasiveness. But the universal question has become, “How to you manage it?”

[hrvoice.org/managing-smart-phone-use-in-todays-workplace-a-five-step-process-part-one/](http://hrvoice.org/managing-smart-phone-use-in-todays-workplace-a-five-step-process-part-one/)



## Fit Wellness into Your Workplace

By **Sue MacPhail**



From the time they drive off in the morning until they set their feet back in their homes, Canadians spend on average 10.5 hours of their day at work or commuting. With so much of an individual's day dedicated to work activities, the workplace has become a critical setting for health promotion.

[hrvoice.org/fit-wellness-into-your-workplace/](http://hrvoice.org/fit-wellness-into-your-workplace/)

## Employee Engagement: A Roadmap

By **David Bator**

Employee participation and performance leads to profits, as demonstrated by companies with high levels of engagement. What follows is a road map to help your organization join their ranks. It's not about annual surveys, reward catalogues, or initiatives that circle engagement but don't deliver. It's about results.

[hrvoice.org/employee-engagement-a-roadmap/](http://hrvoice.org/employee-engagement-a-roadmap/)



## BC HRMA LinkedIn Weighs In... On Applicant Tracking Systems

**Eileen Peterson asks:** *Are we really facing a huge talent gap, or are Applicant Tracking Systems filtering out otherwise qualified candidates? What are your thoughts?*

I admit I was a fan of using an ATS, but now that I'm on the other end of the job search I have growing doubts that its use produced the best candidate pool. After applying for more than 20 HR roles for which I am well qualified without a single call from a prospective employer, I'm beginning to wonder. This process has made me curious about the prevailing wisdom that we have a bona fide talent gap and a high rate of unemployment at the same time that we've seen the increasing use of ATSs. Coincidence?

**Barb Schimnowsky responds:** The nuances you can pick up from actually reading a candidate's cover letter and resume can never be replaced by an ATS. I've heard from many people who apply for positions with organizations that use these and they never get a call...I shake my head.

**Kellie Auld responds:** I must admit that I am not a huge fan of ATS for the inflexibility... For the most part, applicants are not able to make contact with a 'human' to talk to with respect to how you may qualify for a position and as noted in the article, even if you do get through to someone, you don't have the opportunity for a real conversation about your credentials because if the ATS screened you out, the recruiter (while acknowledging you have the skills) will just refer back to the information from the computer generated report.

**Edward Wu responds:** The main issue I see with ATS is not only can it filter people out of contention for a job, it can also filter in people who may not be necessarily qualified. There is some evidence that some people know or were taught to place certain keywords into their resumes for ATS to pickup on, and thus the system will screen the person in because ATS has picked up on those keywords.

## Top BC HRMA Tweets

Questions about your CHRP Recertification Log? Our new recertification resources can help: [ht.ly/fwzau](http://ht.ly/fwzau)

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MT @Forbes: best, non-awkward ways to start/end networking conversations [bit.ly/10wCxG5](http://bit.ly/10wCxG5)

## Q: What have you found to be the most effective means of recruitment for organizations today?"

Kael Campbell



president,  
Red Seal Recruiting Ltd

*A BC HRMA member since 2000, Kael Campbell is the President of Red Seal Recruiting Solutions Ltd, a leading trades and industrial management recruiting employment agency in Victoria. Red Seal services clients across Canada, including the mining, utility, manufacturing, construction and industrial sectors. Kael's bachelor in business administration from Simon Fraser University is complemented by a concentration in HR management and a specialization in social psychology.*

**A:** According to Charles Duhigg, bestselling author of *The Power of Habit*, we need to change our habits if we want to change our organizations. For recruiters this means developing habits that sustain recruiting. In order for a habit to be formed we need a cue, routine and reward. Logging in to Facebook is one such habit: cued by email alerts or a smart phones vibrating, we routinely look at friends posts and are rewarded with funny posts or photos.

At Red Seal our most successful recruiting tool is our email job alerts. We use them to help candidates form a new habit. We provide candidates a steady stream of interesting job ads and updates through email marketing; each email serves as a cue. Emails are sent on a regular basis to make opening the emails, and visiting our website or Facebook page routine. The reward for candidates? Regular updates and information about jobs, the ability to share exciting opportunities with colleges', alumni and co-workers and the ultimate reward—the potential of a new career.

Jennifer Billingsley, CHRP



HR consultant,  
Thompson Rivers University

*An HR consultant for Thompson Rivers University, Jennifer Billingsley, CHRP has worked in both public and private sectors, giving her a broad perspective of different business approaches. Having tied for the highest score on the NPPA exam, Jennifer also works with various students and groups to prepare the practitioners of tomorrow and gain fresh insight. Jennifer also serves as the communications chair for BC HRMA's Central Interior Advisory Council.*

**A:** Effective recruitment begins with organizations knowing what their needs are. First, identify the gap that exists and understand what skills and abilities are required. Second, create an appropriate role description. Third, identify who your ideal candidate may be. For example, is it a seasoned professional or someone who is just starting in that field?

To ensure fit for the organization the candidate should share the company's values. Once you have identified who the ideal candidate is, create an advertisement that will speak to those specific applicants, highlighting those similar values, and the skills and abilities needed. Advertise where this pool of candidates will likely be looking. For example, if you are hiring a professor, academic journals for the area of study will likely be successful.

Recruitment can often be a knee jerk reaction, which is a costly mistake. When organizations are thoughtful through this process, they will see higher levels of success.

Nick Melemenis



labour relations specialist,  
Sun-Rype Products

*As labour relations specialist for Sun-Rype Products in Kelowna, Nick Melemenis' focus is primarily on grievance management, attendance management and recruitment. Currently sitting on the BC HRMA Souther Interior Advisory Council, Nick also assists the Central Okanagan Foundation with HR projects. Dynamic and personable, he secured his business degree in human resources from the Okanagan School of Business, along with a diploma in Hotel Management from SAIT—and is currently working on the CHRP designation.*

**A:** The most effective means of recruitment for organizations today includes endorsements and recommendations—along with the power of technology. This process of recruiting may be an age old process, but in today's world this it has exploded. The recruitment process can extend much further beyond those you work with or those you see in the industry. Technology has made this process much more efficient and streamlined.

Many positions at Sun-Rype Products have been filled using both: through industry endorsements or internal recommendations, whether it was word of mouth, or through a leading industry technological tool such as LinkedIn.

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## Barb Schimnowsky



managing director,  
WestView Executive Search Ltd.

*Barb Schimnowsky is a certified management consultant and managing director of WestView Executive Search Ltd. in Vancouver. With over 20 years experience in executive search and recruitment, Barb has assisted many organizations by recruiting top-quality candidates across a broad spectrum of industries and functions. A BC HRMA member and active contributor to her profession, Barb's volunteerism has ranged from authoring the HR Guide For Community Sport for 2010 Legacies Now to ongoing support of the major gifts committee for Canuck Place Children's Hospice.*

**A:** Depending on the position you're recruiting, social media can be very effective in identifying candidates, but not necessarily the best candidates. Profiles are often dated, costs can be high, and you can be perceived as trying to poach staff.

When hiring executive, senior management, or skilled professionals, identifying passive candidates is still the most effective method. The in-depth research identifying sources and the proactive and personal contact with individuals has proven time and again that it works.

This is why an employee referral program is also a powerful recruitment tool. Individuals familiar with your organization identify top prospects not in a job-search mode, assess their suitability to your culture, and personally sell them on the opportunity. Augment your employee referral program with external resources and you'll have a recruitment process that will yield high quality, high impact hires.

## Sabrina Mowbray, CHRP



corporate HR coordinator,  
Sinclair Group Forest Products Ltd.

*Sabrina Mowbray brings energy to all she does, including her role with Sinclair Group Forest Products in Prince George where her focus is on aligning the 50 year old company's business strategy with the history and values of the organization. Always playing an active role within the community, Sabrina recently joined the Community Employer Partnership board in order to work towards attracting, retaining and engaging talent in the North—and serves as post-secondary liaison and mentoring program co-ordinator for the BC HRMA Northern Advisory Council.*

**A:** Recruitment in today's world must be approached in a holistic manner. It is important to fully define and understand the needs of the organization, as well as its culture and values. In addition to having the required technical skills and experience, potential employees must have the capacity to be fully engaged and to contribute positively to our team.

A proactive focus is essential. Recruitment needs to be continuous—an ongoing process of networking, building relationships and creating a talent pool for future needs. I strive to understand what it is that motivates the desired candidates and target my efforts.

Embracing today's multicultural and multi-generational labour market, I integrate everything from traditional methods to social media. Working with post-secondary institutions and participating in job fairs, I collaborate with other employers and community organizations with complimentary strategies and initiatives.

# BC HRMA Conference 2013: Six Tips to Inspire, Influence, Innovate

By Erin Engstrom

"Inspire. Influence. Innovate."

For over half a century, visionaries, economists, business leaders and HR professionals have gathered to create a singular experience at the largest HR event in Western Canada.

With the new year upon us, the 51st Annual BC HRMA Conference is just around the corner on May 1-2, 2013 in Vancouver. For the past year, the various organizing committees, headed by conference chair Nic Tsangarakis, have looked at what makes the experience such an ongoing success for so many. Unsurprisingly, people play a big part.

Ultimately, the annual BC HRMA conference is all about experiencing 'a-ha moments': exploring new perspectives on timely and relevant topics, learning about the latest industry advancements and sharing the camaraderie of people who share your passions and interests.

As conference/event manager for BC HRMA, I know how much energy has been poured into the creation of this year's roster of speakers and schedule of events, and what value it offers for those who plan to attend—even more so for those who take advantage of the early-bird registration.

While I look forward to sharing more details of Conference 2013, in the meantime I encourage you to visit [bchrma.org/conf2013](http://bchrma.org/conf2013) — and stay tuned to [www.HRVoice.org](http://www.HRVoice.org) for the Conference Insider blog with regular updates. If you have not already, you can check out this year's outstanding plenary presenters highlighted in this issue of *PeopleTalk's* centre-spread.

For the moment though, I would like to share a few tips on how to make the most of your conference experience:

## 1. Put Conference Into Action

Enter conference with a mindset primarily towards action, not ideas.

When you get home set up an action plan with a timeline and milestones outlining when and how you will take steps to act on specific ideas and information.

## 2. Plan Ahead: Enhance the Investment

Create a short list of hot topics that are most important to you and your team. What are you trying to create, bring to life or solve? Having this direction with help keep you focused and engaged at conference.

Attending a conference is a big investment of time and money—so do your homework. Research the speakers, get involved in related social media activities, plan networking events, and make a list of people or suppliers that you want to connect with.

Think about what you want to learn and take away, and plan your agenda accordingly.

## 3. Branch Out: Network Effectively

Attending conferences with colleagues or old friends is great—just don't fall into easy pattern of spending all of your time with them. Make a conscious effort to meet new people and make the most of your time.

Many find it difficult to talk to strangers, but rest assured, people come to Conference to connect with new faces and ideas alike. Make a habit of introducing yourself to the people surrounding you whenever you sit down. Just remember to be an active listener. Be focused, let go of assumptions and balance the amount of time spent in sessions and networking.

Since BC HRMA Conference 2013 has its very own Twitter hashtag (#HRMA2013), you can begin to connect well beforehand. Social media and online discussions are great ways to connect with new and old contacts in preparation for conference.

Moreover, choose sessions that introduce you to new ideas and challenge your thinking rather than attending those where you feel most comfortable; seeking validation is no substitute for allowing yourself to be introduced to new or different practices and perspectives.

## 4. Avoid Conference Overload

There is a lot of information and inspiration coming your way. Keep your mind

fresh by taking care of your body and mind. Remember to eat and drink, rest, stretch, wear comfortable shoes and dress in layers.

At the end of each session, take a few minutes to reflect and make a note of your top takeaways. Note taking should be short and simple. Record key notes, ideas or quotes that resonate with you or motivate you to action—just don't try to record the exact words of the speaker.

## 5. Be an HR Ambassador

Remember, not everyone gets the opportunity to attend. Ask colleagues about their greatest challenges and specific needs, then actively seek information on their behalf at Conference 2013. This will not only help you be more engaged and purposeful at conference, but provide you with plenty of 'takeaway' value to share.

And while you are at Conference, keep that sharing in mind. Be a good contact – give ideas, suggestions and referrals freely, as this adds to everyone's experience.

## 6. Own YOUR Conference Experience

It all comes down to this: be an active participant in your own learning experience. Ask questions, have fun and actively pursue your personal goals and objectives. Determine how to make the best use of your time (tradeshow, networking events, sessions, etc.), and remember, the most valuable information or connections may come outside of scheduled sessions, so be flexible.

This is your Conference. The more effort you put into your experience, the greater your rewards.

I hope to see you in Vancouver for BC HRMA's 51st Annual Conference & Tradeshow, May 1-2, 2013. ☛

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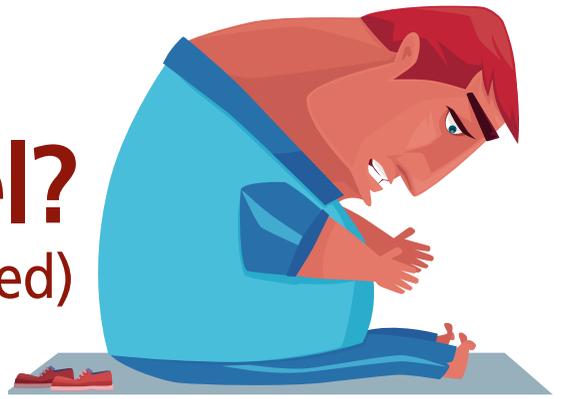
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# Yesterday's Model? (New Modes of Thinking Required)

By Jennifer Gervès-Keen



**O**UR ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS are not working; as HR professionals we should not be surprised—merely prepared. What does organizational change have to do with effective recruitment and retention? Everything.

We are hearing constantly about our current/upcoming labour shortage, and even though we are not yet experiencing the large retirement wave as initially expected, the challenges facing quality, relevant recruitment practices and employee retention issues are greater than ever.

## Recruiting Tomorrow Today

A perfect example of this is Northern BC, a region which is, and will be, a key revenue generator for this province over the next five years and beyond. Prince George alone will need 20,000 people added to their workforce within the next two years to keep up with employer demand.

The next two years is not long-term planning—it's now.

Another example is our resource sector. "Even if we employ all the people who are employable in Canada we're still going to be very short (on) workers", commented David Bazowski, chair, BC Task Force: Mineral Exploration, Mining, Stone, Sand & Gravel in his recent report delivered to the mining industry in BC.

The Mining Industry Human Resources Council report went further, suggesting that, "Just as mines have 25-year mining plans, they should also have 25-year HR plans".

## Adapting to What Matters Now

In Gary Hamel's thought-provoking book, *What Matters Now*, he states: "We live in a world that seems to be all punctuation and no equilibrium, where the future is less and less an extrapolation of the past. Change is multifaceted, relentless, seditious, and occasionally shocking. In the maelstrom, long-lived political dynasties, venerable institutions, and hundred-year-old business models are all at risk".

Our marketplace, our HR landscape, even our values, have been subjected to major change over the past five years—and it is just the beginning of even greater change. Organizations are becoming divided, not necessarily generationally, but by adaptability.

There are those who desire and welcome change, and those who do not.

## Yesterday's Model vs. Today's Challenges

"Job-hopping" is on the rise, even within our relatively flat economy; knowledge transfer is becoming a key concern for organizations, and succession planning is becoming very challenging as the younger members of the workforce do not want to rise to the top under the current paths available to them.

**"Our organizations need to be adaptable"**

How do we work within the context of these challenges as HR professionals so that there will actually be qualified, capable and motivated people to run our organizations in 10, 20 or 30 years' time?

Many of the younger employees being considered for "grooming" are simply not interested in either climbing the rungs, let alone taking the reins. By and large, they are not seeing happy, balanced, family-friendly people at the top of the proverbial ladder—and the role models they are looking for don't seem to exist in our current structures.

We have respected businesses and institutions working within antiquated models and anachronistic mindsets that simply cannot respond to the force and flux of current human resources needs; how can they be effective in retaining a productive employee base?

## Asking Questions, Assessing Resilience

Employers need to be asking themselves some hard questions. How can we effectively recruit qualified employees through limited online systems? Can we find a productive, time-effective system that lets us sort through all those resumes by hand? How do we train our hiring staff to look beyond immigrant education, look beyond age groups, demographics or any other subjective trait, and actually evaluate someone based solely on their skills and values? How do we discover someone's true values through an interview process?

Moreover, with the average job length now dwindled to 18-24 months, how effective are the opportunities we offer? If an organization can't offer development or promotion due to the structure or nature of the business, it is going to have a tough time competing for top talent.

As opposed to looking at potential employees by age group or education, employers need to be taking a good look at individual's values and attitudes to see how resilient (or resistant) they are to constantly changing benchmarks, goal posts and long-term visions; what is sought is that built-in flexibility that provides competitive edge in today's market.

## Adaptive Leadership Required

Our organizations need to be adaptable in ways that they may have never experienced before; many are simply not equipped as yet. In order to successfully adapt, we need to be prepared to take risks, factor feedback and forge ahead fully aware that a failure to do otherwise is no longer an option. Troublingly, the deep cultural and organizational shifts that need to happen are being practiced by few, and while grassroots innovations do occur, the most critical support is from the top.

Innovative and flexible leadership is critical; our organizational leaders need to show the way by allowing people to try

– and potentially fail – new ways of working, and by visibly showing their support to those who are pushing innovation within their organizations.

The demographic shifts that Canadian society is currently experiencing impact much more than our potential retirement numbers, or the diversity of our workforce. People want trust, they want transparency, and they want a bigger say, whether it's in our political institutions, within their work environment, or simply through online comments or debate.

### Youth, Immigrants and First Nations

There are three key areas, from a recruitment perspective, that are crucial to BC's future economic success, and those are our youth, our immigrant population, and our First Nations communities.

There are under-utilized immigrants in our province – and across our country – who came here after being sold on the Canadian business model. Not many are even working in the industry they are trained in, let alone at an equivalent level based on their past experience.

There are young people, apparently the most anxious age group in Canada, many of who are well-educated, yet un-or-under-employed, and who still, for the most part, show no desire to move out of the Lower Mainland.

Then, there are the First Nations communities facing unemployment rates more than double those in non-Aboriginal communities according to BC Stats. Moreover, their under-25 population in Canada is growing at triple the rate of the Canadian non-Aboriginal demographic.

There is opportunity.

### Good Enough... Will Not Be

For the organizations that take an honest look at the challenges facing them now and in the years to come, there are amazing opportunities to build successful, vibrant and exciting professional communities that will be able to dance with (not around) whatever comes their way.

For all the other organizations who believe that “the way we've always done it” is good enough, best of luck. 🎰

Jennifer Gervès-Keen, M.A. (jgkonline.com) is a talented facilitator, speaker and professional coach with over 15 years experience helping organizations and individuals.

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# The Expectation of Excellence: Creating a High-Performance Culture

By Eitan Sharir

**A**S A LEADER, YOU DON'T HEAD to work every day intending to achieve mediocre results. Nonetheless, are you inadvertently setting mediocre expectations through your actions or focus? Unfortunately, this is a trap that snags many organizational and business leaders.

### Are You Empowering Low Performance?

As any teacher can tell you, it's easy to focus on the problem children in the classroom, while the high performers go unnoticed. If you work in management or human resources, you know that low performers are a problem. While they have lower productivity and performance, low performers tend to know how to do just enough to not get fired.

What you may not know is the overall power and negative impact these low performers truly have over the rest of the organization. In school, high performing students don't have many other options; they can't leave, so they just quietly progress from grade to grade. However, in the competitive corporate world, high performers have options. They don't have to stick around, and absent the attention, rewards and opportunities they deserve, they'll simply leave and find their fit elsewhere. Troublingly, elsewhere might very well mean the competition. So while you're trying to fix your problem employees, your competitors could be gathering up your best and brightest to their benefit.

Furthermore, low performers can pull your average performers down to their level. Although your intention in coaching and mentoring low performers is to move your organization to higher levels of performance, you could, in fact, be accomplishing the opposite. The average performers will view the inequality of work/attention between themselves and the low performers as unfair and will eventually begin to reduce their efforts to achieve. The result: lower overall performance for the organization.

When advising companies on how to optimize their corporate culture and

improve organizational performance, I have seen many clients fall into this trap again and again, but I've also found some ways to mitigate its impact. Drawing on that experience, let's examine the trap more closely and explore what leaders and managers can do about it.

### The Employee Performance Mix

Have you stepped back and taken the time to analyze who in your organization would fall into the high performer, average performer and low performer categories? You might be surprised to find that typically 80 per cent of employees tend to be average; only 10 per cent are high performers and 10 per cent are low performers.

**“create a mindset that will engage and align every employee”**

Considering the impact of low performers, this breakdown may surprise you, but this is truly a case where the squeaky wheel gets the oil. Because low performers stand out due to their problem behaviour, they seem to take up a larger percentage of your organization. While you focus your attention on moving such a low percentage of employees from low to average performance, you may be inadvertently lowering the perception of corporate expectation.

In his *Leadership with a Conscience* magazine article, “Pulling the Plug on Low Performers”, Quint Studernot writes:

“Managers unwittingly align entire departments, entire companies, around (low performers) and spend an estimated 80 per cent of their supervisory time on them. You dread working with them, so you give everything to your high performers, which overloads them and creates an unfair distribution of work. Or, you keep devoting attention to them believing they'll change, perhaps putting them on committees to try

to engage them. It rarely works. Meanwhile, you alienate your good people and, eventually, find yourself in a situation where you can't keep high performers.”

### Setting an Expectation of Excellence

Instead of focusing leadership attention on developing low performers, an expectation of excellence should be set organization-wide. High performers need to be rewarded, mentored and recognized, and time and attention should be focused on moving your average performers into the high performance category.

Considering that 80-90 per cent of your employees tend to be average performers, imagine the impact on culture, performance and productivity if you were able to move 20 per cent of these employees into the high performance category. Consider that while the make up of high performance organizations might be split between 40 per cent high performers and 60 per cent average performers, everyone is in the process of moving towards higher performance.

In this scenario, the organization is actually setting the expectation that 80-90 per cent of the organization is operating at a level of excellence, and those who aren't are expected to be in the process of moving up.

### The 30-60-10 Principle: Purging Low Performance

When working with clients on performance improvement, I often recommend to their management that they adopt the 30-60-10 principle to achieve the highest return on employee investment. Thirty per cent of the time is spent with the high performers, where the return on investment for every per cent in improvement is the highest. Sixty per cent of the time is spent with the average performers, with the main focus on coaching, leading and supporting them to operate at the high performance levels. Only 10 per cent of the time is spent with the low performers.

In truth, there is no place for low performers when you set an expectation for excellence in an organization. With an expectation of excellence, every employee

is expected to be fully engaged, focused and inspired by a higher purpose. In these environments, low performers simply either improve or leave.

Thus there is no room left for mitigating poor performance either. Managers need to stop overloading their high performers with work the low performers can't handle; low performers should no longer be rewarded with time and attention. They either embrace the new culture of excellence and improve their performance, choose to leave on their own, or are phased out through employment review and termination processes.

By phasing out low performers who don't improve:

1. You will boost morale by following through on enforcing fairness in the workplace.
2. You will have room to attract new, high performing employees.
3. Your overall results will improve.

### Developing A Culture of Excellence

The key to moving your organization from the status quo to an expectation of excellence is your corporate culture. When you build a corporate culture of excellence, you create organizational capacity and a structure that empowers, focuses and engages employees. You stop wasting a tremendous amount of time and money nurturing an outmoded culture focused on problem solving. Instead, you equip your teams with the right mindset and skills necessary to focus on creating the desired results. Moreover, organizations need to help employees develop the flexibility and resilience to deal with change, challenge and uncertainty that may arise along the way.

By implementing a three-phase process, you can start building a new culture of excellence, creating an organization where your employees feel empowered, inspired and motivated.

### Phase 1: Mindset of Excellence

The first step is to create a mindset that will engage and align every employee with your vision, mission and values, and leave them speaking a common language of excellence. You will build a new capacity for growth. Your employees will think in more creative and innovate ways, and will be more able to deal with challenges and change.

### Phase 2: Strategies for Excellence

With the new mindset of excellence in place, your teams will be ready to focus on achieving their specific goals and plans for performance excellence. This phase is all about growth—building the skills and competencies required to grow the business.

### Phase 3: Sustaining Excellence

When the first two phases are complete, and you have a strong collective mindset of excellence in place and alignment around performance goals, it's time to focus on developing strong leadership to ensure that the new mindset and performance skills learned are sustainable and simply become the way things are done. This is a critical step often missed in organizations—but is required to ensure that employees don't revert back to old habits.

### Changing Expectations Key to High Performance Culture

For those doubting the impact of culture on both existing and potential employees, consider Google, a company that has crafted its identity on culture from the start, and at one point was fielding 3,000 new job applications every day. Why? The reason Google has been able to attract so many top level people is that, for so many years in a row, they were awarded for having the best workplace culture. Work hard, play hard. Google has made it work with great conditions and a very high level of expectations wherein excellence is quite simply expected.

Changing your expectations from mediocrity to excellence is essential to creating a culture of high performance. The best news is that, once your new culture of excellence is in place, your organization functions like a well-oiled machine. Your teams are motivated to create a vision that is meaningful and inspiring and also one that aligns with their own personal aspirations. They are able to deal with change, uncertainty and adversity, and they interact and collaborate to make things happen. Best of all, you have created an organization that is positioned for long-lasting success and prosperity. 

Eitan Sharir is a Vancouver, BC-based corporate culture consultant, leadership coach, and founder of Dynamic Achievement Group (dynamicachievement.com).



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# Hire Standards Better Fit

By **Brenda Jacobsen**

**“What we really need are outgoing, positive, engaging individuals that love what we do.”**

It's the age of change, and the workplace is shifting. The way we did business yesterday has been radically transformed by the speed of mobile data. This evolving workplace is set against a wobbling global financial landscape, focused on rebalance and restructure.

Today, recruiting the right leaders to navigate is critical to advance companies through this paradigm shift. Team players too must be in synchronicity. Recruiters must find the right fit, aligning potential candidates with the company's core culture and creating workplaces where employees feel engaged and inspired.

While top employers are successful at attracting, retaining and enjoying the workforce cream that rises to the top, economics has played a key role in the dynamics with more candidates with deep skills and experience vying for fewer jobs.



S

Victoria Lopez, senior zipline guide,  
Ziptrek Ecotours

## B.C.'s Big Picture: Top Talent, Tough Times

Andrew d'Eça, vice president, business development and general manager of Angus One Professional Recruitment, monitors trends and regularly screens candidates himself. He says that he hasn't witnessed a hiring surplus like this in more than a decade.



Andrew d'Eça, Angus One

Typically, Angus One utilizes a larger temp pool as assignments quickly turn into regular jobs for applicants; however, their temp pool is now more nimble.

**"We're a good indicator of the economy."**

"The candidate quality is now much higher. Normally, I meet with the candidates after to determine which hire is going to be a good culture fit. These days, all of the candidates are outstanding," says d'Eça.

"We went from having too many jobs and not enough people to too many people and not enough jobs. If you look at the B.C. economy, 80 to 85 per cent is small business, and small business is what struggles and hurts the most during tough economic times," says d'Eça.

He says that "quite simply, governments are spending less while businesses have had to restructure themselves to find other ways to run leaner."

"Some companies have hiring freezes or have doubled up on positions. They've simply taken that work and re-allocated it to two or three other people. We've seen a lot of people take early retirement. Businesses that have been for sale and have been up and down in the acquisition market are just handing out severances and early retirement packages like crazy," d'Eça says.

"The fact of the matter is that B.C. businesses, overall, are doing less economy. They've scaled back. On the contrary, we have an office in Calgary that's absolutely booming. It's a really different world in Alberta with the oil sands and the oil and gas industry," says d'Eça.

Regardless, d'Eça believes B.C. is on the up economically. "I've seen very mild and moderate requests for orders and the number of active employees we would have in the field. So we're a good indicator of the economy because we're one of the first fingers on the pulse. When things start to turn around, we feel it early. When things are going sour, we tend to be on the tail end of that."

### Culture Connection Key to Recruitment Success

Despite the uncertain economy, top employers such as lululemon athletica remain strong and continue to attract a steady stream of applicants, nearly 10,000 people per week.

Stephanie Corker, head of recruitment is part of lululemon athletica's global talent acquisition engine which spans San Francisco, Hong Kong, Australia—and naturally, Vancouver.

According to Corker, having good staff and the right fit has made a huge difference in helping them ride the recession. "When we think of going into new markets and our growth, we think of our people first. If we don't have the right people, we will slow down entering those markets."

She believes that economic and environmental factors cause people to really pause and ask: "What does it mean to have a job now and who do I want to be associated with?"

"I think to lululemon athletica's benefit, we really care that we're hiring people who are up for the task of taking on their health, the environment and the economy. Personal responsibility is the heartbeat of lululemon athletica. Our culture is one of greatness, innovation, and choice," says Corker.



Stephanie Corker, lululemon athletica

"The attributes that would make great hires when we started 13 years ago remain the same today. We're up to elevating the world from mediocrity to greatness and we want people that live great lives already," Corker says. "And there's a scale at which they're great. We've been blessed. Some people are saving Africa and other people are making a dent in what it means to be a mom. What matters most is that we're finding people who want to show up and make their mark on the world."

**"We want people that live great lives already."**

Corker translates 'showing up' into being responsible for your career, including the contribution you make in the office and how you relate outside in the world.

"When we hire people who are up for making the biggest contribution they can, the results have been phenomenal. People are inspired. And the work gets done in a fun, efficient manner. That's what we're up for. It's not about talk here. It's about what we do," says Corker.

And the writing's on the wall. lululemon athletica's internal recruiting strategy is anchored through goals which are written on the wall and celebrated when they're achieved.

"Goals aren't something you just write on a wall or talk about. You have to embrace and do it," says Corker. "People may have goals to move into different departments or roles. It's quite exciting internally, because people are setting goals that they're really passionate about, and we get to help make those moves happen in the world and in their work life."

### Banking On a Triple Bottom Line

Vancity is another top employer which has captured the hearts and minds of would-be employees.



Annika Lofstrand, CHRP, Vancity Credit Union

"We do have a strong applicant pool for most roles or what you would call a hiring surplus," says Annika Lofstrand, CHRP, director, talent management at Vancity Credit Union.

"Hiring for fit at Vancity has always been essential," says Lofstrand. "We have a clear vision of redefining wealth. Simply put, we believe that if we do the right thing for our members, profitability, sustainability, and growth will come."

She believes that when you get into

hiring for fit, if people don't understand the company's values or believe in their business model, it won't work for them or for the company. Her solution requires time, attention and really good listening skills.

"The three values of our organization are responsibility, integrity and innovation. The behaviours that we talk about that we need in every employee are personal or work leadership - or in

**"They want to be in a place where their contribution is more than just dollars and cents."**

the community—confidence, plus being relevant, connected and committed to our collective success," Lofstrand says.

"In our recruitment process, we commit to a consistent positive employee experience and to respecting diversity of thought, experience and background. It's not a one size fits all or only one type of person that fits in here. The people who choose to work here really want to make a difference in their careers," she explains. "They want to be in a place where their job is an organization that balances a financial, environmental and social performance or triple bottom line. We're not telling people what their values are, but being clear about what ours are—so they can make the appropriate amount of connection that they need to be engaged, productive and effective as an employee."

Lofstrand says that the people who want to work at Vancity actually do want to make a difference in their careers, community and their lives. "They want to be in place where their contribution is more than just dollars and cents."

### Tighter Talent Times Ahead

While most top employers now enjoy a steady stream of qualified applicants, today's competitive global marketplace

combined with an aging workforce headed toward retirement, reveals an impending challenge.

"We're seeing a very tight labour market in many areas of the province," says Arlene Keis, CHRP, CEO of go2, the B.C. hospitality and tourism employment resource.



Arlene Keis, CHRP, go2

"Look at the numbers. They don't lie. By 2020, we'll have a million new jobs, and now we have only 650,000 kids at school. There's a big gap. Right now, there are 20,000 more kids in grade 12 than in grade 3," says Keis. "And other countries

**"There's no one thing to do to avoid a labour crisis. There are eight or nine..."**

are after our kids too. That's a demographic that's now rapidly shrinking. If you get caught napping on the labour front, it's going to come in like a big boom, even here in Vancouver."

Keis adds that most small businesses can't pay the big dollars that some larger corporations can to recruit and retain, and when you're a seasonal operator with little to no local labour supply in a soft economy, survival becomes a challenge.

"We advocate to our industry—and to all industries—that there's no one thing to do to avoid a labour crisis, even though some are now enjoying a hiring surplus. There are eight or nine things that need to be done," Keis says. "Obviously, becoming a more competitive employer is the first thing. Then focus on retention. Look at turnover and the reason for it. Also, monitor productivity. Cast a wider recruitment net and go after underrepresented groups."

Keis says that a strategy Go2 uses is to work together with other employers to recruit families.

"You have these companies all after the same talent. If we're going across the country to recruit, let's all work together. So if someone is recruited to the mining industry, for example, why not focus recruiting efforts on the family as



Liza Walli, Ziptrek Ecotours

"We put ourselves in the customers' position."

well? In our industry, we really rely on young people, and in the North East part of B.C., the hospitality industry cannot find enough workers to cook and clean hotel rooms or to work in seasonal operations in ski resorts," Keis says.

### Global Market Forever Young

Another company which primarily relies on the youth market and recruits overseas is Ziptrek Ecotours, a brand that was heavily leveraged during the 2010 Olympics in Robson Square and around the world.

Liza Walli, director of human resources for Ziptrek Ecotours in Whistler says that they rely on a huge supply of young workers from South Africa, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Australia, England and Canada to fill vacancies while playing on the advantages of a seasonal market.

"By nature, Whistler is a transient, seasonal resort, but it works amazingly well for us. Our peak season is summer whereas Whistler Blackcomb, the ski resort, is notoriously busy in the winter months. While we're open 365 days of the

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**Presenter: Erica Pinsky, CHRP, B.A., MSc, Respectful Workplace solutions expert.**

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**Presenters: Stephanie Milliken CHRP, Gayle Hadfield CHRP**

### The CHRP Path — NPPA: Facilitated Learning Session

This 1-day facilitated learning session provides an opportunity for CHRP candidates to collaboratively work with peers to review potential exam questions and possible solutions for the Professional Practice Assessment. Note: this will be the last offering of the NPPA sessions.

**Presenters: Stephanie Milliken CHRP, Gayle Hadfield CHRP**

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<b>Wednesday, May 1</b>	<b>START TIME</b>	<b>END TIME</b>
<b>OPENING PLENARY: MARSHALL GOLDSMITH</b> — What Got You Here Won't Get You There	8:30 am	9:45 am
<b>TRADESHOW</b>	9:30 am	6:00 pm
Break (coffee in the Tradeshow)	9:45 am	10:15 am
<b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b>	10:15 am	11:45 am
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Engage, Empower, Enrich: Metrics for Changing Times</li> <li><span style="color: #0056B3;">■</span> Real Engagement for Real Results: The Clear Leadership Model</li> <li><span style="color: #FFA500;">■</span> Embracing Organizational Failure</li> <li><span style="color: #FFA500;">■</span> The Impact of Social Influence Marketing on Employer Brands</li> <li><span style="color: #4F81BD;">■</span> Are You Accommodating Enough?</li> <li><span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> Helping Successful People Get Even Better</li> </ul>		
Networking Lunch	11:45 am	1:15 pm
<b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b>	1:15 pm	2:45 pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Global Leadership Development: Kal Tire's BEST Careers Program and Learning Culture</li> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Your People: Harnessing the Power of Your Greatest Asset</li> <li><span style="color: #0056B3;">■</span> Converting Ideas into Business Solutions</li> <li><span style="color: #FFA500;">■</span> The 6 C's of a Connected Leader</li> <li><span style="color: #4F81BD;">■</span> How to be a Super Sleuth: Workplace Investigations Workshop</li> <li><span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> Speed Networking</li> </ul>		
<b>PLENARY: DAN ARIELY</b> — Predictably Irrational: How Behavioural Economics Impacts the Role of Human Resources	3:00 pm	4:15 pm
<b>2013 PROFESSIONAL AWARDS CELEBRATION</b>	4:15 pm	5:00 pm
<b>WELCOME RECEPTION</b>	5:00 pm	6:00 pm
Mystery Dinner (optional)	6:00 pm	8:00 pm
<b>Thursday, May 2</b>	<b>START TIME</b>	<b>END TIME</b>
<b>PLENARY: AMANDA LANG</b> — The Power of Why	8:30 am	9:45 am
<b>TRADESHOW</b>	9:30 am	2:00 pm
Break (coffee in the Tradeshow)	9:45 am	10:15 am
<b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b>	10:15 am	11:45 am
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Adapting Hierarchies for the New Workplace</li> <li><span style="color: #0056B3;">■</span> Personal Energy Management for Well-Being in the Workplace</li> <li><span style="color: #0056B3;">■</span> The Mentoring Conundrum</li> <li><span style="color: #FFA500;">■</span> Practice Makes Perfect Revisited</li> <li><span style="color: #4F81BD;">■</span> Navigating WorkSafeBC Mental Disorder Claims and Bullying and Harassment Policies</li> <li><span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> Cracker Barrel</li> </ul>		
Networking Lunch	11:45 am	1:15 pm
<b>CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS</b>	1:15 pm	2:45 pm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Taking Action: A Proactive Guide to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace</li> <li><span style="color: #FFD700;">■</span> Key Trends In HR Analytics</li> <li><span style="color: #0056B3;">■</span> Living With Good Influence: Leading Beyond Control</li> <li><span style="color: #FFA500;">■</span> Making the Puzzle Pieces Fit: How to Ensure Your Workplace Technology Implementation is a Success</li> <li><span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> Through Their Eyes: Innovation and Culture at Clearly Contacts</li> <li><span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> HR Café</li> </ul>		
<b>CLOSING PLENARY: SIR KEN ROBINSON</b> — The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything	3:00 pm	4:15 pm

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year, we get to take advantage of those transient summer visitors who are here from between six months to a year," says Walli.

Moreover, many of the attributes required to be an outstanding tour guide are the same that work for ski or snowboard instructors.

"It's that coaching, guest interaction and vibrant personality that come with working outdoors. So these employees make a really easy transition to Ziptrek guides in the summer," says Walli. "Our zipline tours have two components. First, it's the adventure or exhilaration of ziplining, and with that comes a very technical, safety-based skill set. It's critical. But what we really need are outgoing, positive, engaging individuals that love what we do. We need people who are inspired by our commitment to our sustainability, community and environment."

Walli says that people who know how to care for the natural environment and are inspired by nature make exceptional guides.

"We put ourselves in the customers' position. You're on a tour for two to three hours with an individual who has you hanging from a line hundreds of feet in the air. Obviously, you have to trust them to build that quick relationship and connection with them. Those are the kinds of people we're looking for."

### Schools vs. Pools of Talent

To find the right fit for 'the fly', Ziptrek releases their positions about a month early to partnered schools across Canada, so that

people who are learning about environmental sustainability, tourism and recreation, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, all of those related subjects are good candidates.

"If someone's going to school for two to four to six years to learn about this content, it tells me that it has value—that they really connect with us as an individual. That's why we go out to those schools first and enable them to have the first crack at our guide roles because we believe that right away, there's an inherent connection to what we do and that they're going to get value, personally, out of these jobs. That's been our biggest helper," Walli says. "We go out and find people who have already shown a commitment to our core values and they almost always end up to be our best employees."

She says that in their market, they're very aware of what good and bad turnover is.

"Bad turnover for us is leaving in peak season. And so we have a number of policies in place to ensure that doesn't happen. We're very clear from the beginning on what our seasonality looks like, what our

requirements are, and what we expect from employees when we find people who can fulfill that commitment."

### Recruiting to Retain

Resultantly, Ziptrek has retention firmly in its sights; if an employee stays on for an entire peak season, there's a summer bonus applied at the end of the stay. For a lot of travellers or people going back to school, that money in the bank is a strong incentive.

"We're very clear in what we expect, and we don't hire people who can't deliver what we need, or as a business we feel we can't deliver in an employee experience," Walli says.

The bottom (or in this case zip) line, is that the jobs at Ziptrek has are plain fun.

"We take people who are inspired to be guides, but could probably not break into the market as a ski tour or rafting guide which requires a lot of technical skill sets and experience to be hired as providers. We take these amazing people that line up with our company values and we give them all the training they require from shadowing and mentoring, to technical training," Walli says. "They also follow up with our senior guides, get ecology curriculum training, and focus on guest services. We give them everything they need from start to finish to be an exceptional guide. And so they leave us far more marketable and then go on to other jobs in the guiding industry."

Walli believes that engaging employees comes down to providing good leadership from the mentors on the front line, day to day.

**"We're very clear in what we expect, and we don't hire people who can't deliver what we need, or as a business we feel we can't deliver in an employee experience"**

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Stephen Shore, zipline guide,  
Ziptrek Ecotours

“We believe that we have the best on the front lines (literally) leading our teams,” Walli says. “They’re committed to coaching and provide relevant ongoing feedback. And we do a ton around recognition and cultural

“You have these companies all after the same talent. If we’re going across the country to recruit, let’s all work together.”

events, including opportunities to travel with the company to mega signature events such as the Super Bowl. We have a whole bunch of organic recognition to ensure that we’re recognizing excellence every day.”

Brenda Jacobsen has extensive experience as a communications specialist and HR professional in both corporate and private sectors. She now lives on the Sunshine Coast as a freelance writer and editor of the Sunshine Coast Wellness magazine ([www.sunshinecoastwellness.com](http://www.sunshinecoastwellness.com)).

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# Supply and Demand: The Market for Talent

By Ian J. Cook, CHRP

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT changes that has occurred through the digitization of the economy is the change to how talent functions as a market.

In the times of Henry Ford, it was access to capital, machinery and markets that drove business success. In the 21st century, those traditional drivers have shifted gears, with significantly less capital and machinery required, and more reliance on the people who build the ideas into the business. This makes access to people with important skills and capabilities much more critical.

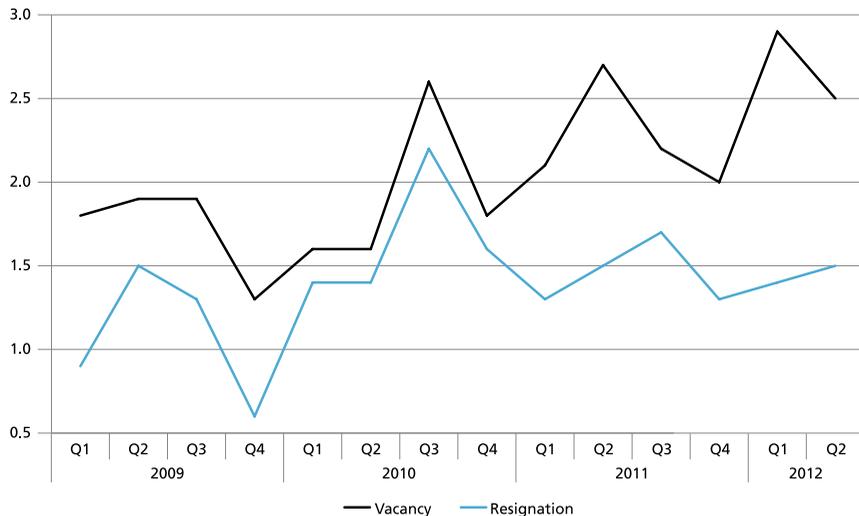
## Absolute Targets Miss the Mark

This, of course, is nothing new to those in business. While many well-documented shifts have emerged from this fundamental change in how money is made, one in particular has been paid scant attention; despite an intuitive understanding, it is still not common practice for organizations to study the dynamics of the 'labour' market and adjust their responses appropriately. For it to become so is essential.

For example, it has been common practice for organizations to set an absolute target number for the time it takes to fill a position. Recruiters would commonly be given the target of filling a vacancy within 35 days. Unfortunately, such absolute targets do not take into consideration any market dynamics.

From our work in the HR Metrics Service we know that 'time to fill' is influenced by vacancy rates and resignation rates. We also know that these vary seasonally, in addition to responding to economic factors (see chart). Witness the steady peaks of Q2 and Q3 and troughs of Q1 and Q4 and recognize distinctive spikes in Q3 of 2010 and Q2 of 2011 when economic sentiment turned positive.

These are factors that will impact the achievability of absolute targets. Whether or not you succeed within 35 days could be as much the effect of a slow market period, as good recruitment practice. On the flip side, missing the target might have nothing to do with poor recruitment practice.



The chart shows the trend for median vacancy and resignation rates over the last 3.5 years. In all instances resignations either increase with vacancy or lag by a quarter

Setting an absolute target for hiring is like asking your procurement team to only buy oil at \$80 a barrel; everyone knows this is not realistic, so why is recruitment, where you are sourcing people from a market, seen differently?

## Labour Market Not a Supermarket

Another common misperception about the labour market is that the unemployment rate is a good indicator of the availability of talent. This assumes that the labour market functions like a supermarket where there is an availability of all types of products, all the time. It is based on the assumption that the unemployed make up a reasonable approximation of the employed; therefore the person you need for your role is available. This assumption is not only incorrect, it is dangerous.

In reality, the labour market functions differently for different segments. The more specialized and valuable the skills, the more it functions like a rare metals market, (where prices can fluctuate considerably based on small movements in supply and demand). The more common and simple the skills, the more it functions like a commodities market, (where prices only move substantially when supply is very constrained relative to demand). This happens in Canadian markets when the unemployment number

hits approximately 4 per cent (not zero), as organizations in Saskatchewan and Alberta are currently experiencing.

An organization which tracks and understands these dynamics will vary its recruitment practices to respond the market, maximize their success rate and optimize their use of resources.

## Unemployment Figures Not Real-Time Reflection

During these economic times predominantly more labour market movement comes from employment to employment moves than it does from unemployment to employment moves. As a result, the unemployment number significantly lags the real-time dynamics of the labour market.

Between mid-2009 and mid-2012 the vacancy rate increased by 32 per cent (1.9 per cent to 2.5 per cent). During the same time the unemployment rate reduced by only 13 per cent (8.5 per cent to 7.4 per cent). In this instance the unemployment figure understates the size of the growing demand for the right type of employee and the pace at which certain segments of the labour market are tightening.

## Supply and Demand in Practice

Here are some options to consider that show how a market-oriented recruitment approach would work for an organization.

### 1. Reward Referrals According to Market Activity

Allocating a payment for a successful referral from an existing employee has become a standard organizational practice. Many organizations also vary the payment based on the complexity of the role they are recruiting for. Applying an even more market-oriented approach would be to increase the referral fee through the Q2 and Q3 peaks and reduce it for the other quarters; this rewards success when the market is at its toughest, and avoids overpayment when the market is more active. You could also apply the same variation by tracking vacancy and increasing the payment as vacancy increases, and approach signing bonuses in the same way.

### 2. Set a Competitive Standard

Instead of targeting efficiency metrics such as time and cost to fill, organizations should establish a baseline quality of hire that they will not move below and then look to be efficient relative to their market competitors. Hence time to fill targets become less about an absolute number and more linked to a variance to the market median; for example, the target could be 10 per cent lower than the median for our market. In a tight labour market it may make sense to spend more than your average to secure the best person quickly, as the productivity gained through this far outweighs an additional few thousand dollars spent on the recruitment process.

### 3. Differentiate Recruitment Efforts

The other market-oriented dynamic which makes sense for more organizations to pursue is the differentiation of recruitment processes to match the different market segments from which talent is sourced. For example, a great number of large organizations have started to outsource the “commodity” level recruitment to recruitment process outsourcing businesses.

Traditionally the top end talent has been outsourced to executive search firms, and while this is likely to continue, some larger organizations are starting to build this capability internally: realizing they can get a better result, for less cost, by focusing their in-house recruitment team only on critical roles and leaving the volume hiring to others. The next time you negotiate with an executive search firm, ask them to set their pricing based not on

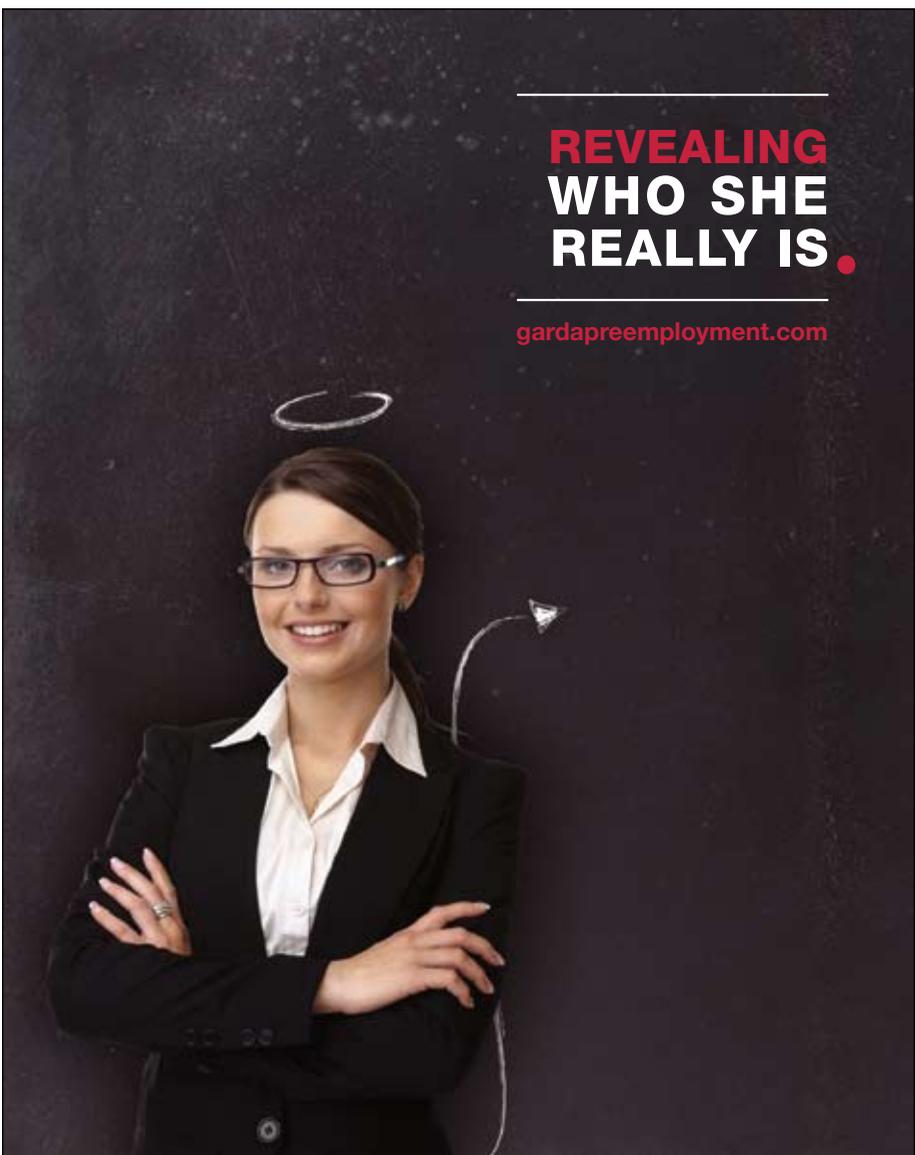
the level of the role, but on the demonstrated scarcity of the talent.

### Supply and Demand Analytics

Much as we intuitively understand that there are several different markets for talent, there is a need to study in more detail the dynamics of these markets and then build flexible and appropriate recruitment practices which generate the right results: the best hire possible – with the optimum resources – neither over or under investing to secure that talent.

Much as a stock trader, oil trader or any other individual who succeeds by “playing” the market, recruiters need to develop both the skills and the data sources to work less from intuition and more from good analytics to make sure they keep winning. 

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



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# Are Your Hiring Practices Preventing You From Finding the Right Fit?

By **Karen Zukas**

**Y**OU'RE HIRING. OF COURSE, YOU WANT THE BEST FIT possible. So, ideally, as a B.C.-based company, you want candidates with Canadian experience and fluent English. Right?

Maybe not.

Two BC employers have taken a very different approach to finding the "right fit" for their organizations. For both, it's paid off handsomely in terms of successful talent recruitment and retention.

## Help-Wanted: Canadian Experience Not Required

Burnaby-based Metro Testing Laboratories is a 205-employee firm that provides inspection and testing for all phases of construction, as well as in-house supplemental testing. They work with local contractors, engineering and architectural firms, and municipal and provincial government agencies. They have the same fundamental needs as any other company of their size and scope, and have chosen to include hiring of skilled foreign workers as one way of meeting their staffing needs.

Metro Testing Laboratories doesn't make Canadian experience mandatory for new hires. "[We] prefer to train them ourselves into our way of doing things," says Harry Watson, president, Metro Testing Laboratories. Metro Testing Laboratories also has other techniques for recruiting skilled immigrants.

"In our advertising, we ask to have a second language. This prompts skilled immigrants to apply," Watson explains. "We put on free training courses for the type of work that we do, and we also send the applicants out to shadow some of our employees. Then we will often offer them a job."

Watson notes that his approach of actively seeking out skilled immigrants for its workforce is unusual in his field where he says most companies tend to be somewhat

**"As BC employers face growing skill shortages, what constitutes the "right fit" is undergoing a transformation"**



Hear more from Michelle Rolls and Harry Watson, and about the valuable role of skilled immigrant talent in BC's labour market in this IEC-BC video: <http://ow.ly/enBGU>

"tribal" in whom they hire. At Metro Labs, however, the "tribe" is global. "To date we have brought people from 15 different cultures into the group — no small thing for a small company," says Watson, who immigrated to Canada in the late 70s, and counts himself among Metro's global tribe.

## The Benefits of a Global Tribe

He admits that it does take some accommodation. "Give the skilled immigrants an opportunity to show they can actually do the work, be patient with them, give them a little bit longer time to adopt the culture," he suggests. However, he says,

the payoffs are enormous. "Skilled immigrants have definitely contributed to the success of Metro, and they really do feel like a part of the company. I think they feel proud of the company."

Michelle Rolls, who owns and operates two auto body shops in Northern BC, had a similar experience integrating a skilled immigrant into her work force. Rolls simply could not get the

staff she needed. After advertising as far away as Manitoba, she finally hired Glenford Trowers, who arrived in B.C. straight from Jamaica.

"The first time I met Glenford he came in off a bus. He was overwhelmed. He went from Vancouver, which was nice and sunny to Prince George, which was full of snow. We gave him a toque when he got here so we knew he'd be okay for the first day," Rolls says with a laugh. But the adjustments went beyond clothing.

"When (Trowers) first got here, the first month, we had to bring him up to Canadian standards. But really, it was because he called something one thing and we called it something else. It wasn't that he didn't have the skill. It just took him a while to learn our method."

**"To date we have brought people from 15 different cultures into the group — no small thing for a small company"**

Not only did Trowers have the skills, he also had a level of commitment to his work that quickly made him indispensable.

"His dedication brings everyone else up. I mean, when you get someone who really cares about the company, who cares about all of us, how can you not be a better company for that?"

### Top Talent is the Priority

If Watson and Rolls had prioritized Canadian experience, they would have missed out on employees that have proven to be an excellent fit for their companies.

"As BC employers face growing skill shortages, what constitutes the "right fit" is undergoing a transformation," says Kelly Pollack, executive director, Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IEC-BC). "Employers like Harry and

Michelle, who have adjusted their hiring standards and recruitment techniques to include, rather than exclude, skilled immigrants from their talent pool, will have a significant competitive advantage."

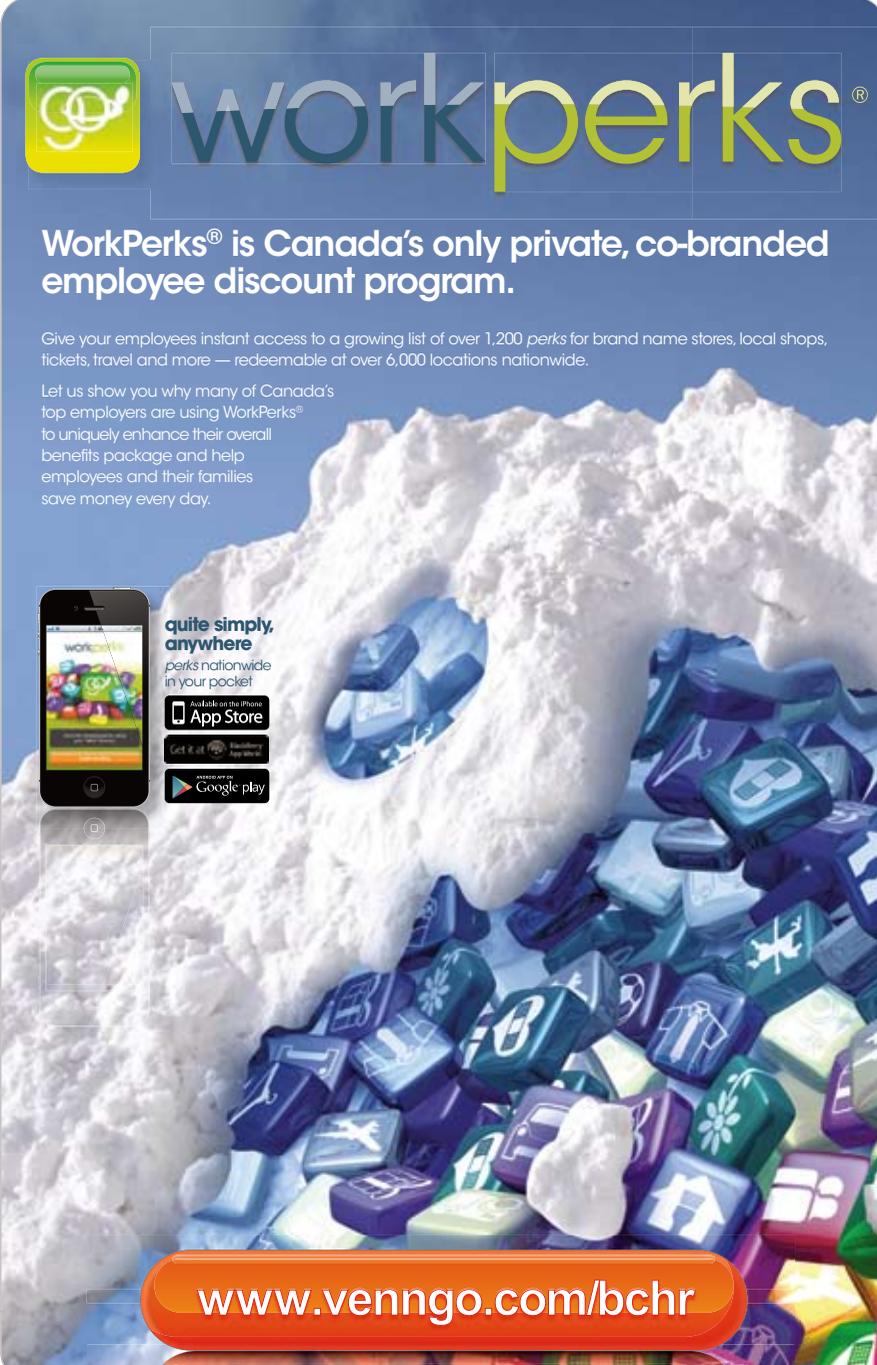
Both were presenters at the recent *IEC-BC Employer Summit* on integrating immigrant talent into the workforce. To read the Leaders Summit Proceedings visit [www.iecbc.ca/about-us/in-the-news](http://www.iecbc.ca/about-us/in-the-news).

Find out more about how to assess skilled immigrants for the "right fit" using

the New Canadian Assessment Resource (<http://iecbc.ca/how-to-employ/hire-talent/assessing-new-canadian-experience>).

Moreover, BC HMRA is presenting workshops with IEC-BC on "Sourcing and Recruiting Immigrant Talent", the details of which can be accessed via the BC HMRA events calendar. 

Karen Zukas is communications manager of the Immigrant Employment Council of BC ([www.iec.bc.ca](http://www.iec.bc.ca)).



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# Northern Symposium Highlights New HR Realities

By **Isabelle St-Jean**, RSW, ACC

## Learning. Leading. Legacy.

Those three words underscore the efforts of all those seeking solutions in a changing workforce; they also served as a welcoming lens of focus on October 1-2, 2012 for the 8th Annual Northern Symposium in Prince George.

Organized by BC HRMA and hosted by the Coast Inn of the North, the Northern Symposium marked the change of season with an appeal to reason: new realities mean something new for HR leadership.

## Welcome to the New Reality: (Diverse) Help Wanted

From economic duress to demographic stresses, business as usual has become increasingly unusual, requiring a rethink of the most fundamental constituents of the workplace. As addressed by professional facilitator and coach Jennifer Gervès-Keen in the opening sessions of the Symposium, neither “Recruitment for a Diverse Workforce” nor “Building Retention in a Diverse Workforce” is possible with antiquated practices and mindsets.

Instead, the challenge of finding and keeping quality employees is only likely to increase without changing the questions we ask. How then, Gervès-Keen questioned, are we to keep everyone—across the multiple spans of generation, ethnicity, values and skills—engaged and committed to staying and excelling in their respective positions?

Fortunately, regardless of the differences which make each employee unique, there are a few common elements that have been identified in seeking to understand what matters most to all. Gervès-Keen brought that wisdom forward at the start of the two-day symposium, drawing upon the closing remarks in a study of generations done by the Sloan Centre:

“Everyone, regardless of generation is looking for meaningful work, fair compensation, and good benefits... All generations are also hoping for job security, flexibility, and some autonomy on the job.”

As HR professionals we are reminded that the desire to be respected and valued—understood in our impact upon the organization and provided with opportunities to learn and grow—is one shared by every employee in every organization.

In keeping with calibre of the event, Gervès-Keen’s pair of starting sessions not only ‘got the gears turning’, they meshed seamlessly with the Northern Symposium’s themes of learning, leadership and legacy. As would presenters to follow, Keen inspired the audience to adapt their management style to the needs of the different generations in the workplace, and make the most of the multi-generational mentoring programs available.

**“flexible thinking is required for all involved...”**

## First and Foremost: Safe and Sound

Throughout his session the following morning, Alan Moore, employers’ adviser, Ministry of Labour, Citizens’ Services & Open Government, prompted the audience to consider that any good job offer is grounded in the provision of a safe workplace. While acknowledging the critical support of HR in the success of safe workplace models, Moore reminded the audience that the responsibility, much like the expectation, is one shared by everyone in an organization.

The new expanse of that responsibility, was subsequently explored by Adriana Wills, partner, Harris & Company LLP in her exploration of the more contentious issues surrounding Bill 14. Wills pointed to the development of human rights in the workplace as the point of origin for

the proposed change in legislation: which would see mental health matters receive credence akin to physical injury claims.

However, as Mills pointed out, it is not uncommon for a problem to become more prevalent once widely identified and brought foremost in our awareness. For example, following the introduction of anti-bullying legislation in Australia, cases of bullying at work were estimated to have increased by 30 per cent.

Regardless, as asserted by Gavin Marshall, partner, Roper Greyell LLP; following legislation such as Bill 14, HR professionals will have the added responsibility of maintaining a culture of respect to help prevent bullying and harassment.

Balancing matters of respect and privacy are unlikely to become less contentious. Through their session, “Employers vs. Doctors”, Marshall and Alissa Demerse, partner, Roper Greyell LLP, spoke at length about the current challenges for HR professionals of managing medical issues and information in the workplace. They acknowledged that due to increasing emphasis on privacy rights and expanding legalistic approaches, dealing with medical or disabilities issues among employees has become more complex.

Moreover, they addressed the fine balance between the duty to accommodate, privacy obligation and duty to manage: the seemingly contradictory roles that HR is required to fulfil in the process of managing such health and safety issues in the workplace.

## Managing Accountability

Sean Steele’s session, “Attendance Management Strategies for the New Workforce” was replete with engaging insights about the importance of managing absences and maximizing productivity. As director of organizational health & development, BC Ambulance Service, Emergency & Health Services Commission, Steele addressed the guiding principles of medical and disability management.

He also identified some of the challenges currently emerging among employers: the increasing cost and duration of disability claims, the prevalence of human rights and duty to accommodate employees, the ageing workforce that includes an increasing number of employees with chronic medical conditions, and the cumulative mental stress claims expected to be on the rise.

By presenting principles to guide medical and disabilities management, Steele reminded us of what is important to keep in mind while addressing such issues: research indicating that “earlier employer involvement will shorten the duration of absences”.

“It’s all about relationship,” Steele emphasized, affirming the importance for employers to get involved.

Moreover, it has been found that the interaction between the direct supervisor and the employee is central to all case management activities. By establishing this meaningful rapport, the employer can help to set a framework of accountability within which medical issues can be monitored and set on a course of progress towards the employee’s return to full health and to their work.

### A Boom in Flexible Thinking

Fortunately, this is much in keeping with leading HR minds and organizations, already cultured to the profits such thinking merits. The model of the workplace is changing in British Columbia: flexible thinking is required for all involved, young, old, and where X marks the spot, for what lies ahead.

As pointed out Gervès-Keen, the time for such thinking is now; while much has been made, 83 per cent of Canadian businesses are not well prepared for the upcoming surge of retirement.

While much has been made of Gen Ys demands of flexibility upon the workplace, Gervès-Keen pointed out that the move of mass numbers of Boomers into retirement will make flexibility a mandate. The old model of working excessively until 65 often results in decreased energy and stamina which frustrates one’s desire for an active and exciting “retirement” or re-engagement lifestyle. Besides which, it does little to serve the potentials of knowledge transfer within any organization.

In the years preceding this major life transition, many Boomers will both require and merit more flexible work arrangements to attend to their changing work/life balance. So too, will the merits of flexible thinking become more prevalent.

Innovative workplace ideas are gradually emerging to provide interesting incentives and perks while offering new ways of balancing work and personal life over such periods of transition. An example cited was a program in which an employee could choose to work for 4 years at 80 per cent salary and then take a sabbatical year for one year at full salary. From this perspective, we are encouraged to alternate work with time for personal and purposeful interests such as learning, travel or volunteering nearby or abroad.

### A Legacy in the Balance

With this new work/life balance model we can extend our involvement in the workplace over a longer time span while at the same time satisfying our needs for personal fulfillment along the way. While this type of work/life balance model might not be the ideal in every workplace, it is congruent with the new 21st century reality that acknowledges our extended longevity. Economics aside, this affords us all additional years in the workplace.

How we enjoy them, as individuals and organizations, depends entirely upon perspective—and taking the time in our own professional careers to benefit from events such as this, where passionate minds bring information and inspiration to be shared.

In keeping with the theme of the 8th Annual Northern Symposium, the learning imparted only serves to build upon HR’s leadership as the workplace continues to change in years to come. The legacy is laid in securing health, wellbeing and prosperity among employees, employers and organizations alike.

It’s a tall order. Fortunately, the 9th Annual Northern Symposium is already in the works, and the 51st Annual BC HRMA Conference is slated for May 1-2, 2013 in Vancouver. 

Professional speaker, author, life and business coach Isabelle St-Jean brings over 20 years of communication, leadership and personal effectiveness experience to her audiences, readers and clients.



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# Shifting the Perception of Disability in the Workforce

By Karen Lai and Mark Gruenheid



**H**OW MANY OF YOUR STAFF HAVE ASKED for a redesign of their workstation? To provide an ergonomic cushion for their chair, a wrist cushion for their keyboard, or an extra set of lights for them to read their documents? These little requests are known as accommodations to ensure that the workplace suits the needs of employees. Accommodations are often a topic of conversation when it comes to recruiting people with disabilities. In fact, it is one of the main barriers they face when they have the desire to enter the workforce.

## Abilities in Mind: Beyond the Myths

According to the *2009 Labour Force Status of Persons with Disabilities in BC*, people with disabilities are significantly under-represented in the workforce compared to those without disabilities. It may be because of the many myths that have been around for years relating to employment and people with disabilities, such as the need to retrofit an office to ensure accessibility. Because of the myths and

perceptions of employing people with disabilities in the workforce, the Abilities in Mind (AIM) program of the BC Centre for Ability was created with employers to facilitate a perceptual shift on disability.

There are many negative perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities and this is a key barrier to finding work. Disability is a big and complex category which affects each person differently. One individual may use a one-handed keyboard because one side of their body is paralyzed; another may need the assistance of a 'to-do' list because they have short term memory loss. People with disabilities are often unfairly stereotyped and can be the recipients of negative assumptions such as requiring extra training for the job or being unable to perform job duties successfully. They can also be mistakenly viewed as objects of pity or deserving charity.

## Exposure, Awareness and Education

To this day, there is a level of fear when discussing the 'elephant in the room'

and being around people with disabilities. Many people don't know how to talk about it openly and candidly, preferring to look at disabilities as limitations and something to fear. It is the fear of the unknown. Unless employers have a personal connection or story with people with disabilities, they are often left with their social influences or media portrayals, which can support false assumptions.

In response to these negative stereotypes, AIM promotes awareness and education to help guide the employment of people with disabilities. The program works to shift the perception of disability so that employers judge applicants on their ability to perform job duties, not on their disabling condition.

As that perception does not change without the support of employers, AIM has worked to create a business-based approach to building inclusive workplaces, drawing strong support from local organizations such as the Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver where one AIM success story has already found her 'fit'.

## Meet Melanie 'Capable'

*Melanie was getting on with her life as many individuals in their late-20s do. She had a good job in retail sales, was contemplating furthering her education and had a solid group of friends and contacts. One night, her life took a drastic turn when the car she was traveling in struck a roadside lamp post. Melanie sustained an acquired brain injury (ABI) as a result of the accident.*

*She describes her challenges with ABI in the following ways: "I become much more easily overwhelmed. Concentrating and focusing with distractions around and memorizing unfamiliar information can also seem impossible. Also I have found trouble with sleeping at regular and adequate intervals compromises my ability to function."*

*She still had interest and ability in customer service but could not easily meet the demands of a job requiring long shifts and continuous multi-tasking. Through a referral from the AIM Program, Melanie was subsequently*

interviewed by the Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver. Melanie's professional presentation and skills in verbal and written English shone through in the interview. She appeared to be a great candidate and was offered a reduced hourly schedule.

Melanie now works in the fitness centre of the hotel assisting guests, maintaining the facility and preparing food items. She began working one or two short shifts a week and is slowly building her hours. The Shangri-La Hotel has been very supportive in making sure that Melanie's transition back to work is a successful one. Other companies such as CTV Bellmedia, TD Canada Trust, London Drugs and Vancity Credit Union also work closely with the AIM program to attract, hire and retain employees with disabilities.

### Strong Support for Business-Based Approach

Employers are very complementary of the approach and see the work of Abilities in Mind as a huge step forward in the education and awareness around recruitment of persons with disabilities.

"AIM is looking for an opportunity, through education, discussion and open dialogue, to innovate," says Kimberlee LoCicero, director of human resources for Shangri-La Hotels Canada. "It really makes sense with the business world and with people who are passionate but also up front and frank enough to put the elephant on the table and discuss how we move employment in the workplace to what it should be."

### Embracing Ability

The shifting perception of disability in the workforce will be highlighted by AIM at their upcoming conference, "Embracing Ability: Redefining a Diverse Workforce" on March 12-13, 2013 at the Empire Landmark Hotel in Vancouver. It will bring together forward-thinking employers, innovative service providers and dynamic individuals with disabilities to focus on best practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

For more information, please visit AIM at [www.abilitiesinmind.ca](http://www.abilitiesinmind.ca)

1 Labour Market Outcomes of Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia, 2009, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/2e52fd64-aa13-4418-8ed5-a6f47a982b13LabourMarketOutcomesofPersonswithDisabilitiesinBritishColumbia.pdf>



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# CHRP Recruiting Brand Recognition

By **Maureen Campbell**

**"CONSTANTLY IMPROVE,"** WERE THE WORDS OF A WISE, unknown individual. It seems a very simple premise, but it can often be a challenge. The challenge rarely comes from what to do next, but from the constraints that can be involved – financial, time and priorities to name a few.

When one looks at issues such as recruitment, one almost automatically thinks of employee recruitment, but the idea of ‘recruiting’ new customers is also an important consideration. As HR professionals, we are all aware of the importance of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation, but at the end of the day, business leaders need to see the value in this designation as well.

BC HRMA has been well aware of this for quite some time. Five years ago, 20 per cent of the BC HRMA membership had their CHRP designation. Since then, that statistic has moved up

to over 50 per cent of members attaining their designation; this number increases to over 60 per cent if you include the CHRP candidates. In a recent member value survey conducted in BC, the primary reason that members join BC HRMA is to attain and retain the CHRP designation. This reason was overwhelmingly larger than any of the other reasons, which included professional development and networking. Individuals clearly see the value of holding the CHRP to support their careers.

Recruiting business leaders is important to strengthening the value of the CHRP; in essence, business leaders are the “consumers” of the CHRP designation. HR professionals that carry the CHRP designation bring a wealth of expertise to the table: the ability to see the people side of the business and help the organization navigate the complexities of talent management and employee relations is of value to business leaders. Creating

**“Recruiting business leaders is important to strengthening the value of the CHRP”**



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— **Chris Taylor**, VP, Human Resources, Best Buy Canada

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awareness of the CHRP brand and establishing the value that it represents is a critical factor in ensuring the ongoing growth and success of the CHRP designation. Consumers will not consider a brand they are not aware of, and, more importantly, without awareness you cannot build brand trust.

Brand trust is the intrinsic 'believability' that any entity or organization evokes. In the commercial world, the intangible aspect of 'brand trust' impacts the behaviour and performance of its business stakeholders in many ways. It creates the foundation of a strong connection with all stakeholders, converting simple awareness to strong commitment. This changes normal stakeholders into devoted ambassadors, leading to significant advantages, including perceptions of premium value.

In the last 18 months, BC HRMA has focused on promoting the CHRP brand by positioning the CHRP designation in various media and PR opportunities, thereby increasing the brand, brand trust and value of the CHRP. Using a variety of print and radio advertisements and sponsorship opportunities has increased the value of the CHRP designation to the point that CHRP holders are now considered

expert resources for HR current affairs and news. Even the term, CHRP, is becoming more common place, which adds value to the designation and to the members of BC HRMA, as well as members of various provincial associations across Canada. This works to serve all HR professionals as recognition by business leaders and general population is growing.

This recruitment campaign has been very effective. A 2012 survey showed that 50 per cent of those surveyed were familiar with the CHRP designation as compared to 11 per cent five years ago. As the value of the CHRP becomes more recognizable, it positions those HR professionals with the CHRP designation on a different professional level.

This is just one example of how BC HRMA supports the HR profession and HR professionals in adding value to the CHRP designation. It's like Ralph Lauren said, "When you think of the blur of all the brands that are out there, the ones you

believe in and the ones you remember... are the ones that stand for something." 

Maureen Campbell is the communications manager for CCHRA.



**"Brand trust  
is the intrinsic  
believability..."**

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# Policy, Property and Privacy: Employer-owned Computers

By Graeme McFarlane

COMPUTERS ARE EVERYWHERE. THEY say that the average cell phone has more computing power than did NASA when it sent people to the moon. Computers provide us with the conduit through which a large part of our communication now takes place.

The value of computer use in business is readily apparent. They help streamline work processes and allow employees to easily communicate with each other—even over great distances. They also provide an information gathering platform that is second to none.

With the explosion of computer use, issues particular to this technology have arisen. When individuals use technology, their conduct is often tracked and stored. Emails, tweets, Facebook postings, web browsing histories and others all provide a rich store of information that is unique to a particular individual. This information is highly revealing about an individual's personal life. The care, storage and access to this type of information intersects with an individual's privacy rights.

These issues are highly relevant to the modern workplace. Virtually all employers provide computers to at least some of their employees. The question of whether an employee has a right of privacy related to their computer use is relevant to many areas in the employment relationship.

In its decision of *R. v. Cole, 2012 SCC 53*, the Supreme Court of Canada grappled with the level of privacy an employee could expect in relation to his historical use of an employer provided computer. Although the case concerned a criminal conviction, the Courts' discussion will assist employers in addressing privacy issues in the workplace.

In this case, Mr. Cole was charged with possession of child pornography under the criminal code. The alleged material was found in a hidden file stored on a laptop computer provided to him by his employer. During a routine maintenance operation, an IT technician discovered

the file and reported his finding to Mr. Cole's manager. The manager then turned the computer over to the police who ultimately arrested Mr. Cole. At trial, Mr. Cole brought a challenge to the search of the laptop alleging that without a warrant the police had violated his Charter right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure.

At the trial level, the judge agreed that Mr. Cole had a reasonable expectation of privacy related to his use of the company owned laptop. He found that the police should have obtained a warrant before viewing the material contained in the machine. Because they did not, he excluded the evidence found on the laptop because Mr. Cole's section eight Charter rights had been violated. The Crown did not have any other evidence against Mr. Cole, so the charges were dismissed.

Two levels of provincial appeal followed, and ultimately, the Court of Appeal for Ontario confirmed the exclusion of much of the evidence seized and sent the matter back for retrial.

The Supreme Court of Canada was engaged and it first examined the nature of the information stored on the computer. It held that the nearer the information lies to the biographical core of personal information, the more likely that an employee will be able to expect that the information will remain private. In this case, Mr. Cole had used the laptop to browse the internet. A review of his browsing history would reveal his interests, likes and propensities and this information went to the "biographical core" of personal information.

The Court then observed that the employer owned the equipment and had a patchwork of policies, practices and customs that reduced Mr. Cole's expectation of privacy. It focused particularly on the fact that the employer had reserved ownership of all information stored on its equipment. The Court held that although the employer's rules reduced Mr.

Cole's expectation of privacy it was not eliminated in circumstances of intrusion by the state.

It confirmed that Mr. Cole's Charter rights were violated, but refused to exclude the evidence on the basis that the admission of this highly reliable and probative physical evidence would not bring the administrative of justice into disrepute (this is a fancy test that criminal lawyers use).

At the end of the day there are some important lessons for employers to be learned from the Cole case. The ownership and permitted use of employer provided computer equipment will be the focus of any judicial examination related to an employer's monitoring of employee computer conduct.

All employers should implement policies with the following components:

- ownership of the technology and data are reserved to the employer;
- a full description of permitted uses and prohibitions;
- confirmation of an employer's right to monitor computer conduct;
- contravention of the policy may result in disciplinary action including possible termination; and
- illegal/criminal use will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Of course all of the other rules for a valid policy would apply as well.

Decision makers are struggling to balance the interests of employees with the rights of employers in dealing with the ever changing technological landscape. However, we can see repeatedly that the better prepared employers are with respect to its policies and communications with its employees, the more likely that there will be fewer surprises and associated costs. 📌

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



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# A Healthy Cynic's View of Social Media Recruiting

By Dawn Longshaw

**W**HILE PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS used social networks to find jobs through referrals, the move online has changed the recruitment process considerably. Social media in particular, connects organizations with vast networks of people across a wide range of industry sectors and companies. Without doubt, the utility and efficiencies introduced to the talent acquisition process are commendable.

However, for all the benefits of social media, there are some lingering negatives—most of them rooted in our more traditional organizational moorings. What is needed is a balanced approach to putting the available tools to the best use and a willingness to change our offline processes accordingly.

Let's step back, look at some of the concerns and see how smart business managers and HR practitioners can make the most of both worlds: the virtual and the real.

## Branding a Double-Edged Sword

While much is made of the number of 'connections' or 'friends' that social media can bring, its value as an employment branding tool is even greater than its 'database' appeal. That said, the cutting-edge tools of social media can cut both ways. Businesses no longer have sole authority over what is being said; technology has shifted the power of the message from corporate to the people.

Claims which companies make related to employment are being scrutinized. Simply by tapping into their social networks or visiting sites such as glassdoor.com or honestly.com, candidates

are able to validate employment brand statements and value propositions on a 24-7 basis. This holds true even outside the immediate recruitment experience as prospective employees can get 'live' answers on Twitter, Facebook and internet forums to their questions about companies, their management, their recruitment process and the employee experience.

**"...nothing connects quite like people."**

In today's e-centric world, employment brands are no longer controlled by the corporate point of view. While a transparent online presence should be accompanied by such mission and mandate statements, prospective employees have grown brand savvy and are seeking authenticity rather than corporate propaganda. As a result, job seekers use social media to learn about the culture of your company.

What questions are other applicants asking? What do employees say? How quickly does HR respond to questions on Twitter or Facebook? Given a keyboard and Internet connection, prospectives employee can learn more about a company than imaginable and/or sometimes desirable.

Does your organization live up to the expectations of its online presence? Smart organizations will be those which honestly assess whether what they think they offer is what they truly offer.

## Building Better Offline Processes

From a candidate perspective, social media recruiting tools have dramatically changed how job seekers learn about companies and connect with people who work there. Rather than applying for jobs online, the savvy candidates often connect directly with people who work for a company, and, in turn, get connected to the organization.

Unfortunately, most corporate recruiting practices are incongruent with the expectations of these most mobile and motivated members of the candidate pool. Herein lies the greatest peril of social media in the recruitment process. Unless you have addressed the fundamentals, all best online efforts are mired by the brick and mortar follow-through.

True enough, recruiting is traditionally transactional in nature which does not necessarily make for a great candidate experience. However, a better experience is always possible. Is your application process unduly painful? Are applicants tossed into the 'black hole' experience after first experiencing the 'friendly touch'?

Social media makes it easier for employers to identify and craft relationships with top talent, but nothing kills a referral faster than a slow response. Make sure that your presence on Facebook or Twitter is not a version of 'post and pray', but more along the lines of 'post and host'.

Giving immediate access to a wider pool of potential talent, social media can provide instant outreach. The question is: 'Do you have the mechanisms in place to accommodate an instant reply?' Moreover, hyperlinks back to your job site should

always include a mechanism for reply, otherwise you need to think about what the word of mouth is likely to be about your social media platform. If you do not respond within 24-72 hours at most, then the damage is done.

If the dynamic online introduction only serves as a fashionable funnel for a depersonalized transactional recruitment process which has not changed for years, you can expect to hear about it through social media.

Personalizing the overall recruitment experience can dramatically yield results. Invite the 'friends' of the candidate to participate in the recruiting process by inviting them to breakfast or lunch with the candidate, asking them to lead company tours or sending 'thank you' notes post-interview.

### Communicate, Participate, Adapt

It isn't enough to use social media for outreach. Studies show that using networks merely as a broadcast channel does not generate the same results as those who engage with their 'connections', 'followers' and 'friends'. This makes logical sense considering both the new media's 'social' monicker and participatory means of perpetuation.

**“Does your organization live up to the expectations of its online presence?”**

Seen in this light, social media encourages the job seeker and prospective employer to 'get to know one another' and empowers them with the tools required. That said, nothing connects quite like people.

### One Approach Does Not Fit All

Networking is still about relationships – trust, confidence and familiarity – and online alone is not enough. Incorporating new tools into your kit does not mean dismissing or excluding what came before. Effective communication is an essential part of recruiting; there are simply more

means by which to communicate. Identify and use a variety of channels to engage with candidates.

Above all else, remain an engaged participant in the conversations that evolve. When recruiters do not pick up the phone to speak to candidates, rely on email or InMail or wait for electronic responses to job board postings, the candidate experience suffers.

No matter how smart and fast the technology becomes, recruiting will

always be about people—and while well-used technology enhances effectiveness, it cannot replace 'people focused' processes—such as picking up the phone to make a live connection.

Think not in terms of high touch alone, but of quality touch above all. **▶**

Dawn Longshaw is a professional recruiter and managing director of Vertical Bridge ([www.verticalbridge.ca](http://www.verticalbridge.ca)), a Vancouver-based recruitment consultancy.



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# Data-Driven Approach Helps Find Employees Who Fit

By **Doug McCann**

**W**HEN THE JOB MARKET IS TIGHT, DESPERATION may drive recruiters to hire someone who might not be the first choice. With the high cost of turnover, most prefer to hold out for the ideal person.

“Our goal is to hire the right people for right position so we have a better retention rate over time,” says Maurice Paquette, president and CEO of Coast Wholesale Appliances, a major household appliance supplier based in Vancouver, BC. “The savings are huge.”

Getting the right person into the right job can be tricky. Companies need to understand where people’s strengths lie and how they will work with colleagues and managers. The fit with the corporate culture is also becoming increasingly important as labour shortages in Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C. drive companies to cast their nets in the international pool.

To gain this understanding, smart businesses are beefing up

their array of hiring tactics with scientific, data-driven solutions such as personality assessments. Coast Wholesale Appliances and more than 7,800 other organizations across the world use an assessment called the Predictive Index (PI). The tool is available in 65 languages, ideal for cross-cultural validation of candidates.

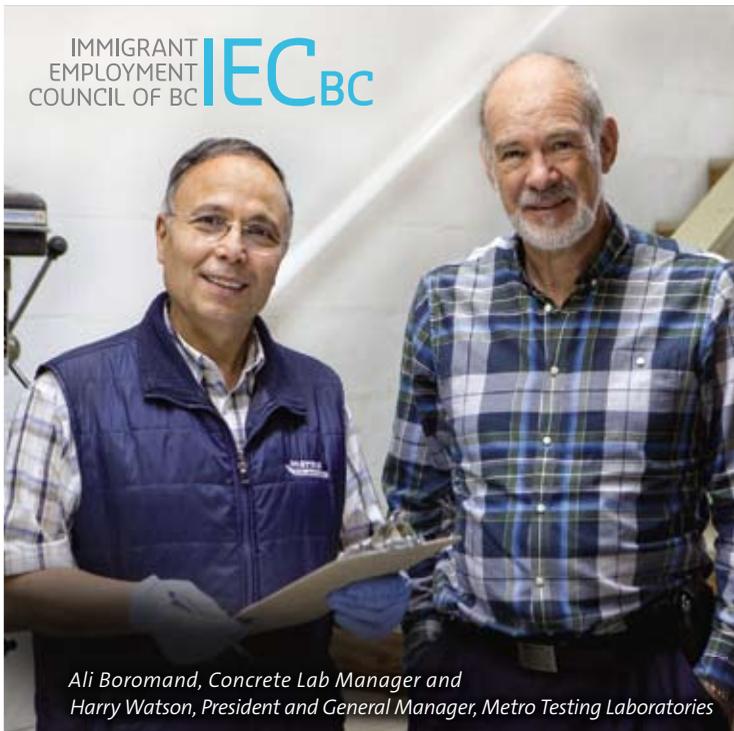
Developed in 1955, the PI measures a person’s underlying personality traits, such as extroversion, dominance and patience. Individuals check off a list of adjectives to describe themselves and the way others see them, and software calculates and analyzes the results. Companies

can use the resulting two-page report on the inner drives of the individual to match applicants with current job opportunities.

“People can’t ‘game’ the system,” says Paquette, who has used the tool in several companies for more than 20 years. “It shows who people naturally are and if there’s a conflict in how they present themselves.”

**“People know how to answer interview questions in the way you want”**

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Ali Boromand, Concrete Lab Manager and Harry Watson, President and General Manager, Metro Testing Laboratories

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– Harry Watson, President and General Manager, Metro Testing Laboratories

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“People know how to answer interview questions in the way you want,” agrees Laila Lee, Recruitment Specialist, Canada for commercial real estate services company Colliers International. “PI has given us an extra edge in identifying the behavioral fit from the start.”

She adds, “In terms of turnover, the issue for most companies tends to be around the manager/employee relationship. Using behavioral assessment lets us put the right people in the right role. We’re a fast-paced service company, and we need detail-oriented, organized people who can adapt quickly. Knowing someone’s natural style will help them stay in the role for the long term.”

Checking the fit between a potential employee and manager is effective for more than new hires. It also supports re-assigning hires placed in jobs for which they are not well suited, or to help when promoting employees.

Flynn Canada Ltd., a roofing, glazing and curtain wall services contractor, uses PI when an employee is up for promotion. Checking the individual’s natural tendencies against the requirements of the job allows the company to make faster, smarter staffing decisions. Additionally, insight into a person’s behaviour and workplace drives can help managers better motivate, drive performance and improve morale.



“We promote from within the organization, and a behavioral assessment is a good indicator of an employee’s potential for success in a future role or leadership position,” says Gerard Montocchio, Flynn’s vice president of HR. “For example, a person may be quite good at the technical aspects of the job, but may find it difficult to delegate responsibilities to others. Uncovering those behaviors or work styles leads to the right job fit.”

New managers at Microsoft Canada were early adopters of this data-driven approach to hiring. “The managers loved it because they were able to get to know their teams quicker and better,” says Randy

Lenaghan, Microsoft’s vice president of enterprise sales. “After seeing its value, they quickly became evangelists for it throughout the organization.”

Personality assessments can’t replace the standard job interview, but they do give companies a powerful tool to make better hiring decisions. And when faced with fierce competition for candidates in a tight job market, that can mean the difference between settling for second best and making the right hire. **P**

Doug McCann is managing principal for the B.C. and Alberta branch of Predictive Success Corporation (predictivesuccess.com), the Canadian licensee of international management consulting firm PI Worldwide.

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# Skills Mismatch a Growing Concern

By Jock Finlayson



IT IS NOW MORE THAN THREE YEARS SINCE Canada's recession officially ended and the economy returned to a path of (modest) growth. During this period, the labour market has also rebounded, with the country adding approximately 820,000 jobs and the unemployment rate edging lower. Still, 1.4 million Canadians remain without work, and many young adults in particular are having a tough time making their way into the job market.

## People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People

Despite an economy that is still operating below full capacity, many employers report difficulties in finding workers. This points to a growing "skills mismatch" in the labour market. Mismatches refer not only to specific skill shortages, but also to more general gaps in qualifications, knowledge, training and education. In this situation, some people are unable to find jobs, even as employers complain they can't fill vacant positions.

The skills mismatch problem was vividly portrayed by former Ontario college president Rick Miner in his 2010 book, *People without Jobs, Jobs without People*. Miner emphasizes two forces that are transforming the job market: population aging and the development of a knowledge economy. He argues, correctly, that a larger proportion of young people will require some kind of post-secondary credential if they aspire to have productive careers. These credentials include not just university degrees, but also college diplomas, as well as recognized and portable qualifications in skilled trades and technology-based occupations.

## Pace of Change Widens Gaps

In a dynamic economy, certain industries are always expanding and others contracting, so some degree of labour market mismatch is inevitable. However, in a world of rapid technological innovation and accelerating knowledge obsolescence, the gaps

between skills and job openings appear to be widening. When human capital depreciates, training can play a critical role. While firm- or industry-sponsored retraining and up-skilling makes sense for existing employees, training new labour force entrants or workers transitioning from one industry to another is a more complicated task, one that calls for a response through government policy and targeted programming. There is also the serious problem of those who lack the basic skills – literacy, numeracy, good work habits, etc. – needed to gain employment in most sectors.

## Regional Scarcity Highlights Mismatch in B.C.

Particularly in Western Canada, there is a regional dimension to the labour mismatch issue. Regional labour scarcity can arise due to a lack of qualified local people to fill jobs in a given community. Mismatches also occur when suitably skilled people exist, but live in different regions (or do not meet employment criteria for other reasons, such as language barriers). In B.C., the pattern of reported skill and labour shortages suggests the province is indeed experiencing geographic mismatches: some job opportunities are in regions where the labour supply is inadequate, and some unemployed and underemployed people in urban communities who do possess relevant qualifications are unwilling or unable to move to where the jobs are. This problem is likely to get worse as natural resource-based industry sectors continue to grow across Western Canada – and as immigrants with a demonstrated preference for urban living come to make up an ever-increasing share of the population.

## Studies Target Mobility, Skills and Education

The past few years have seen an upsurge in research on skill shortages and mismatches. A study by two International Monetary Fund economists that looked

at data from all 50 U.S. states concluded that local unemployment rates are linked to skill mismatches, as well as to housing market developments that have diminished workers' geographic mobility.<sup>1</sup> The authors estimate that the aggregate mismatch between the supply and demand for skills in 2010 was about 1¾ percentage points higher than before the onset of America's housing market meltdown in 2007. A 2011 Brookings Institution study found that inadequate skills and education among unemployed workers, relative to the requirements for available jobs in some occupations, was "hampering economic recovery in U.S. metropolitan areas."<sup>2</sup>

## Aligning Efforts with Market Trends

What can be done to ameliorate skill shortages and other mismatches between labour supply and demand? The main lesson for policy-makers is to ensure that the resources allocated to publicly-funded education and training are aligned with economic and labour market trends. B.C. universities, for example, are churning out more teachers than will be needed in the next 10-20 years, yet the province isn't training enough people in some skilled trades and technical occupations. B.C. has significantly expanded basic undergraduate university education, but arguably the province hasn't put sufficient emphasis on graduate-level training or the development of advanced skills in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (the so-called "STEM" disciplines); this is where demand for workers is expected to grow steadily in the years ahead.

Shifts in policy and in the way taxpayer dollars are used to fund different areas of education and skills development can help to reduce the extent and persistence of the labour market mismatches that threaten to hold our economy back. **■**

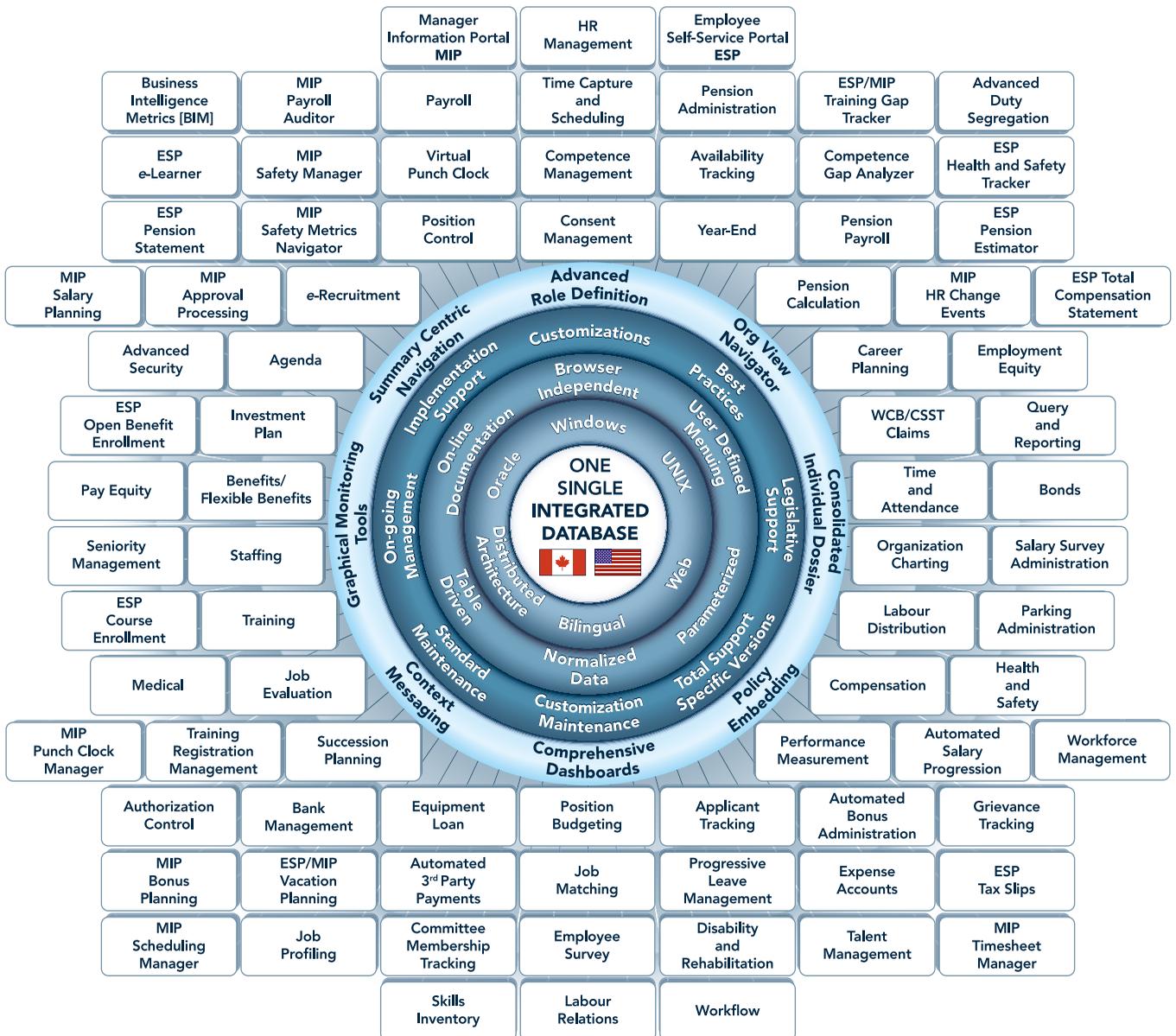
Jock Finlayson is the executive vice-president of the Business Council of BC.

1 Marcello Esteveao and Evridiki Tsounta, "Has the Great Recession Raised U.S. Structural Unemployment?," IMF Working Paper (May 2011).  
2 Jonathan Rothwell and Alan Berube, "Education, Demand, and Unemployment in Metropolitan America," Brookings (September 2011).



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# Maximize the Value of Total Rewards in Your Hiring Process

By **Peter Saulnier**, CHRP and **Vincent Chow**

*Alex, a recruiter in a mid-sized engineering firm, just got a phone call from Chris, a current candidate. Chris has been through three successful interviews for the role of Project Engineer and has received an offer from Alex for \$60,000. Chris is now telling Alex that another firm has just offered him \$75,000. Chris has decided to accept the higher offer and will pass on the one from Alex's company.*

*Alex is thinking – is there anything else I can do or say to save this deal? Or just let it be – after all, this is the fourth candidate this month who didn't accept their offer. "Are we that off?" she wonders, as she walks to tell the Compensation team that, thanks to their "competitive" ranges, they've just lost another candidate.*

## No Compensating for Poor Offers

One of the most challenging parts of the hiring process is the salary negotiation. Since most people don't work for free, compensation is obviously a very important reason why people work. However, talented employees don't just work for money. Today's employment deals include many items, some of which can be easily quantified, and some which can't.

In the hiring process, one thing is almost certain—candidates would like to maximize their deal and get the highest pay they can negotiate. Managers, on the other hand, may have a very different number in mind, whether due to limited budget, concerns about internal equity with existing employees, or simply because there is a clear pay range for the position.

What happens when you have done all your homework and you believe that what you're offering is a fair and equitable salary—but it's still not enough? Why do there always seem to be other organizations offering higher salaries than you?

As we live in a free market society, no matter how competitive your offer is, there is always a possibility that someone else will offer higher. In recent years it's become obvious that organizations need to utilize the "total rewards" concept effectively – not only for their existing employees, but also for their potential employees.

By selling your total rewards package effectively, organizations are showing candidates the true employment deal – not just the number on their pay cheque. Candidates will have a much fuller understanding of what they will receive if they

join your organization. It also takes away some pressure during the salary negotiation process as now the emphasis is on the overall value of the offer.

Here are three easy steps to ensure that you maximize your organization's total rewards programs to attract, and secure, quality candidates:

### 1. Making a List: Build Up a Full Inventory

Many organizations have all the pieces of a comprehensive total rewards program, but haven't spent time putting them together on one sheet. It is a rather easy thing to do: review your inventory of programs and summarize them together so it is easy for recruiters, hiring managers and candidates to understand the overall total rewards package.

There are five elements of total rewards:

- Compensation
- Benefits
- Work-life
- Performance and recognition
- Development and career opportunities

### Compensation

Salary is obviously a key element. However, many organizations also offer short term and/or long-term incentives. Sometimes it can be difficult to demonstrate the value of an incentive plan, especially when it's an equity-based plan (stock options, for example). However, it can be advantageous to explain to candidates what the payout could be in different scenarios. Also, don't forget some of the

extra incentives your organization may provide, such as a referral bonus, project completion bonus or recognition awards.

### Benefits

The list of benefits can be long, and most organizations have them summarized already. For those organizations with a retirement benefit, the biggest opportunity is to make it easy for candidates to understand its value. Don't just present the plan text, but also a few scenarios and real examples so new recruits can appreciate its significant potential value to them.

### Work-life

Work-life programs can range from flextime and telecommuting to health and wellness initiatives, to community involvement and volunteering programs. Today's organizations have established many programs to enhance their employee experience. These programs usually reflect the organization's culture and values – which for many candidates can be the real differentiator when they choose their next employer.

### Performance Management

It may seem strange to include this as a reward, but in many organizations the focus of the performance process has switched from appraisal to development. And accountability for the process is shifting from manager-owned to employee-owned, or at least shared accountability. Hence, employees can really benefit from a well-designed and well executed performance process that includes, for example,

goal setting which assists their career development, coaching meetings to help them perform well.

### Development and Career Opportunities

One of the common reasons that candidates consider joining a new organization, especially when they currently have a job, is that there may be better opportunities in a new organization. Some learning and development programs that organizations provide are easily translated to a dollar value to show to candidates. Others may be more difficult, such as a formal coaching program, a career development initiative, or a job rotation program. For the “right” employee, these programs and opportunities are invaluable.

### 2. Make the Data Come Alive

Once the list is done, focus on what you can do to make it easier for candidates to realize the value of all these items.

A great example is equity-based pay programs such as stock options or restricted stock. These can be a very effective way to create future wealth for employees, but it can be difficult for some candidates to visualize the actual potential. Companies should utilize scenarios and visual aids to illustrate the earning potential and provide candidates a positive (but realistic) view of the program.

Similarly, many organizations have a good retirement program but struggle to demonstrate its value. The same approach can be used to bring it alive for candidates. Even for a straightforward group RRSP, instead of simply indicating in your offer letters that your organization contributes 3 per cent, why not show it in real dollars based on earnings and help them understand the potential future value? Powerful stuff.

How about those total reward items that are harder to quantify? Be creative. For example, for courses that are offered or for career opportunities within the organization, how about showing candidates real employee testimonials, even video clips, about their experience working with your organization? Or even share your training calendar with your candidates so they truly appreciate your investments in employee development.

### 3. Customize: Own Your Rewards

Once you have the full inventory, create a few variations based on your frequent hires and/or targeted demographic groups. Figure

out what would be the perceived strengths (and areas of improvement) for various groups, and then emphasize the most attractive items with each candidate group.

For example, for a retail company the majority of hires are frontline sales employees. The rewards emphasized in the hiring process for this group might be your flexible hours, or learning opportunities, or very competitive branch bonus plan. Whatever they are, make sure that you present the most relevant rewards in

a way that the candidate groups will best understand their value.

Follow these three steps and you'll be well equipped to show candidates the true value of your offer. And that will give your hiring process the best chance to succeed. **P**

Peter Saulnier, CHRP and Vincent Chow are partners with Logan HR Management Inc. (LoganHR.com), a consulting firm specializing in career transition, compensation, and performance management.

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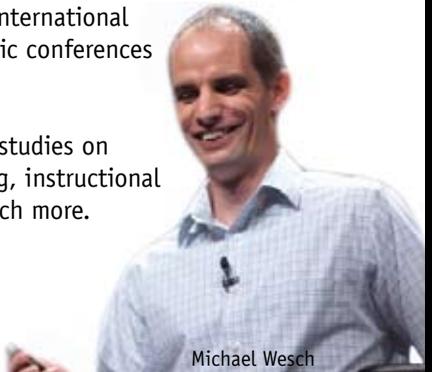
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# Lang Knows Her Business (and Yours)

Gemini-award winning business journalist Amanda Lang is CBC's senior business correspondent, reporting for, and occasionally hosting, its flagship nightly news program, *The National*. She is also co-host of *The Lang & O'Leary Exchange*, a daily business program airing on CBC News Network.

Taking her first job in journalism with *The Globe and Mail*, Lang subsequently became the New York correspondent for *The Financial Post* newspaper, before making the leap to television. Part of the team that launched the Business News Network, Lang moved to CNN as a reporter and anchor, before returning to Canada in 2002 to join BNN and CTV; she has been with CBC since 2009.

Lang is author of the bestseller, *The Power of Why: Simple Questions That Lead to Success*, a book that shows readers how to reignite curiosity at any age to become more innovative and productive. She brings her engaging insights and style to BC HRMA Conference 2013's plenary stage on May 2, 2013.

## Heading into 2013, what are the primary 'big picture' elements that will continue to present a challenge for 'business as usual' in Canada?

The biggest challenges are those beyond our control – namely the threat of a new recession in the US (brought on by its inability to maneuver around the so-called Fiscal Cliff of higher taxes and lower government spending) and the threat of a breakdown in the Euro zone (which could take many forms). Because those challenges are beyond our control, it makes sense for Canadian business to focus on expanding and investing, albeit with an eye on the risk of recession. Just as a homeowner today needs to be mindful of rising rates and the risk of recession in planning expenditures, businesses need to balance between prudence and expansion. Leaning too heavily toward prudence – which Canadian businesses arguably are doing now, and hoarding cash – represents a very real domestic risk, as well as a lost opportunity.

## If Canada is facing a challenge in its productivity gap, what are some of the means companies can leverage to fill the gap and fuel more innovative futures?

In the short term, using capital on hand to invest in their businesses is an easy way to improve the efficiency of a business and therefore its productivity. But ultimately productivity will be driven by innovation. It is often said that no business innovates for the sake of it – but only in the face of

a need to do so. In order to create that need, and foster a culture of innovation, businesses are wise to open themselves to competition. That can be domestically, by expanding, or by increasing their export markets. Either way, we need the sense of urgency that comes from competitive pressure to make us innovate. And innovation is the best route to productivity.

## How important to a company's ongoing success is its recruitment process?

Few things are as important to a business' success than the people it can attract and retain. Matching the right skills to the jobs you have – and recognizing that not all of those skills come with a degree or diploma attached – can be a key differentiator for a business. Once on board, committing to training is an essential component of success. Canadian businesses have shown a poor relative record of training their recruits and staff. That's an investment that many businesses should be making now.

## What gives companies the edge in seeking to attract top talent—and what is the single most important contribution HR might make in this area?

Though the answer to this question may vary by industry, I truly believe that if a business wants to have fully engaged employees, delivering all of their capability to their jobs, then connecting with them on multiple levels makes a big

difference. Internal cultures that foster a sense of the 'why' of the business help connect employees with their jobs, but also helps them see how their jobs are a direct line to the end goal of the enterprise. Making that connection for non-front line employees (and sometimes even for those on the frontline) can be a huge contribution from HR. Helping to identify training or feedback opportunities is one of the ways to keep employees engaged.

## How do you envisage the role of HR moving forward in an era of multiple demographic shifts and moving targets?

Because HR has been identified as one of the impediments to employee innovation, the hope is that HR professionals move out of their silo and seed the entire workforce. Acting as a conduit of information from employees to the systems designed to help them internally, and perhaps as important, being themselves an ambassador of corporate culture – the 'why' of the enterprise – make HR professionals central to the success of a business. But some of the rules of how to engage employees are going to have to change. A new generation of workers who live with social media will view much about the workplace – especially a traditional culture of hierarchy – with a jaundiced eye. Businesses can't afford not to connect with those employees, and HR professionals may be best suited to help create the system to engage them, using those same tools. **▶**

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