

HRMA

PeopleTalk



Measuring the Dividends of Diversity

Hear and Now:
The Art of Listening

The New Language of Business:
Courage Required

XYBOOM: Eight Key
Generational Issues (& Opportunities)

How Accessible is Your Workplace...Really?

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Added peace of mind

Green Shield Canada's Prism health and dental plans now deliver even more protection to those individuals who are losing or not eligible for group health benefits

With costs escalating, provincial health insurance plans limiting, reducing or eliminating coverage for many health-related services, and many organizations capping, cutting or eliminating healthcare benefits, the need for individual supplemental health insurance is more essential than ever before. This is especially true for those who are losing or not eligible for group benefits through their employer, including:

- Retirees • Staff facing job loss
- Part-time and contract workers
- Students and overage dependents
- Divorcees and surviving spouses

Thankfully, by taking advantage of the economical, yet comprehensive healthcare coverage offered by Green Shield Canada's Prism health and dental programs, these individuals can gain the security they deserve, knowing they have protection against both unexpected and routine healthcare expenses they'd typically have to pay for out of their own pocket, including prescription drugs, dental care, visits to registered therapists and specialists such as chiropractors, and much more.

Understanding that everyone's healthcare needs and finances are unique, Prism offers individuals three programs to choose from – Prism Spectra, Prism Precision and Prism Continuum. Within each of these programs are four different plans, each offering varying levels of coverage.

Eight of the twelve Prism plans available offer guaranteed acceptance if coming off a group plan – with no medical questions or exams required – an important consideration if an individual has any pre-existing medical conditions. **Individuals coming off ANY group plan are eligible to apply, no matter who their prior coverage was with.**

More out-of-pocket protection than ever

Best of all, numerous enhancements have been made to Prism plans this year, plus a NEW Level 4 Plan with higher maximums is now available, giving individuals even more protection against healthcare expenses.



Why Prism Health and Dental?

Faster underwriting – We typically process applications in just 10 days, unlike many providers who can take up to 8 weeks

No waiting period – once your application is approved your coverage will become effective on the first day of the following month, unlike some plans that make you wait months before you can take full advantage of all of your benefits.

Special rates for families – recognizing that families may have an even greater need for coverage, Prism has separate rates for families, unlike many providers who only offer per person rates

Fewer rate increases – Prism Plans typically only incur rate increases every two years, unlike many insurance companies that raise their rates annually

The smart solution

By providing individuals with information about Prism, you'll help them gain the critical individual healthcare coverage they need. NO employer contributions, contractual obligation or fees are required on your part. Simply distribute our Prism material to those individuals who are losing or not eligible for group benefits and we'll do the rest. You can request Prism brochures and enrollment packages by phone, fax or online – whatever works best for you.

Learn More

If you have any questions, want more information about Prism or would like to receive Prism packages to distribute to your employees, simply:

- ▶ Visit us online at www.sbis.ca/peopletalk
- ▶ Send an email to peopletalk@sbis.ca
- ▶ Call us at **1-800-667-0429** or **416-601-0429** between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm ET

You won't get an automated response like you will with many companies. Instead, you'll speak directly to one of our helpful Customer Service Representatives. We care enough to answer each call personally.

A trusted, established and respected company



As Canada's leading agency for individual health and dental plans and the exclusive partner for Green Shield Canada's Prism health and dental programs, we market and administer the Prism plans, while the billings, claims and risk are managed by Green Shield Canada.



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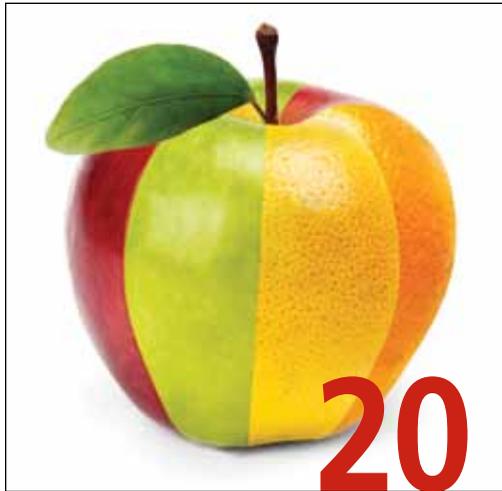
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PeopleTalk

CONTENTS

V20 | N3 | Fall 2013



association news

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

cover story

- 20 **Measuring the Dividends of Diversity**
By Cathy Gallagher-Louisy

"It is never too late to give up your prejudices."
—Henry David Thoreau

"Parents and schools should place great emphasis on the idea that it is all right to be different. Racism and all the other 'isms' grow from primitive tribalism, the instinctive hostility against those of another tribe, race, religion, nationality, class or whatever. You are a lucky child if your parents taught you to accept diversity."

—Roger Ebert

"Recognize yourself in he and she who are not like you and me."

—Carlos Fuentes

"Diversity and independence are important because the best collective decisions are the product of disagreement and contest, not consensus or compromise."

—James Surowiecki

departments

- 10 **people and perspectives**
How is diversity supported in your workplace—and what is the greatest benefit?
- 12 **upfront and online**
HRVoice.org, LinkedIn and Twitter highlights
- 13 **members' corner**
Diversity Unified by Volunteerism
By Debra Finlayson, *CHRP*
- 14 **training and teambuilding**
Hear and Now: The Art of Listening
By Amelia Chan, *CHRP*

XYBOOM: Eight Key Generational Issues (& Opportunities)
By Jane Terepocki, *CHRP*
- 18 **peopletech**
Embrace Diversity in the Social Media Age
By Anca Aroneanu, *CHRP* and Christine McLeod, *CHRP*
- 30 **leadership**
Bring Diversity Off the Sidelines (And Into Play)
By Michael Bortolotto

Different Thinking About Neurodiversity
By Isabelle St-Jean
- 34 **recruitment & retention**
The Language of Business: Courage Required
By Raluca Manolache, *CHRP*

'Top Recruiter' Taps Local Talent for Global Challenge
By Kyla Nicholson, *CHRP*

Bottom Up Succession: Diversity Key to Retention
By Pam Paquet
- 40 **workplace wellness**
How Accessible is Your Workplace...Really?
By Mark Gruenheid
- 42 **CHRP update**
HR Urged to Focus on Strategy and Finance Skills
- 43 **raising the bar**
Light at the End of the Accommodation Tunnel?
By Graeme McFarlane
- 44 **bottom line**
National Trends Evident In BC
By Jock Finlayson
- 46 **voice and vision**
Olga Shcherbyna: Seeking Diversity Clues

BC HRMA: Unity in Diversity

WELCOME TO OUR FALL EDITION OF *PeopleTalk*. As a topic we take to heart in the HR profession, the ties between diversity and so much positive potential are clear. As always, the topical takes on dynamic meaning in the context of our own organizations and careers.

As previously vowed, I took the opportunity to sit down, listen and speak with BC HRMA members throughout the summer. Whether traveling to take part in the Central and Southern Interior regions' year end celebrations or speaking locally at another BC HRMA event in Burnaby, the experiences have been eye opening. While the chance to connect one-on-one with many of you remains the obvious highlight, one thing became apparent—just how different the events were in the varying regions.

Those differences in style and substance alike are what make each of our eight regions so dynamic. That they are underlined by a shared passion for our profession and our association is what make them so effective. By its very nature, from the make up of our membership to the breadth of the membership events across the province, BC HRMA is unified in diversity. To see that evidenced time and time again makes me feel extremely proud to be part of this association. It speaks to BC HRMA's impact in communities near and far, as well as the rewards of being a member.

This issue of *PeopleTalk* explores the impact of diversity on organizations, as well as some of the opportunities moving



Shannon Joly, CHRP

forward. As a human resources professional, I have faced challenges concerning diversity in my own working role in public education. When out visiting the schools, I see both the increasing diversity in our student population, as well as an organizational challenge shared by many—the need to constantly revisit and adapt our programs and HR strategies to meet these changing needs from many perspectives such as culture, engagement and staffing.

Given that our classrooms are just snapshots of a broader demographic picture, I have often wondered if organizations as a whole are prepared to meet the challenges of the emergent diversity. As demographics continue to shift, they depict a future of ever greater diversity in the workplace. This makes the impact of diversity on the bottom line of any orga-

nization an issue every HR professional needs to recognize. There is peril in inactivity and great potential for those who both factor and embrace the ongoing change.

As you take a break from the heat of the Summer and settle into Fall, I hope you will take a moment to enjoy this thought-provoking issue as you consider the important role we play as HR professionals in issues surrounding workplace diversity.

Shannon Joly, CHRP
President, BC HRMA
sjoly@bchrma.org

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Of Obstacles and Opportunities

JOHN F. KENNEDY ONCE SAID, "IF WE CANNOT END NOW our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity." As an appeal to our essential shared humanity, these words have endured, if not ultimately prevailed.

While originally grounded in compliance-based models of hiring that ensured employment equity regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, building a better business case for diversity has greatly expanded its definition and exploded prior models. Its proponents have ranged widely from Albert Einstein to Maya Angelou to Malcolm Forbes who defined diversity as "the art of thinking independently together."

In this issue of *PeopleTalk*, we delve into the science behind that art and explore the multiformity of opportunities that define the dividends of diversity. We also reach out to BC HRMA members to ask "How is diversity supported in your workplace—and what is the greatest benefit?" (p.10).

Getting beyond the rationale for diversity to bring it forward as both a business driver and culture builder, the Canadian Institute for Diversity and Inclusion recently examined diversity measurement practices in Canadian organizations. The results of their landmark research lie at the core of this issue's cover story "Measuring the Dividends of Diversity" (p.20). Unsurprisingly perhaps, diversity is firmly on the radar for nearly four-fifths of Canadian employers.

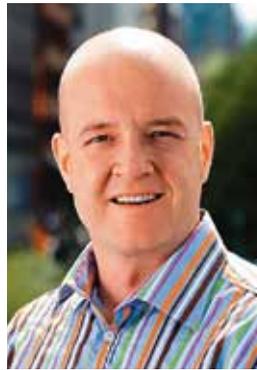
During our own discussions of diversity at the editorial table, the topic transformed from a thorny subject to take on a new bloom of definition—one that spoke to origin, but reached further to explore the hidden strengths within every individual, team and organization alike.

From Mark Gruenheid's exploration of "How Accessible is Your Workplace... Really?" (p.40) to Michael Bortolotto's first person appeal to "Bring Diversity off the Sidelines and Into Play" (p.30) to our back page interview with Olga Scherbyna of Diversity Clues (p.46), we go to source with those on the front lines of ongoing efforts.

We also go between the lines to factor some of the enduring obstacles. Challenging the orthodox concepts of mental 'disability', Isabelle St-Jean serves up "Different Thinking About Neurodiversity" (p.32). What shines through in both Raluca Manolache's "The New Language of Business: Courage Required" (p.34) and Amelia Chan's "Hear and Now: The Art of Listening" (p.14), is that our greatest impediments are most often within: our fears, prejudices and faculties alike.

Fortunately, what began as a topic of affirmative action has evolved into an unparalleled opportunity and reality. As per Jane Terepocki's "XYBOOM: Eight Key Generational Issues & Opportunities (p.16), Impact99's "Embrace Diversity in the Social Media Age" (p.18) and Jock Finlayson's demographic overview in "National Trends Evident in B.C." (p.44), the world in which we live and work is already, and increasingly, heterogeneous.

What we make of it defines the true genius and ultimate dividends of diversity.



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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 those whose diverse efforts make our Fall 2013 issue greater than the sum of its parts.



Cathy Gallagher-Louisy
Measuring the Dividends of Diversity p. 20

Cathy Gallagher-Louisy is a diversity and inclusion leader and certified cultural competence trainer and coach with over 20 years experience in a range of corporate, government and non-profit organizations. As director of community partnerships and knowledge services with the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (cidc.ca), she leads the institute's research projects and develops key partnerships. Previously with Hewitt Associates, Cathy developed, implemented and led Hewitt's diversity, sustainability, philanthropy, and community involvement strategies in Canada.

Michael Bortolotto
Bring Diversity Off the Sidelines and Into Play p. 30



Michael Bortolotto is a successful professional speaker and author (positiverebel.ca) who was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at the age of 16 months. Through an extensive routine of time-consuming exercises, he led himself beyond the various challenges and obstacles which threatened to prevent him from walking, talking, and using his arms, hands, and fingers. By using real life experiences and examples, he encourages, persuades, and leads audiences to rethink and realize that anything is possible with enough determination and a firm focus on results.



Amelia Chan, CHRP
Hear and Now: The Art of Listening p. 14

As the founder and principal consultant of Higher Options Consulting Services (hr-options.com), Amelia Chan is passionate about operational excellence and employee engagement. Her boutique consultancy provides a wide range of human resources and immigration services to small to mid-sized businesses. While holding her CHRP, Amelia is also a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) and a BC Commissioner of Oath who enjoys volunteering with various non-profit organizations to support educational opportunities for training and development.

Mark Gruenheid
How Accessible is Your Workplace...Really? p. 40



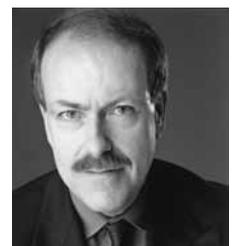
For over two decades Mark Gruenheid has focused on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. A graduate of UBC, Mark has a professional background in recruiting and has worked as a counsellor, marketer and job developer. As the manager of Abilities in Mind (AIM) at the BC Centre for Ability (abilitiesinmind.ca), Mark regularly facilitates workshops on disability awareness, vocational rehabilitation and job development. He envisions a world where "disabled" is not used to describe people.



Jane Terepocki, CHRP
"XYBOOM: Eight Key Generational Issues (& Opportunities) p. 16

Jane Terepocki, CHRP is a recruiter and trainer in the human resources department at Mountain Equipment Co-op—Canada's leading outdoor retailer (mec.ca). She takes pride in building collaborative, long-term relationships, and understanding the nature of the issues people face, so that she can improve their employment experience. Jane is a member of the International Leadership Association, and has attended conferences in the USA and Europe.

Jock Finlayson
National Trends Evident in BC p. 44



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.

“How is diversity supported in your workplace—and

Barbara Walker, CHRP



HR manager
City of Whitehorse

Barbara Walker is the manager of human resources for the City of Whitehorse, Yukon. She holds an MA, Leadership from Royal Roads University and has held her CHRP since 2010. She is passionate about strategic leadership and is focussed on bring organizational values alive in the workplace.

Over my career, workplace diversity has evolved from dialogue about valuing visible minorities in the workplace towards our current struggle with valuing the observable and unobservable differences among employees. It remains easy to hold the ethnocentric view that everyone around us has the same world view, but in so doing we miss out on huge opportunities. Learning about the strength of our differences and building on our shared values creates opportunities for improving the customer experience, internally and externally. At the City, one of our diversity challenges is met by valuing the differences and strengths in generational abilities, needs and ambitions.

A current example of diverse attitudes is the degree of comfort across generations with the rise of social media in our employee and external customer groups. The City is adapting our business processes to enable electronic transactions and electronic inclusion into public and organizational policy decisions to bridge the divide between generational cultures.

When we provide opportunities for feedback by all generations, we are better able to design tools, processes and products that will meet the needs of all of our citizens.

Lynda Gerty



director of engagement
Vantage Point

Lynda Gerty is the director of engagement at Vantage Point and co-author of The Abundant Not-for-Profit: how talent (not money) will transform your organization. With over 15 years of leadership experience, Lynda thrives on harnessing the power of talented people to move causes and organizations forward. She has enjoyed previous adventures in grassroots community organizing, the travel industry and electoral politics—and is currently engaged as a board member with ArtStarts and HFBC Housing Foundation.

At Vantage Point, we intentionally attract, engage and integrate people with a broad diversity of talent and expertise into our workforce. As a not-for-profit organization, our unique competitive advantage is our ability to pay talented people with meaning. Last year, our eight salaried employees worked alongside almost 200 knowledge philanthropists (in 235 different customized roles) as one integrated talent team. Together these people contributed passion, talent and expertise to further our mission.

This diversity of experience, skills and perspectives exponentially increases our impact in the community. Each time we connect with a new knowledge philanthropist, our team is invigorated by their unique perspective, insightful questions and innovative ideas—and our increased capacity to make new ideas happen. And the greatest benefit of engaging with the diverse brilliance of our community is that it replaces not-for-profit scarcity with possibility.

Andrew Woods



HR consultant
Lexxon

Andrew Woods, MBA is a professional speaker, university lecturer, trainer and author of BOOM! engaging and inspiring employees across cultures. He has provided leadership, management development, cross-cultural communication, innovation and creativity workshops for over 400 companies in 16 countries. He is co-chair of the BC HRMA Fraser Valley roundtable on career advancement and volunteers as a business mentor for S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and Canadian Youth Business Foundation.

Accepting people for ‘who-they-are’ and embracing cultural and individual differences is crucial in today’s globalized economy. At Lexxon, we embrace cultural diversity across the organization. Our training team has a wealth of international and local training experience which provides depth, cultural sensitivity and the ability to train individuals using multi-modal techniques to ensure a uniform message across cultures and training with lasting quantifiable results.

Switched on businesses rely on their people to work together as a functioning team, but subtle and deeply ingrained beliefs and values often interfere. Most of us aren’t aware that we have prejudices that get in the way of open relationships. Transforming and re-framing a ‘them’ to an ‘us’ mentality breaks down invisible barriers within an organization. The organization evolves into a culture of increased trust and improved moral which helps ensure better teamwork, higher productivity and increased profits. We see this both in our organization and those of our clients.

what is the greatest benefit?"

Gena Amulung, CHRP



HR and employee benefits
Capri Insurance Ltd.

Gena Amulung, BMgt, CHRP is human resources and employee benefits at Capri Insurance Ltd. based in Kelowna. With 10 years of experience in a variety of industries in both Alberta and British Columbia, her background in customer service and employee benefit programs has allowed her to expand her HR experiences into the insurance industry. The current HR role is relatively new to Capri and she is excited by the opportunity to contribute to a vibrant workplace.

Capri is one of the largest insurance brokerages in the Interior of British Columbia. Consequently, we service a diverse clientele. It's important to us to hire a workforce which reflects the community we serve in terms of gender, ethnicity and age. As an added benefit, clients are serviced by friends and neighbours who understand their specific needs.

Employees describe working at Capri as being part of an extended family. New employees receive a company orientation where they learn about Capri's culture from our CEO. We enjoy successfully built programs that encourage and reward employees who contribute back to the workplace by bringing forward new processes or ideas to create a better workplace.

Participation in wellness campaigns and community charities allow employees to share interests and create bonds that extend beyond the workplace. Activities are employee led. They choose the method and means to support diversity and strengthen our Capri family.

Brenda Wagner



director of HR
Axis Family Resources

Brenda Wagner obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology in 1989 and Post Baccalaureate in HR Management in 2005. She has worked supporting adults with autism and developmental disabilities in a management role with Axis Family Resources, as an HR coordinator at Finning, and returned to Axis as director of HR in 2007. Axis Family Resources is a multi-service social services agency that has served children, youth, adults and families since 1992.

The greatest benefit of diversity is the opportunity to learn about different approaches to situations, building stronger relationships, better understanding of people and a more accepting staff group.

Axis Family Resources is a social services agency that supports the diverse people and staff we serve in many ways. We hire staff of all ages, gender, sexual orientation, staff who have struggled through challenges that many of our youth/families are going through, and staff with different cultural, experience and educational backgrounds.

We celebrate people's differences and work within their skills and abilities to achieve their goals. Our staff review cultural awareness on an annual basis and encourage those who want to be involved to maintain their culture or differences in their lives. We have an annual Team Day—and coincidentally this year's theme is Diversity. Each region creates fun activities for staff to participate in while they learn how diversity in the workplace makes for a stronger workplace.



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BC HRMA LinkedIn Weighs in On “Reasonable” Termination Notice

Georges Gracieuse, CHRP asks: What would you consider to be a “reasonable” working notice for the termination of the services of a senior sales person of 50 years working 11 years with the company.

Karin Wills responds: Even the best intentioned employee may tend to curb their normal enthusiasm once they have been told “we want you to work for “X” more weeks, then we don’t need you anymore”. That person, aside from having to present a professional face to customers during that time frame, also has to act on finding something new. That is a difficult situation to be in and everyone will manage it differently.

Kael Campbell, CHRP responds: A recent round of termination by an EPC firm provided 8 weeks notice, 18 weeks severance pay and career counseling for someone with similar length of service. I would highly recommend the company contact an employment lawyer so they can fully understand the obligations and liabilities that could arise.

Dr. Eli Sopow responds: “Working notice” can be an emotional death sentence to many, especially if it is unexpected. I personally am very opposed to such concepts as “working notice” and “constructive dismissal.” All work requires an emotional and personal investment, some activities far more than others. Unfortunately some employees define themselves by what they do, not by what they are as humans. In such cases losing a job is far more than losing work. It is also a loss of identity, self-image, and hope. “Working notice” can be extremely traumatic, akin to a slow but inevitable death.

Top BC HRMA Tweets

RT @CareerBuilder: Leaving your job doesn’t have to ruin your career—#HowTo make a graceful exit: cb.com/1doqV00

Managers and Gen Y: The mindsets that keep them apart ow.ly/oyOIF

RT @bhv: A Creative Approach to Career Development - @BCHRMA ow.ly/onRhn

HR Trends Survey 2013: Key Results



The results of the 2013 HR Trends Survey demonstrate continued expectations for steady or increasing revenue, a need to be flexible to operate in an environment of reorganization, restructuring and change, and a need to access talent that can manage these changes and deliver on organizational revenue targets.

hrvoice.org/hr-trends-survey-2013-key-results/

Improving Communication Skills with Immigrant Employees

By **Jeff Madigan**

Is your pizza being delivered by an agriculture engineer from Dubai? We have all heard the familiar story of how highly-skilled, internationally-trained professionals are wasting time in low-wage survival jobs. Does this happen because of inadequate language skills? hrvoice.org/improving-communication-skills-with-immigrant-employees/



Successfully Leading a Diverse Workforce

By **Gobinder Gill**

In the past, the North American workplace was quite homogeneous. Workers, for the most part, knew the unwritten rules about what was expected and how things were done. Today’s workforce, however, includes employees from various backgrounds who bring with them different workplace perspectives, preferences and expectations. The rules can no longer remain unwritten.

hrvoice.org/successfully-leading-a-diverse-workforce/

Do Your Training Programs Assume People Think Alike?

By **Ed Bernacki**

Research confirms that training often has a cognitive bias in its design and delivery. Whether you use MBTI, KAI or DISC, it’s obvious that people do not think alike. Yet do we use this insight when designing training programs? The research suggests not.

hrvoice.org/do-your-training-programs-assume-people-think-alike/



Five Top Team Esteem Blocking Behaviours

By **Randy Kennett**

Team esteem is one of the most important drivers of organizational effectiveness in the workplace. Team esteem can be described as how people feel about the team, as well as how people feel about being a member of the team. Moreover, team esteem can have a powerful impact on any workplace. hrvoice.org/five-top-team-esteem-blocking-behaviours/

Diversity Unified by Volunteerism

By **Debra Finlayson**, CHRP

In *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*, author Scott Page explains how diversity trumps like-mindedness through the four dimensions of cognitive diversity: perspectives, perceptions, solution generation and predictive models.

Diversified teams offer what Page calls “super-additivity”. When a group of people work together and one person makes an improvement, the others can often improve on this new solution even further—improvements build upon improvements. (Princeton, 2007)

Volunteers Define BC HRMA Value

Such diversity is built into the DNA of BC HRMA membership, just as the spirit of volunteerism serves as an integral driver of member value. At every level, volunteers make it happen, bettering their industry, association and lives in the process.

When peering through the lens of diversity, there are few association bodies as all-encompassing as BC HRMA. Its vision, to be recognized as the ‘place’ for leading people practices, holds significance at every level within its structure—as well as impacting the broader business community.

BC HRMA is a volunteer-driven organization, led by a board of directors whose expertise establishes and guides the vision, mission and mandate of the association. Within their ranks, there is a wide array of business and human resources leaders spanning industry sectors, each selected for their knowledge and experience to ensure BC HRMA is a viable and professional entity within and outside the association—both today and tomorrow.

The membership itself spans the experience scale from student to senior HR and business leader, across all industries. Moreover, BC HRMA membership reaches vertically and horizontally within organizations. This diversity has given rise to a value offering that both addresses the wide breadth of membership needs and utilizes their wealth of skill sets and professional experience—benefiting industry and member alike. Uniquely volunteer-driven in many aspects, the inclusive platform of roundtables, symposiums and other

learning events is constantly evolving according to member demand and desire.

Member Benefits a Collaborative Creation

In the summer issue of *PeopleTalk*, Tim Read, CAE, stepped into this Member's Corner column to outline the wide range of BC HRMA member benefits and highlighted the development, networking and savings made available through the association's products, services and programs. Our network of volunteers is the key to this offering, providing a rich body of expertise that supports a collective matrix of energies and experiences which link member's services to member needs.

Internally, BC HRMA staff work directly with various volunteers to garner needed advice. Volunteer committees provide innovative and creative thought at every juncture, including the annual conference and tradeshow, professional development programs and member communications such as HRVoice.org and *PeopleTalk*.

“Our network of volunteers is the key”

Another key group of volunteers, the regional advisory councils (AC) and committees operationalize the vision, mission and mandate of the board throughout BC HRMA's eight regions assisted by their member relations manager (MRM). These councils provide a representative voice for each region that reflects the diverse geographic, industry and experience levels of BC HRMA members.

Recognition of Shared Success

It is the diversity within the collective expertise and experience of our volunteers that defines the true value offering of the BC HRMA—key to moving member events and services from good to great such as HR Connects, HR Community Showcases and the HR Café to name just a few.

While the BC HRMA volunteer connection runs along multiple lines, its

frontline are the membership leads, phone ambassadors and event hosts who welcome new members into the community. The regional AC's provide plenty of support here too, creating regional CHRP study groups and connecting mentors to protégés in the mentorship program.

In keeping with the culture of respect fostered by the members, our volunteers also seek out those deserving special recognition through the BC HRMA awards program. That these recognitions extend from giving out scholarships to those beginning their HR career journey to those leading the profession to new heights, is indicative of both the association's breadth and meaning to those within the membership.

What our volunteers have recognized and shared in abundance is the powerful opportunity to grow and develop both their careers, as well as a bigger picture grounded in both community and commerce.

The Volunteer Opportunity and Impact

For those seeking to become involved with BC HRMA, connect with your regional MRM and let us understand your professional needs so that we provide an overview of current opportunities. Change is constant, so an ideal fit may be just around the corner. As MRMs, we strive to create meaningful volunteer experiences thriving from the shared successes that emerge.

There is tremendous satisfaction derived from working with such a diversely-skilled group of volunteers. Their hearts, minds and voices have long defined BC HRMA—just as their collective efforts have redefined both the membership value and full scope of HR.

As a member relations manager for BC HRMA, I can assure you that nothing brings a wider smile than being asked about the on-going initiatives of our regional volunteers. The answer is always along a similar line: they are doing amazing things—for one another, the association and their organizations. **◆**

Debra Finlayson, CHRP, MA (c.) is BC HRMA's Member Relations Manager for the Fraser Valley and Greater Vancouver regions.



Hear and Now: The Art of Listening

By **Amelia Chan**, CHRP

HR PROFESSIONALS SEEK INSPIRATION, insights and ideas on a daily basis. After all, herein dwells innovation and no small measure of fulfillment. However, the greatest asset available to HR in this arena is often the most underutilized—namely, our listening skills.

Neither the challenge nor the barriers are unique to HR, but shared by everybody on the planet to varying degrees. Nonetheless, nobody likes to have poor listening skills pointed out.

What if there was an extreme upside? What if a measure of humility might restore both the humanity of communications and provide better business results than imagined? Can listening really make that much of a difference?

The Most Critical Skill of All

According to author Bernard Ferrari who wrote *Power Listening: Mastering the Most Critical Business Skill of All*, the answer is a definitive ‘yes’. Ferrari holds good listening in the pole position for leading business success and integral to gaining the fresh insights and ideas which maintain

that success. Using his version of the 80/20 rule, we should devote 80 per cent of each conversation to listening and only 20 percent to speaking—primarily asking questions.

Unfortunately, while the math ratio of ears to mouth supports the importance of listening, Ferrari points to just the opposite in terms of where our efforts are most often focused. Presentation has become a primary skill set, especially in our interconnected, multi-media moment. Given the exponential growth of communications technologies, the core concentration on communications is understandable.

While presentation is key, good listening is the foundation upon which better business is built. However, many executives take listening skills at face value and spend little time in their development.

As communicators, we have come far. As listeners, we need a rethink.

Three Traits of Great Listeners

The thrust of Ferrari’s research is that listening and great leadership are intrinsically linked. Of greater application are the three core traits he identifies in any

great listener. Across industry and rank, they show respect for others’ ideas, talk less than they listen, and challenge the assumptions and subtext underlying each conversation.

The art of listening requires “slowing down” to be in the moment. If we are to understand the essence of what others are trying to convey, conversations need to be approached differently. While invariably there are desired outcomes for both parties in any conversation, the opportunity to recognize the contributions being made and explore beneath the surface yields valuable outcomes.

If we want to motivate and engage, we need to keep the lines of communication open and reciprocal.

The more tools we apply, the more isolated or separate from each other we often seem to become. We are caught up with the tools but not the “talk”. The greatest gift we can give others is being present in the here and now.

While modern technologies can be used creatively for dynamic exchange, they can also reduce communications to a series of “me to you” messages—neither

requiring nor generating a great deal of engaged interaction between parties. Likewise, the hierarchical history of the workplace has been traditionally grounded in similar uni-directional communications.

Two Steps Ahead (or Getting Ahead of Yourself?)

This leads to a breakdown in communications, which is understandable. Fortunately, it is also remediable.

We often hear what we want to hear instead of listening without judgment and for comprehension. We aren't connecting when we are just moving the conversation along—and people can sense it when you are only going through the motions or paying lip service with your ears.

Part of the reason for that is the inherently task-driven mindset that predominates in many work cultures. This creates a checklist mentality, whereby the nuance of response is easily passed over. Selective hearing is a common enough affliction for the goal-oriented, but perfunctory listening is more pervasive. As a result, despite the key messaging and cleverness of our communications, much of what we have to offer one another, whether frustration or innovation, simply fails to be addressed—or possibly even heard.

We are trained to look for the skills, knowledge and experience for the immediate roles to be filled. In doing so, we can fail to recognize of the value-added qualities of a candidate once they become employees. It's these hidden talents and special qualities that our future stars need to develop to become the leaders of tomorrow. We just need to be more aware of the potentials to be found outside the scope of our expectations.

While it might be a truism for HR professionals, we can't truly get to know people if we aren't listening to them.

The Universal Language

Listening is the true universal language. It doesn't matter whether we are familiar with the dialect or understand the words. The meaning (and interpretation of the intent) comes from more than the words being used via all the nonverbal cues of the message being delivered. The words themselves actually only communicate a small percentage of the message.

When we are relying solely on technology to communicate, we can actually be

missing up to 80 per cent of the actual communications—and the potential.

Human resources is really about communication at its core. We, as a function, are employed to think for our living—and our ears are our minds best asset. We can't provide strategies when we don't have a good handle on the situation. For this, we need to listen.

“break the
greatest
communicator
barrier of
all—the one
between
our ears”

Listening with Fresh Ears

Beyond Ferrari's three essentials, consider the following:

Anchor Your Intentions: Make a list of things you need to do and prioritize. Clear your mind of the chatter through active meditation. Focus gives you clarity of action and the presence of mind to be open and “available” to your management team and employees.

Be, Hear, Now: Be cognizant that we are neurologically incapable of hearing and formulating a response at the same time, so be in the moment. Instead of waiting for the next moment to speak or focusing on making your point, hear what the other person is telling you – this includes all body language, visual cues and tone.

Tailor Your Talk: Focusing on your audience is the key to creating compact communications tailored to their ears and your mutual need. It also keeps your talk to a tailored minimum and ears open to opportunity. This fits well with Ferrari's 80/20 approach and allows your conversation partner a full 80 per cent input.

Reflect, Question, Connect: If we are basing our responses on our assumptions

or imperatives alone, we are listening to understand. Commit as much of your talking as possible to asking questions. This not only garners valuable information, it provides assurance that you are indeed listening—and that your conversation partner is being heard. While this fuels innovative potential, it also builds a reciprocity of respect.

Avoid Assumptions: We have all judged books by their cover only to ‘discover’ their worth later. In HR, there is seldom a later without consequence. Talent is hired elsewhere and turnover tells its own internal tale. Consciously or not, in a busy environment and our rush to ‘get things done’, we make a lot of quick judgments of an individual or a situation.

Superficialities can be misleading. Diversity in culture and communication styles can also lead to misunderstandings. These simple errors can lead to ineffective interactions, impasses or even bigger problems. Fortunately, they can also be eliminated with more mindful exchanges from the start.

Lead With Your Ears (and Actions):

People are influenced and inspired by conviction and clarity of action. Leadership needs HR to foster that connection with the executive, managers and employees alike. Employees want to be heard, but need to see that what they say and do makes a difference. CEOs, executives and managers need to lead with words and actions that showcase vision, humility and interest. The reason for HR's seat at the table in the modern ‘idea’ economy has never been more apparent.

While all of us can further hone our listening skills, it is refreshing to realize how a small shift in our attentions can remove many of the existing obstacles to innovation and productivity in the workplace. There is no need for a complete overhaul, just some fine tuning and smart modifications applied to break the greatest communicator barrier of all—the one between our ears. 🗣️

As founder and principal consultant of Higher Options Consulting Services (hr-options.com), Amelia Chan is passionate about operational excellence and employee engagement. Her boutique consultancy provides a wide range of human resources and immigration services.

XYBOOM: Eight Key Generational Issues (& Opportunities)

By Jane Terepocki, CHRP

“The world has never been richer, and yet we somehow cannot see how we can leave the next generation a world better than what we inherited. Are you willing to imagine together and take risks to realize possibilities for a better future?”



GREAT IDEAS ARE MOST OFTEN BORN of tough questions.

In May 2013, I was a panelist for the XYBOOM Conference, a multi-generational event that owes its origins to a good conversation—in this case between a few 20-somethings scratching their collective heads.

How was it that such a well-educated generation was unable to find work in their fields of interest?

From that conversation, the first full day event emerged in 2012 with a simple, yet complex, mission: to facilitate intergenerational understanding and collaboration of shared dialogue, and to develop mentorship and research opportunities.

Well run, dynamic and thought-provoking, the relevance of the XYBOOM Conference continued to grow in its second year. From two morning panels to live case studies in the afternoon followed by a Wisdom Café, the opportunity to share views and questions were constant throughout via social media and face-to-face.

Our panel tackled a question on the minds of all in attendance: “In the Workplace: What Generational Issues Hinder Organizations Today?” Together with Carol Chiang, partner, KPMG, Val Litwin, VP, franchise operations, Nurse Next Door and James Palmer, VP, sales and marketing, Great Little Box Company, the panel generated a strong exchange of ideas and a succinct summary of eight key issues.

1. Intergenerational Issues in the Workplace Are Not New: However, new dynamics such as employees staying in the workplace longer and flattened organizational hierarchies have forced

intergenerational issues to the forefront. There is more generational blending with various generations working as cohorts rather than hierarchical structures, which may also result in more space for generational conflict.

Opportunity: Different generations working closely can foster different perspectives and increase creativity—it is important to embrace generational diversity and challenge organizations or systems that don’t. There are also more opportunities for mentorship within the wider spectrum of experiences.

2. Practice Emotional Intelligence: With the various generations together in the workplace, it is important to practice emotional intelligence and be aware of individual and generational preferences

Opportunity: Knowing when to compose an email that demonstrates formality and respect vs. an email that is brief and to-the-point may involve understanding generational preferences. Communications need to be customized based on who the audience is. The ultimate goal, regardless of generation, is effective communications.

3. Culture-based Hiring: Those in hiring positions make decisions based on limited time spent with the candidates (e.g. the 45 minute interview) while candidates often focus on short-term needs such as immediate pay.

Opportunity: When hiring, more time must be spent on determining cultural fit and soft skills; these traits should take precedence over generational perceptions and hard skills.

4. Fostering Passion: Individuals can and should bring their passion to an organization. However, organizations must have a clearly communicated rallying cry that channels these passions effectively.

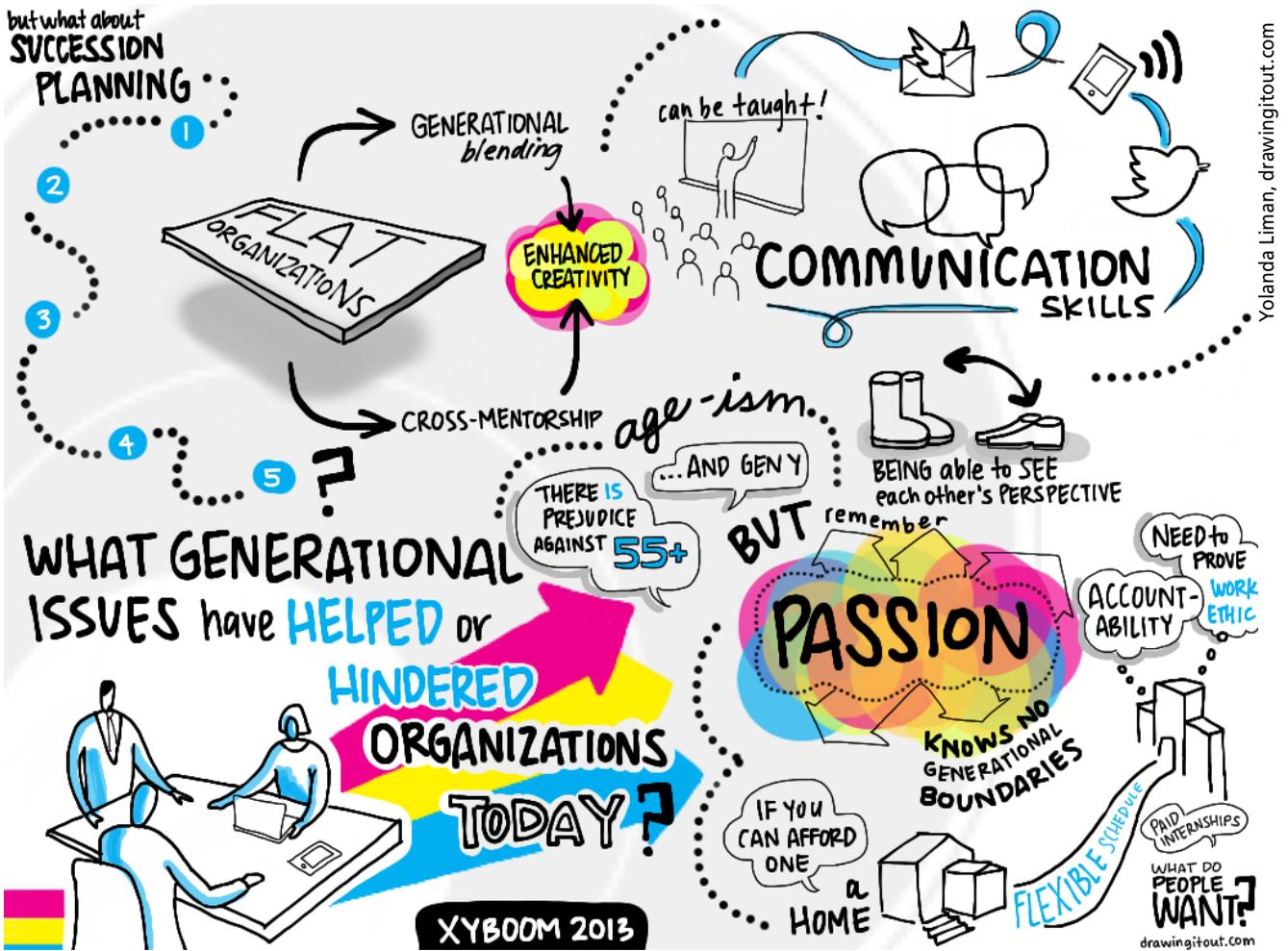
Opportunity: If people know what the organization needs from them, it will help to drive the passion within themselves. Passion can also be complemented with recognition and reward programs.

5. Succession Planning: People change careers more often today and retention strategies need to keep pace. The average duration for individuals of any generation with a company is about five years. This, combined with flattened organizations and people delaying retirement makes workforce management especially tough.

Opportunity: Companies need to balance succession planning for tomorrow vs. managing the perceived bottlenecks of today.

6. Work/Life Balance for All Generations: There is a shift taking place that puts higher importance on work-life balance. When compared to other countries with rapidly growing economies such as China or India, our workforce is not as high strung.

Opportunity: Create meaningful flexibility for employees. For instance, flexibility can be in the form of allowing work from home when it makes business sense, or a focus on output rather than hours worked. BC-based businesses may need to manage perceptions they are not as competitive as their counterparts in other parts of the country and globally.



7. Work Ethic and Perception: It is evident that all generations work hard, but do younger generations expect to be recognized and rewarded for their hard work faster? There is a perception that Gen Y-ers are not as willing to put in the hours to build a strong foundation but are more focused on instant gratification. While companies need to be transparent that long hours are the norm (if that is the case), potential and new employees still need to understand strong work ethics are what is valued.

Opportunity: Mentorship is important for putting expectations in context. It can be a great way to build organizational trust and empowers individuals to be their

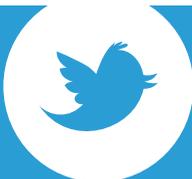
own leaders and figure out how they want to move forward. Mentors can be sought within an organization but also in the community, which can then extend mentorship into life experiences.

8. Unpaid Internships: There appears to be more and more unpaid internships. Young people and new graduates are faced with the cost of working in unpaid internships in order to gain experience to be more competitive for paid positions.

Opportunity: If faced with the decision to accept an unpaid internship, negotiate what other benefits the position would result in (e.g. contacts, leads for paid employment).

It is amazing how one day of exchanging ideas and experiences can help define the genuine generational issues at the heart of the workplace AND unearth a wealth of possible solutions. At the end of the day, it does not matter if you are X, Y or Boomer, only that you recognize the dreams and aspirations of others. In that regard, forums such as XYBOOM which bring all generations together, go a long way towards creating the working solutions needed most. **P**

Jane Terepocki, CHRP is a recruiter and trainer in the human resources department at Mountain Equipment Co-op—Canada's leading outdoor retailer (mec.ca).



Changing the mindset of the community to promote instead of look down on trades. #xyboom - Jonathan Tsang @OfficeCritic

Blend of working together, cross-mentorship, coaching and sharing lead to better partnerships - Carol Chiang #XYBOOM - XYBOOM

Conference @XYBOOMdotCOM "It's about emotional wisdom & respect, acknowledging that we are at different stages and backgrounds" - @vltwin #xyboom - CYBF BC @ CYBFBC

Last audience question: how do you get dialogue to start within your company? #XY-BOOM - XYBOOM Conference@XYBOOMdot-COM

#xyboom panel highlighting the need for effective workplace communication skills to help unleash passion & chemistry - Connie Chong @connie_chong

Audience question: Younger generation demands flexibility, but is the current workplace feasible to achieve this? #XYBOOM - XYBOOM Conference @XYBOOMdotCOM

It's the relationship building and informal conversations that lead to successful formal business pitches and ideas #XYBOOM - Carolyn Shum@shumbum1210

Overheard at #XYBOOM: "At the end of the day we are all human" - XYBOOM Conference @XYBOOMdotCOM

Embrace Diversity in the Social Media Age



By **Anca Aroneanu**, CHRP and **Christine McLeod**, CHRP

DIVERSITY IS DEFINED AS “THE CONDITION of having or being composed of differing elements: variety.” Variety itself is the spice of life—something that extends to today’s workplace. We can now speak our mind, complain, celebrate, share, and learn instantly through a variety of tools. That variety is considerable and loaded with potential for organizations and individuals alike.

The Evolution of Connectivity

The business world has changed and continues to do so—especially the way we connect. We used to communicate face to face alone. Then came the telegraph followed by the telephone and fax. Then email revolutionized the workplace. Instant messaging quickened the scenario considerably. We no longer had to get up from our desk to talk to someone. Cell phones emerged the size of shoe boxes and quickly shrank in size while growing in usage: smartphones.

THEN came social media.

Do you know how many social media tools there are out there? I don’t. The number changes every day. Only a decade ago, most of us only had one phone and one email address at work. If you needed something from a colleague, the decision to call or email was relatively easy. Now, employees can choose from any of many tools to communicate and collaborate. Moreover, the word ‘social’ does not negate the fact that there are tools for all facets of business: social advertising and marketing, analytics, employee facing, customer facing, and the list goes on and on.

Facing Down the Fear Factor

So why are some companies terrified of social media?

Perhaps it’s a numbers game and some business leaders are feeling a bit intimidated. There IS power in numbers and the number of employees conversing online grows daily. To think of

this in terms of ‘the company’ vs. social media is both destabilizing for any internal culture and pointless. Good luck overpowering something that multiplies faster than you can say ‘social media.’

Regardless, some companies have decided to take the avoidance and denial route. ‘Social media is distracting our employees so we are going to ban everyone from using it at work.’ But wait—employees have smartphones WITH social media tools on them. ‘Okay then, we will ban employees from using their smartphones at work.’

Tying Tools to Productivity

How effective is this mentality? This is obviously not a productive dialogue for any organization. The telephone used to be viewed as a distraction, as was email.

In fact, email is still one of the biggest enemies of productivity. A survey of corporate email users done by Osterman Research showed that on average, we spend 2.5 hours per day working with email.

However, while it may feel productive to put emails into folders, respond and delete—that’s not productivity. Labour productivity is defined as the amount of goods and services produced by one hour of labour. When email is checked, nothing is produced.

Even worse, if employees spend more than a quarter of the work day on email, how does collaboration prosper? Two or more brains are better than one. Unfortunately, even if the workplace is dynamically diverse, the majority of those valuable contributions are stifled by such routines as email management. Email has a definite function, but is a poor reflection of social media’s productivity potential.

Nonetheless, social media has just as often been painted with the ‘time-wasting’ brush. Logically, it makes sense to assume that with more online tools productivity should decrease even

“if your organization is living in denial, it will not be able to do so for long”

further, but this is not the case. Microsoft has recently completed a two year study and found that employees who use social media are more productive.

Furthermore, employees noted that management underestimates the benefits of using social tools and that they could perform their jobs better if management was more supportive of social tools.

Banning social tools is clearly not the answer if organizations expect high productivity, collaboration and engagement.

If You Can't Beat Them...

Many companies are already embracing social media and seeing results. They are using social media tools at every level from marketing to HR, and as a result, have gained exposure, increased sales and developed their brand image.

However, as mentioned, there are so many tools available. How do you choose what's best for your organization?

A simple Internet search brings up a wealth of articles on different tools available and how to choose the best one. The truth is it doesn't matter what social tool(s) you use. Just pick one (or several) and see where it takes you. Like any other tool you use in your organization, its effectiveness needs to be gauged according to how it helps achieve agreed upon company goals.

Moreover, when the same technologies are put to use by teams working together, the results can even surpass strategic expectations. And if you are allowing people to work together, you will be amazed at what they can achieve (and no micro-managing required!) The collaborative effectiveness unleashed by social tools is best served by a quick anecdote.

Why Social Media Works

As the event coordinator for Impact99, I am part of a national team and not one member of our team lives less than an hour apart. How do we get anything done? While we certainly don't have a central office, we are always in touch. We have regular team meetings using Google Hangouts. We discuss and debate topics using Twitter, Facebook and the Impact99 blog.

Ninety-nine per cent of our communication takes place on social platforms. Last year, we used 37 Signals and BaseCamp. This year, we collaborate on

Sendgine. We have 'trains' for all the different aspects of Impact99. We can share files, comment on posts, and create 'to do' lists. What I love about working on Sendgine is that I never feel like I'm 'out of the loop.' There is complete transparency and clarity in everything we do. While virtual, it has been the best environment I have ever worked in. Social tools = motivation and engagement.

"Ninety-nine per cent of our communication takes place on social platforms."

Social media tools increase collaboration and productivity in today's diverse work environments. The corporate landscape is changing. Just as we embrace diversity with our human resources, it's time to apply this acceptance to social

tools as a means of unlocking the potential of that diversity.

It does not matter which tool you use, but if your organization is living in denial, it will not be able to do so for long. Competition, collaboration and innovation are key to any business success—and social media is both a driver and a provider in these crucial areas. Don't be afraid of diversity and change. Engage with social media. **📌**

Anca Aroneau, CHRP is event coordinator for Impact99 (impact99.ca) and Christine McLeod, CHRP is Impact 99's chief possibilities officer.

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Measuring the Dividends of Diversity



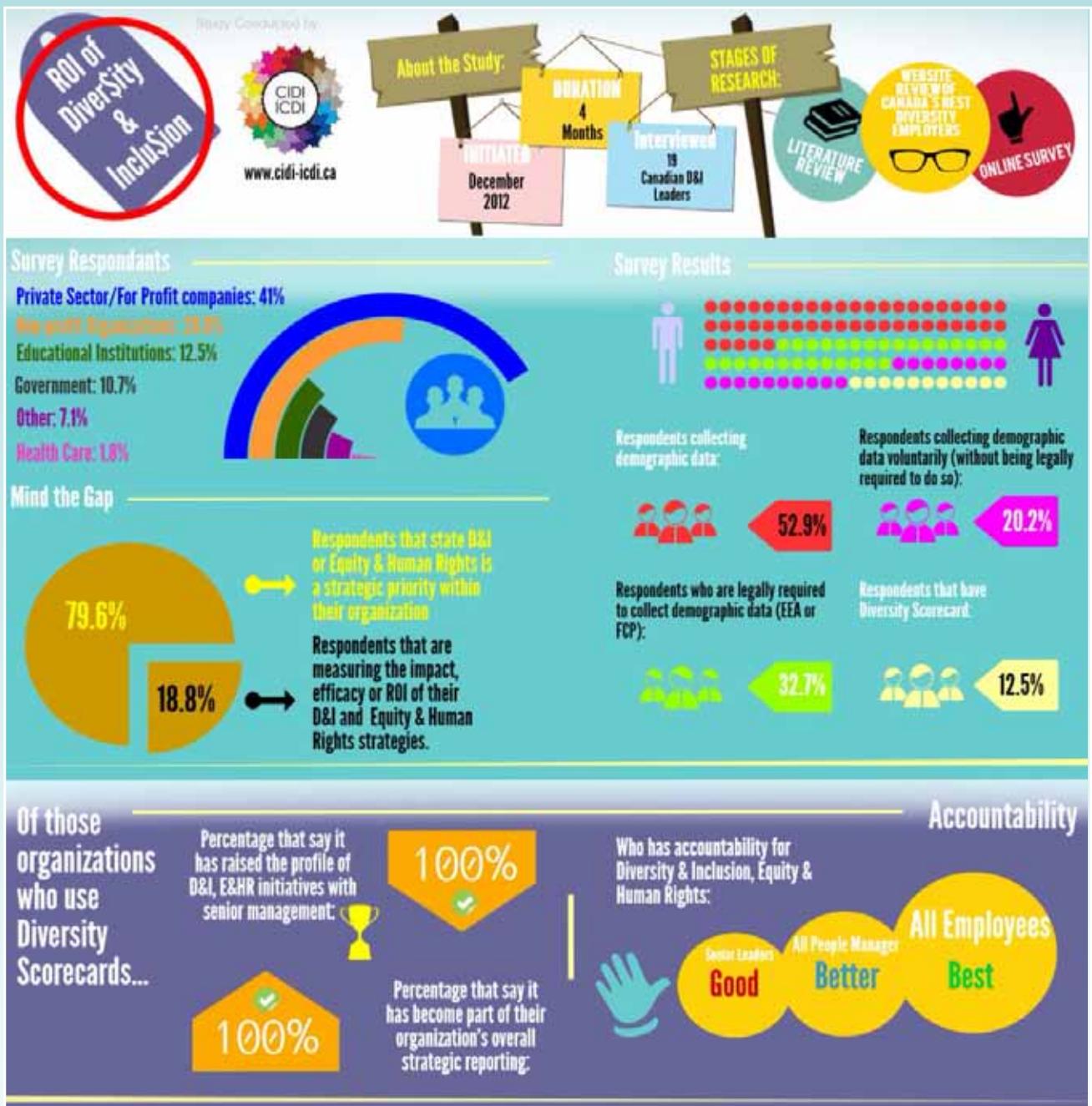
By **Cathy Gallagher-Louisy**

Imagine a company launching a new product or service without the ability to measure sales and profitability.

Imagine a public sector or non-profit

organization launching a new public service without the ability to track how much it costs or how many people it will serve.

Unthinkable, right?



Yet, surprisingly, most organizations do not apply the same rigour to measuring the impact of diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives.

Many organizations today understand the business case for D&I. Our workforces, customers and the public are all becoming increasingly diverse. Organizations that are not addressing these changing demographics stand to experience negative impacts, including:

- loss of market share amongst different communities;
- decreased ability to serve the diverse population;
- loss of access to talent;
- lower employee engagement and higher turnover rates among underrepresented groups of employees; and
- many other potential impacts.

Employers already understand these issues exist and there is growing pressure to address them. Yet, how can organizations ensure they are going beyond understanding the rationale for diversity to actually improving inclusion within their workplaces? Are your diversity efforts making your organization more inclusive?

These questions confound most HR and diversity and inclusion practitioners and very few have the answers. With this in mind, the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (CIDI) committed to the research required.

The CIDI is a national non-profit organization, that is quickly becoming a trusted advisor for all issues related to diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights management within Canada's workplaces. Our goal is to help employers, business leaders, HR and D&I practitioners effectively address the full picture

of diversity within the workplace by providing innovative and proven strategies, research, measurement tools, and educational supports with the goal to help improve the overall inclusivity of the Canadian workforce.

“The primary purpose of diversity measurement and scorecards is to answer the questions: Are we making our organization more inclusive with our initiatives, and how do they impact the organization’s overall strategic goals?”

New Research on Canadian Organizations

The new research report, *What Gets Measured Gets Done: Measuring the Return on Investment of Diversity and Inclusion*, examines diversity measurement practices in Canadian organizations. Our research was comprised of a comprehensive literature and website review, an online survey with responses from 56 Canadian employers, and 19 in-depth research interviews with D&I leaders across the country.

While many are committed to D&I, our research found few organizations conduct even the most basic of measurements.

Diversity & Inclusion is a Strategic Priority in Our Organization (Really?)

Nearly four-fifths (79.6 per cent) of Canadian employers who responded to our survey indicated D&I, equity and human rights are considered a strategic priority within their organizations. However, less than one-fifth (18.8 per cent) reported that they measure the impact, efficacy, or return on investment (ROI) of their diversity initiatives.

This is puzzling. How many other strategic initiatives does your organization NOT measure?

Many organizations invest significant resources in D&I initiatives. Why would so many organizations NOT measure something they consider to be a strategic priority? How can they know whether their efforts are effective and having the intended impact?

Fewer Than Half Collect Basic Demographic Data

Just over half of the survey respondents (52.9 per cent) had conducted an employee census or asked employees to self-identify based on demographic categories. That means nearly half of employers do not track the most basic demographic information about their employees.

Why does this matter? If you don’t understand who is in your organization, how can you develop strategies that respond to their needs?

Gathering employee demographic data is widely considered to be a basic practice and a first step for organizations dedicated to focusing on diversity and improving inclusion.



CHRP's at Coast Capital Savings Branch

At **Coast Capital Savings**, we pursued CHRP as a team. The designation has led to people strategies more aligned and involved with the needs of our organization.

— **Jay-Ann Fordy**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union

CHRP

Certified Human Resources Professional

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HR professional

Discover the CHRP Designation at bchrma.org/chrp



Measuring demographics in your organization is essential to identifying gaps in representation, and determining inclusion issues and barriers to advancement. Access to this data allows you to set goals, establish appropriate programs and initiatives, and measure results. This ensures that you are building a representative pipeline of the leaders of tomorrow.

Organizations that have done this effectively have yielded great results. They have the ability to compare their workforce to Canadian census data and determine if certain groups are missing from their staff. They can track representation, hiring, promotion and turnover rates to determine if certain groups are experiencing fewer promotions or greater turnover. Moreover, they can examine employee survey results by demographic breakout to determine how different groups are experiencing the workplace.

Collecting demographic data is essential and key to understanding your employees, allowing HR programs and business strategies to respond to the needs of your organization's unique workforce.

Measurement Provides Greater Visibility with Leadership

Today's organizational leaders use a balanced scorecard, dashboard or a suite of standard metrics to track the performance of strategic goals and priorities.

However, our study found that less than 13 per cent of Canadian organizations have a Diversity Scorecard.

Interestingly, of those that had a Diversity Scorecard, 100 per cent said it has raised the profile of their diversity initiatives among their leadership; similarly, 100 per cent said that it has become part of their organization's strategic reporting. That's a fairly compelling argument for having such a scorecard.

“The primary purpose of diversity measurement and scorecards is to answer the questions: Are we making our organization more inclusive with our initiatives, and how do they impact the organization's overall strategic goals?”

It is becoming increasingly difficult for many organizations to justify ongoing expenditures or use of resources. Developing robust metrics to prove the value of D&I initiatives is a cornerstone to their ongoing success.

continued on page 26



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Standard Measures of Inclusion

Standard metrics among organizations measuring the impact of D&I include:

- Representation of diverse/under-represented groups by job level;
- Recruitment, promotion, and turnover statistics by demographic group;
- Employee engagement scores by demographic group;
- Diversity-related or inclusiveness questions on employee surveys;
- Human rights, harassment, or discrimination complaints;
- Participation in training on diversity, inclusiveness, equity and/or human rights; and
- Participation in employee resource groups / networking groups.

Going Beyond Standard Metrics

In addition to the standard measures, leading organizations are monitoring inclusion by correlating many data points (e.g., employee survey data, performance management data, mean performance rating by demographic group and employees on flexible work arrangements).

More advanced organizations measure diversity-related metrics in their external and internal pipelines. For example, they track the number of people hired from diversity recruiting efforts, and/or examine the demographics of their succession planning programs to ensure that the next level of promotions better represent the available labour pool.

Very few organizations go a step further to measure leading indicators (as opposed to lagging indicators). Lagging indicators are measurements of what has already happened in an organization, such as turnover, complaints or litigation. Conversely, leading indicators predict what will happen with an employee's experience and are more important than lagging indicators when measuring D&I work.

Additionally, very few organizations measure D&I impact throughout an employee's lifecycle. One major public sector organization was amongst the few Canadian organizations we

examined with extensive metrics at all levels of the organization, and for a range of employee experiences.

CIDC found it was rare for organizations to conduct ROI analyses of their D&I efforts. Only three of the organizations examined had undertaken an ROI analysis of specific programs. However, in *The Diversity Scorecard*, Dr. E.E. Hubbard suggests that the ROI on D&I initiatives outweighs the ROI on almost any other business initiative. Clearly more organizations could benefit from such analyses.

“Ultimately the scorecard can only do so much...Leaders need to truly understand and drive D&I efforts, and work on the identification, mentoring and development of diverse talent to ensure they are promotion ready.”

Norma Tombari,

Director, Global Diversity at RBC

What Makes a Diversity Scorecard or Measurement Framework Successful?

CIDC's research indicated that a diversity scorecard is most successful when:

- The top leader is accountable for the results and holds their leadership teams accountable;
- The leadership teams regularly read and understand the scorecard;
- Leadership and managers understand how they can personally impact the results;
- Leaders are involved in developing the scorecard;
- The results are relevant to the organization's strategic goals;
- The organization is ready for the measures;
- A wide range of historical data is available on all aspects of the employee experience throughout all levels of the organization;
- It is brief and easy to read;
- It is communicated effectively and consistently; and
- Measures demonstrate efficacy and impact, not just list activities undertaken.

Holding Leaders and Managers Accountable

A few progressive organizations have tied diversity results to their leaders' annual performance objectives. In some organizations, diversity-related metrics are incorporated into the competencies of partners, senior leaders, or all people managers.

However, the best practice discovered was at a large national employer where everyone in the company has D&I competencies included in their annual performance review. Diversity and integrity were tied to the company's core values, so the weighting of D&I measures on performance reviews was higher for those at the director level and above.

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Key Findings from the Research

Hard metrics are vitally important, but we need both qualitative and quantitative measures to tell the full story of where an organization is on its diversity journey. Measurements must always relate back to the strategies and key objectives of the organization.

It's not enough for the HR or D&I team to develop a scorecard on their own. Diversity scorecards are most successful when they are developed with and owned by the senior leaders, where there are regular reviews and consistent effective communication of the results—and leaders understand how they can personally affect the results.

Most importantly, if measurement strategies are to be truly useful, they need to go beyond simply providing a list of activities and programs undertaken; they must demonstrate the efficacy of D&I initiatives and show how these impact the organization's strategic goals.

But We Can't Afford to Measure

You may feel like your organization doesn't have enough resources to implement a Diversity Scorecard or a robust measurement strategy. On the contrary: you can't afford NOT to measure.

As within most organizations these days, chances are you are struggling with tightening budgets. What gets cut? Anything that cannot show value. Measurement is key to showing you are actually making progress toward your goal of creating a more inclusive organization, and that your D&I initiatives are valuable to the organization's strategic goals.

Dig Deeper With Diversity

To read the full report along with the detailed toolkit to help you implement or improve diversity measures, download the report from our website <http://www.cidi-icdi.ca/reports/what-gets-measured-gets-done.pdf>

Visit our website to learn more about our latest cutting-edge research on Canadian organizations and the many ways we can help you achieve your organizational inclusivity goals. www.cidi-icdi.ca

By Cathy Gallagher-Louisy, director, community partnerships and knowledge services, Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion.

About the Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion

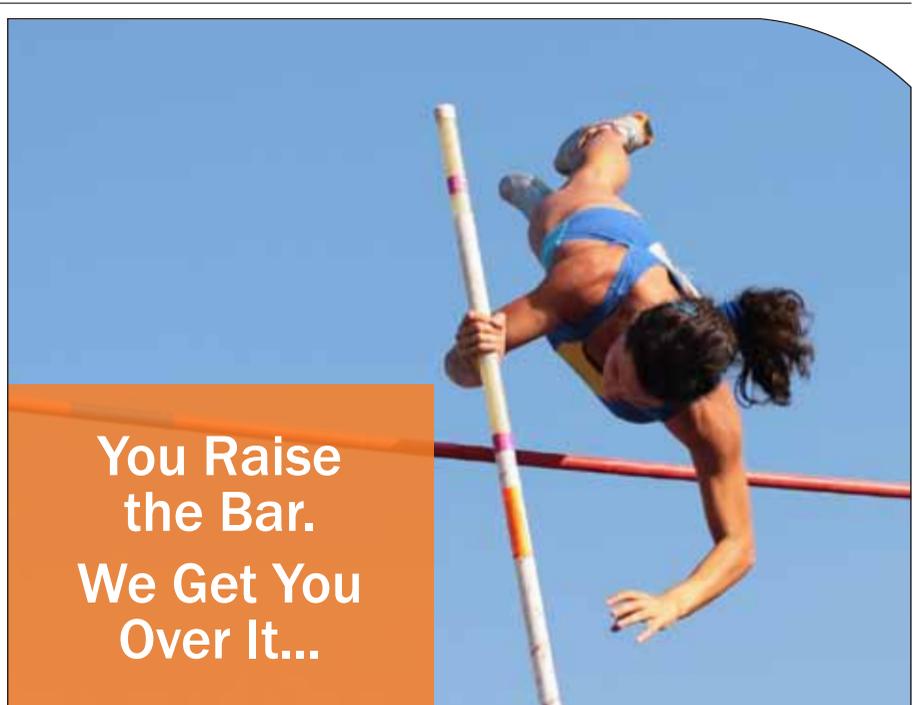
The CIDI is a national non-profit organization that is quickly becoming the trusted advisor for all issues related to diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights management within Canada's workplaces.

The CIDI helps employers, business leaders, and HR and D&I practitioners effectively address the full picture of diversity within the workplace by providing innovative and proven strategies, research, measurement tools, and educational supports with the goal to help improve the overall inclusivity of the Canadian workforce.

Effectively managing diversity and inclusion is a strategic imperative for all Canadian employers. In many organizations, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) practitioners are responsible for the achievement of big performance goals, as well as transforming their organizations into inclusive work environments; however, they are often under-resourced which creates challenges achieving their organization's strategic goals.

At CIDI, we take an integrated and holistic approach to the full range of diversity, inclusion, equity and human rights issues faced by our members and clients. We believe that diversity is a journey, not a destination.

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Tools and Techniques for Implementing Measurements

Strategize First

As with any business priority, you need a strategy. If you don't have a D&I strategy, you risk having your diversity efforts viewed as a series of disjointed events—and they might just be. Create a D&I strategy document that outlines your objectives, what actions you'll take to achieve them, and how you're going to measure success. Set goals that align with your organization's overall strategic objectives. Determine what success will look like and how you will know (if and when) you've achieved it.

Ensure Leadership Support

The tone from the top is one of the single most important pieces of a diversity initiative. Regardless of how much grassroots support exists in your organization for your D&I programs, if your leadership doesn't support these initiatives, ultimately you will not see the results you are hoping for.

If leadership doesn't understand the business case for diversity, you need to work with them until they do. Furthermore, they need to believe in the business case and live it. If it's not important to them, it won't be important to the organization. Employees are very

perceptive and savvy about leaders who don't 'walk the talk', so it's vitally important that they 'get it', and exemplify inclusion through their own daily behaviours.

Make the Case for Measurement

Your organization is likely already conducting some form of measurement—metrics such as voluntary and involuntary turnover. Make the business case for why measurement of your D&I initiatives is essential to your organization's success, and demonstrate how it will impact your organization's strategic goals.

As a bonus, use the WIIFM (What's In It For Me) argument with any detractors, and consider articulating how collecting data may also benefit other departments, divisions, or business units within your organization.

Conduct an Employee Census

An employee census is a basic first step to understanding how your organization is performing. Demographic data can be a very powerful tool. Don't be afraid of it. Organizations that are most successful in the area of D&I collect robust demographic data so they can understand who their people are.

If you don't have the resources internally to collect the data, consider utilizing an external service provider.

Something Borrowed...

If you have limited resources, work well with them:

- Recruit diversity champions who already exist in your organization, e.g., employees who are involved in employee resource groups, diversity councils, or other D&I initiatives. Ask them to take on different aspects of the measurement process and give them tasks that will take a limited amount of time. This way, you can spread out the workload.
- If you have an analytics, reporting or performance management team, find out what data they are already collecting. Perhaps they can spare an analyst for a few hours per week or month.

If these are not options within your organization, then consider engaging an external service provider that can take your data, analyze it and create a useful scorecard for you.



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Tools and Techniques for Improving Measurements

Review and Reassess

Review your diversity strategy and measurements to ensure they are aligned with the key objectives of your organization.

Show Impact

Determine methods to evaluate efficacy or impact for every goal or activity listed on your strategy. Your D&I report should be more than just a checklist of activities you have completed.

Hold Your Leaders Accountable

If you are not already doing it, make the case to include some form of leadership accountability that is tied to D&I. Make sure it aligns to your organization's strategic goals or existing leadership competencies.

Before You Go...

Ensure you are conducting exit interviews, focus groups, and/or individual interviews with representatives of all key demographics to reveal insights about different groups' experiences of your organizational culture.

Communicate. Communicate. Communicate!

Communication is one of the more critical pieces

when it comes to a diversity strategy. Even more so when it comes to measurement.

Explain to your people why you are measuring, what the measurements mean and how they can personally impact the results. Include your metrics on your intranet and public website to demonstrate your commitment to improving inclusivity.

Review and Repeat

Review your measurements regularly to determine if they are telling you the complete story. Ask questions like:

- How are we doing? What have we achieved to date?
- What has worked? What didn't work, and why?
- What needs to be adjusted?
- Where do we go from here?

Stay the Course

One of the most important pieces of advice we can give to D&I practitioners is: be patient and creative. Forgive yourself for not being able to do it all. We know you have lofty goals and limited resources. You are doing this work because you

are passionate about it and because you know it is good for your organization and your people. Harness that passion to engage others and encourage them to contribute.

Just Do It

Ask for and be open to feedback on your measurements and reports. Once you have it, make sure you do something about it.

If D&I is a strategic priority, it is imperative that you understand how you are doing so you will know if you're successful.

You can probably come up with a thousand reasons why you shouldn't or can't measure, but there's one essential reason why you should: *What Gets Measured Gets Done.*



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Bring Diversity Off the Sidelines (And Into Play)

By Michael Bortolotto



SPORTS ARE A GREAT METAPHOR FOR A LOT OF THINGS IN LIFE—business included. Regardless of the game, sport offers a lot of true life lessons that stretch from the playing field to the classroom to campus to work.

From Spectator to Game Changer

“The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a person’s determination.” – Tommy Lasorda

One of the things I have always liked most about sport is how it inspires us as spectators. We have all had times in our lives when we find ourselves standing on the sidelines watching the action and saying, “I’m just as capable as any player out there. If only...”

This is the point at which we either step back from the field or take the steps to move from being an observer to a successful game changer.

Those steps differ depending upon the sport and to a certain extent the position, but one thing is universal—the drive. It can work wonders on and off the field, in business as in life.

Unfortunately, getting off the sideline is more of a challenge for some of us.

Stepping Past the Boundaries

“Do you know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play.” – Mike Singletary

I know because I stood on that sideline long enough to see it for what it was: an invisible boundary made of poor attitudes (some of them mine), lack of understanding, discrimination and ignorance. Those attitudes and boundaries were mine alone to change. How other’s defined my unique physical difference provided me all the motivation I needed to get off that sideline.

I have Cerebral Palsy and I was determined to play football. As I came to discover, many of these boundaries were based on my assumptions of other’s assumptions.

My first opportunity to participate as a real player came when I started high school and was trying to find a way to fit into the social fabric of my new school. One morning I found myself on the soccer field watching 19 boys playing football at the far end of the field. It soon became very clear and apparent the two teams weren’t even because one team was scoring almost at will. Watching the game in silence for approximately five minutes, I was wondering where they were going to get another player for the team with only nine players.

Then, one of the player’s shouted at me, “Can you play football?” I quickly yelled back, “What?” Another boy yelled back asking the same question, “Can you play football? We need someone on our team to make the game fair.”

Daring to Attempt the Impossible

“You were born to be a player. You were meant to be here. This moment is yours.”

– Herb Brooks

My answer was an immediate and unequivocal, “Yes!”

That’s when they let me know I would be playing wide receiver. Suddenly I was in the game, but for how long I wondered? They had yet to see me in action and had no idea about my secret misgivings. Playing wide-receiver was an impossible position for me to play. Having Cerebral Palsy meant I couldn’t make my arms and hands work in the coordinated fashion required to catch a football on the run.

What had I been thinking? Once they found out I was incapable of catching a football, I was sure they’d boot me off the field and my life would slide back into the reality of being a sideline spectator.

On the very first play, my ‘secret’ was unveiled for all to see. I ran down the field, past all the defenders, and into an open spot. The quarterback saw me standing alone and threw a bullet pass right at me. I raised my arms and hands to catch the ball—and my worries became a reality.

I dropped the pass.

All the boys surrounded me. I waited for the inevitable excusal which surprisingly never came. What they wanted to know was my secret to running zigzags so fast?

Everyone was talking at once, but one thing I remember hearing is, “Hey, if Michael could catch the football, he’d be unstoppable and the best wide-receiver on the field.”

Hitting the Bullseye on the Fly

“What you lack in talent can be made up with desire, hustle, and giving 110 percent all the time.” – Don Zimmer

That’s when they began brainstorming new ideas to get me to catch the football. This was amazing, for the first time in my life, people were looking beyond my apparent physical condition and focusing on how they could access my unique and effective running abilities to raise the quality of their own game.

The team came up with some really crazy ideas to utilize my unique running style and compensate for my inability to catch. The idea we settled upon was to use

me as a human bullseye. This involved running down the field, stopping, exposing the face of my chest and stomach to the quarterback, and letting the quarterback hit me with the football, “Bullseye”!

This sounded like a really painful and dangerous idea to me, but I was on the field and in the game. “Sounds good. Let’s give it a try.”

The plan was for me to run down field 25 yards, stop, turn around, and not move. So that’s exactly what I did and sure enough it worked without a hitch. Amazing, but just as I’d thought, the ball hurt when it hit me. Over the next three weeks every time we played football, I was unstoppable. That said, being on the field came at a punishing cost to me physically and that had to stop soon.

**“Leadership,
like coaching,
is fighting for
the hearts and
souls of men
and getting them
to believe
in you.”**
– Eddie Robinson

Innovation is Smart Play

“Stubbornness usually is considered a negative; but I think that trait has been a positive for me.” – Cal Ripken Jr.

One morning I decided to change my stance. Instead of exposing my chest to receive the ball from the quarterback, I switched to a Kung Fu position. The idea to protect my chest was both defensive and novel. While I WAS catching the ball, my bruises were far from metaphorical.

The ball is snapped. I cross the line and run my pattern, stop and turn around. When the ball came towards me, my hands started moving in a circular motion

to bat the ball away from me—my Kung Fu was limited. That’s when I accidentally caught the football.

Every player on both teams stopped and stood in silence over what had just happened. One boy yelled out “You said you can’t catch a football and I just watched you do it.” Another boy asked me “How did you do that?” That I didn’t know proved not to matter.

My quarterback quickly told me to stand 15 yards away from everyone. Then he pitched the football at me and I caught the ball. We repeated the experiment to repeated effect and a growing wave of incredulity. What I remember most are the smiles on everyone’s faces continuing to grow until one boy yelled out: “Bullseye. We fixed him.”

Shifting Mindsets and Achieving Success

“Champions keep playing until they get it right.” – Billie Jean King

Over the years, I spent a fair amount of time trying to figure out why and how my hands were able to catch the football. The conclusion it seems is quite simple. I had a good team and enough success to encourage me to try another, less painful, approach to achieving my goal.

I had gained the field, caught the ball and achieved my goal of playing football. Given the opportunity to step off the sideline, I surprised myself and my team. Did they fix me? Insofar as I can still manage to catch most anything thrown my way, they did indeed. They also opened my eyes to the fact that some of the obstacles in our path are of our own creation.

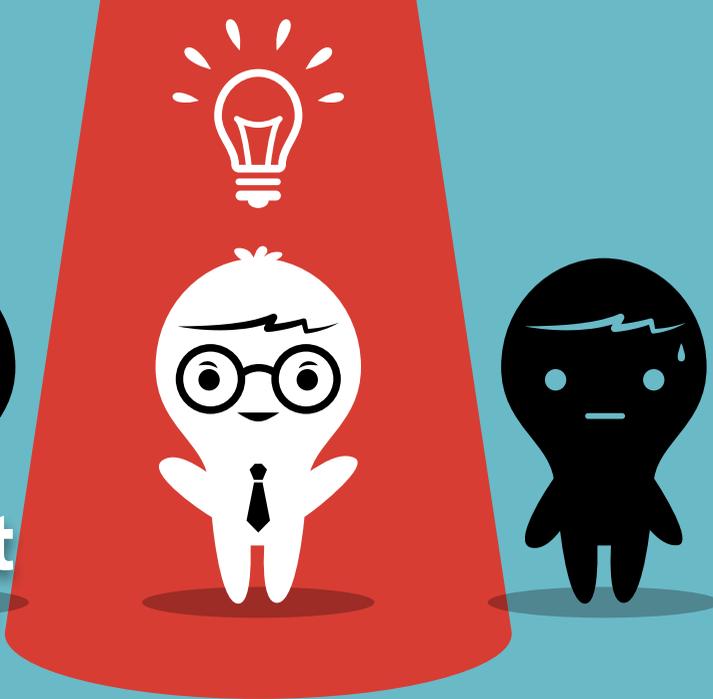
Deep down though, I know I did my bit to fix them too. I definitely improved all of their coaching skills. Moreover though, I helped them hit a bullseye of their own.

When we mobilize people who are deemed different, when we collaborate beyond our traditional mindsets and silos, we grow more than just points on the scoreboard or figures on the bottom line. We come to realize and respect the benefits of the unique, sometimes latent and often hidden talents and abilities that define our future potential. 📌

Michael Bortolotto, is a successful professional speaker (www.positiverebel.ca) who lives with Cerebral Palsy.

Different Thinking About Neurodiversity

By Isabelle St-Jean



WHILE DIVERSITY IS INCREASINGLY recognized as both a competitive differentiator and primary driver of engagement and productivity, it has become a common aspiration for organizations.

As an ideal, it speaks to the harmonious potential of people of various ages from diverse backgrounds with diverse abilities working together in synergy. Leaders know the importance of core culture, but have come to realize that each culture and generation carries unique strengths that bring further strength and resilience. A diverse workforce as such can come together to draw on collective intelligence and foster excellence.

Over the past decade, the breadth of diversity in the workplace has grown more inclusive, especially in regards to people with physical disabilities, creating opportunities for organizations and individuals alike.

Neurodiversity Redefines Notions of Normal

However, one category that continues to struggle to find their place of belonging in the world of work are those whose 'disabilities' are neurological. The disability label itself is misleading, as people with neurologically diverse abilities have much to offer.

Fortunately, through extensive research on the brain in recent years, we have come to recognize the full scope of our neurodiversity. Indeed, the spectrum

of normalcy for this vital organ is much wider and expansive than previously thought. Moreover, we know now that aspects of brain function can change in accordance with focus, habitual activity and environment. This allows us to better grasp the implications of brain plasticity and neurodiversity alike.

“What if we were to decide that the rose embodied the epitome of what a flower should be?”

By recognizing mental 'normalcy' as a largely illusory label, we are far better equipped to redefine the potential of other neurologically differentiations. Rather than regarding attention deficit disorder, dyslexia or autism as mental illnesses or the results of abnormality, we can adjust our perspectives accordingly.

Great Strengths Within 'Different' Thinking

Although these neurological differences may present certain challenges, they also imply remarkable abilities. For example, it is commonly known that most people who have autism tend to have less social and emotional intelligence, and are therefore

challenged by interpersonal relations. However, their ability to focus on details, memorize and integrate information in their fields of interest can be outstanding. How much so? Ask Albert Einstein.

Much of what comprises our definition of normal in the world was created by people who thought differently. In his book, *Neurodiversity*, Thomas Armstrong, PhD uses a clever analogy to help us understand our own biases when it comes to what we consider "normal".

A Rose By Any Other Name?

Armstrong encourages us to consider the world of flowers. What if we were to decide that the rose embodied the epitome of what a flower should be? What then would we say about the elegant simplicity of the calla lily—which is odourless and consists of one petal swirling around its pistil? Is that really any less of a flower? Surely not.

How is it then, that we can appreciate the diversity in flowers, yet struggle with our own interpersonal relations. Armstrong's recommendation is obvious. We need to better appreciate that people have diverse and complementary abilities that can be of tremendous use across a wide variety of occupations.

Specialisteme: Autism an Asset

By better understanding the gifts and assets across the spectrum of neurodiversity, we can connect them to specifically suitable roles to increase employee satisfaction and productivity.

One of the best known examples of this kind of workplace is a Danish software company called Specialisteme where the company prides itself in having about 75 per cent of their employees with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. Specialisteme is owned by The Specialist People Foundation whose mission is to enable one million jobs for people with autism and similar challenges through social entrepreneurship, corporate sector engagement and a global change in mindset. Instead of seeing dysfunction, the company saw the opportunity to put their autistic employees' enhanced perceptual functioning and attention to small details to work on software development and testing for 'bugs'. These are two areas that task neurotypical individuals with their difficulty and tedium alike.

While leading the way, Specialisteme and other organizations such as the Technical Standards and Safety Authority are fostering greater awareness and providing information to individuals and employers about neurodiverse conditions. By making a few simple accommodations and reasonable adjustments to the working environment, people on the autism spectrum can develop their full potential while being productive and having a positive experience at work.

Da Vinci's Gift Revisited

Likewise, dyslexia is another version of neurodiversity which is still largely misunderstood. Although commonly thought of as a learning disability affecting reading, math, and writing, dyslexia is actually a kind of mental functioning with hidden strengths, in addition to the more obvious challenges. In his book, *The Gift of Dyslexia*, Dr. Ron Davis, identifies these abilities: sharpened intuition, insightfulness, imagination, awareness of one's environment, enhanced creativity, multi-dimensional perception, and pictorial thinking.

Given this definition, how many are surprised to find history filled with, and in many cases created, by great dyslexics who were geniuses in their field: Leonardo Da Vinci, Winston Churchill and Walt Disney to name just a few. Moreover, these brilliant people did not have the benefit of the assistive software available today to counteract the challenges of dyslexia at work or at school.

Inclusivity Ennobles Us All

Lastly, speaking from the personal side, as the mother of a young man on the mild end of the autism spectrum, I am relieved to see the diversity conversation becoming more inclusive in the field of human resources and in our society. This will hopefully open more possibilities for neuro-diverse young people to have a brighter future and find their place of belonging while reaching their full potential.

After all, a truly civilized and evolved culture not only champions the obvious

strengths and resources of its people; it strives to include and encourage all people to contribute their gifts in the world of human endeavour. Embracing and acting on this ethos not only fosters and expands the true significance of human resources, it ennobles us all. **◆**

Professional speaker, author, life and business coach, Isabelle St-Jean, RSW, ACC, brings over 20 years of communication, leadership and personal effectiveness to her audiences, readers and clients (inspiredmomentum.com).



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The Language of Business: Courage Required

By **Raluca Manolache**, CHRP

"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word."

—Emily Dickinson

WORDS HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHANGE WORLDS. That power is undiminished by the proliferation of modern communications. However, what the rise of social media has exposed is a disconnect between the traditional language of business and the hearts and minds of employees and employers alike.

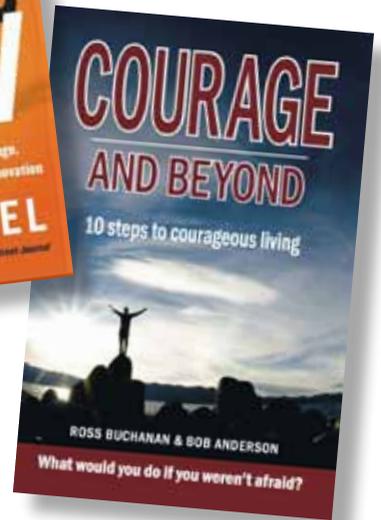
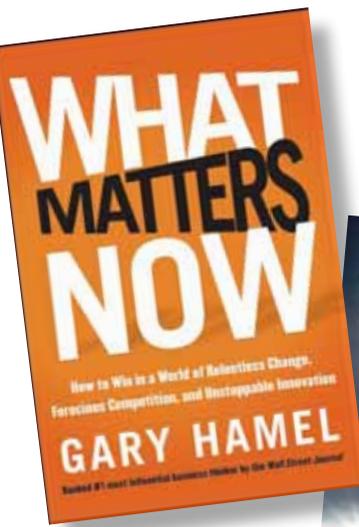
Amidst all the change that defines the world around us, we often forget that the most powerful technology of all are the words we use daily. Their impact, and the impact of others' words upon us, in many ways defines our shared and individual realities—in life as in business.

Simply put, that is because words both reflect and direct our emotions, both positive and negative.

Where is the Love?

As noted by management consultant and author Gary Hamel in his latest book, *What Matters Now*, the need to humanize the language of business is both overdue and hurting business. He advises companies to collect and read through a batch of their most recent communications, including the last annual report, blogs and the mission statement.

"Note the key phrases. Make a list of oft-repeated words. Now do a little content analysis. What are the goals and ideas that get a lot of airtime in your company?" Hamel asks. "It's probably notions like superiority, advantage, leadership, differentiation, value, focus, discipline, accountability, and efficiency. Nothing



wrong with this, but do these goals quicken your pulse? Do they speak to your heart? Are they "good" in any cosmic sense?"

"Now think about Michelangelo, Galileo, Jefferson, Gandhi, William Wilberforce, Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa. What were the ideals that inspired these individuals to acts of greatness? Was it anything on your list of commercial values? Probably not."

Hamel points out that remarkable achievements are most often rooted in passionate commitment to values which transcend the current business vocabulary,

including "beauty, truth, wisdom, justice, charity, fidelity, joy, courage and honor."

"A noble purpose inspires sacrifice, stimulates innovation and encourages perseverance. In so doing, it transforms great talent into exceptional accomplishment," says Hamel. "That's a fact—and it leaves me wondering: Why are words like "love," "devotion" and "honor" so seldom heard within the halls of corporate-dom? Why are the ideals that matter most to human beings the ones that are most notably absent in managerial discourse?"

"The need to humanize the language of business is both overdue—and hurting business."

Courage and Beyond

Leadership consultant and Vancouver-based author Ross Buchanan, founder of Strategic Results International, has spent much of the past 20 years working through these types of questions with over 1,000 organizations across North America.

According to Buchanan, the number one reason most organizations hit a plateau and stay stuck is that "they allow the mindset of scarcity to reside at the heart of their corporate culture. Without a strong presence of abundant thinking in any organization its success will be severely limited."

Businesses seem to use the same words but expect different results. Language applies to everyone, so why don't we change the language in which we communicate? Is it fear that leads to a

language of scarcity rather than a language of abundance? Or is it a language of scarcity that leads to fear?

As for the language of business, Buchanan sees room for almost immediate improvement for organizations and individuals alike, by simply embracing a single word: courage. "To me, abundance is all about the courage to dream, to trust and to act—which are three of the 10 steps outlined in our new book," Buchanan says.

In his latest book, co-authored with Bob Anderson, *Courage and Beyond: 10 Steps to Courageous Living*, Buchanan asks a question right up front that goes to the heart of the matter. "What would you do if you were not afraid?"

"Courage or the lack of courage which we call fear will really define and determine our lives won't it? We allow fear, which more often than not is nothing other than a feeling of discomfort or anxiety, to paralyze our success and the success of others around us. The price we pay in the workplace for this courage deficit is high in that it erodes our ability to enjoy life to the fullest and robs us of freedom, joy, health and success".

An Abundance of Potential

When people love what they do, they transpire their voluntary positive energies into innovation, which leads to productivity. According to the numbers, there is room for improvement—much of which hinges upon how we communicate.

As per Gallup's 2013 survey, 70 per cent of employees do not want to be at work. While a discouraging statistic on disengagement, it is perhaps underlined by the fact that over 60 per cent of the workforce do not trust their senior leaders according to the Canadian Management Centre's *Build a Better Workplace* survey.

What then does it take to turn negative energies into positive energies?

Buchanan offers that "in order to embrace and embed courage at the heart of an organization, it really must be modeled by the

leadership team. I have personally witnessed how freeing and refreshing it is to the members of a firm when their leaders model courage—and how contagious courage really can be when the leaders do more than simply mouth the words."

Walk the 'New' Talk

One area where the language of business has evolved is in recruitment. However, aside from those vanguard companies of change, Buchanan often sees a wide gap between the good words and the actual bill of goods.

"What I see is typically nothing other than false advertising. They advertise for what they want to become rather than what they are," says Buchanan. "Once invited on board, most new employees in a matter of days awaken to the chasm between what they had been sold and what the reality is. Unfortunately, only the courageous few have what it takes to immediately rectify the situation by escaping the fraud."

Unfortunately, those courageous few are most likely top performers, which makes walking the 'new' talk essential at all levels of leadership.

The language of business is key to employee happiness and organizational success. That words such as courage, love and beauty inspire us in our daily lives is beyond question. That these same words and ideals can elevate the culture and bottom line of any organization is growing increasingly apparent.

"Heck, if the leaders and employees of an organization can't get excited, then how or why should they expect their clients (or employees) to be excited?" asks Buchanan. "The real, genuine and meaningful inclusion of these words would produce results beyond our wildest expectations." **P**

Raluca Manolache, CHRP is a passionate writer and HR professional who has worked with CBC/Radio, Service Canada and S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

"The language of business is key to employee happiness and organizational success."



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'Top Recruiter' Taps Local Talent for Global Challenge



Chris LaVoie, creator and executive producer of *Top Recruiter*



Vancouver's Yvonne Wu, senior recruiter at AbsoluteSoftware

By **Kyla Nicholson**, CHRP

OVER THE PAST DECADE, HR HAS come a long way in the minds of business leaders. More recently, it has been winning over the hearts of an ever-growing audience. At least part of that success might be attributed to the efforts of Chris LaVoie, creator and executive producer of *Top Recruiter: The Competition*.

Yes, HR reality TV has arrived. You may have heard of it through the *Huffington Post*, *Forbes* or *Details* magazine. Over 2.2 million viewers tuned in online for the first season and now *Top Recruiter: The Competition* is back—with an infusion of BC HR talent.

Amongst the global pool of competitors is Vancouver's Yvonne Wu, senior recruiter at AbsoluteSoftware. A veteran with over 10 years of recruiting experience, Wu "fell into" recruiting when she took her first job at Blast Radius. She stuck with it because she "loves seeing people grow and being part of someone's journey to success".

As you'd expect from reality TV, there will be drama, but there's also healthy competition and valuable advice. Whether you're a job seeker, a hiring manager, an HR practitioner or a recruiter, you'll find this online reality show provides something for everyone.

PeopleTalk chatted with LaVoie and Wu to get some insights into the competition and tips for your recruiting practices.

Q: Where did the idea for a show about recruiting come from? What can people expect to see?

Chris LaVoie (CL): I was watching the presidential debates and it was all about the recession and jobs and the lack of jobs. And then I'd talk to people that had access to opportunities. So it was really about educating people that there are opportunities out there while entertaining them.

The job advice is really the golden nugget, but you have to deliver it in unique ways so the audience absorbs it. How do you make your kids eat something healthy if they don't like the taste? You put the vitamin in peanut butter. People are attracted to the combination of drama, substance and solid advice.

Q: Last season the contestants were all North American and this year they're from around the world. Why the change?

CL: This season there's more substance to the characters. These are major players from companies globally. It's a global economy. It's a smaller world because of

the Internet and social media, and every company is affected by that. Everyone's connected.

Bringing together the backgrounds, personalities and philosophies, and bringing in the cultural learning was another element to enjoy.

PT: How did making it a global competition affect you as a contestant?

Yvonne Wu (YW): The [recruiting] process is generally the same, but how situations are handled and what's said to candidates is different based on culture. There are some things that we couldn't even do here.

Q: What are some things to keep in mind when recruiting from an increasingly diverse talent market?

YW: Companies need to make sure they don't hire the same people all the time. It's important to make sure there's a cultural fit with the organization and that people bring new things to the table that are valued. The way people communicate or share perspectives shouldn't rule them out – you have to keep an open mind.

PT: When people think about diversifying their organization, cultural diversity is often the focus. How does introducing HR help diversify the perspectives at an organization?

YW: Our company started out without an HR department. Now we have HR and a recruiter—that's me. As an HR team, we partner with managers and introduce them to new things they've never used before. Sometimes we expect people to understand the value of something because we do. They might not be familiar with it and they might not see the value until they know how to use it.

PT: What are the best social media tools for recruiters? Anything new that people should keep their eyes open for?

YW: LinkedIn. You can search, connect with people, join groups for industry

networking, brand yourself and your company—and they come up with new things all the time.

Twitter's great for branding. It lets you know about the company culture. It gets out information about jobs and helps your company be visible.

HireVue is something that I wasn't exposed to before the show. It's an online interviewing platform to check out.

PT: What piece of recruitment advice would you give to HR?

YW: Don't judge a book by its cover. If a resume doesn't read well, it doesn't mean the person isn't qualified. Consider having a conversation, at least over the phone. They may just not know how to write a resume.

PT: Advice to candidates?

YW: Don't inflate information on your resume. If you can't give examples or back up what you've said people will know it's not true. Recruiters will catch you when you're not truthful and it'll hurt you in the long run.

PT: What are three recruiting tips for organizations that don't have HR?

YW: Network. It's an affordable, easy way to meet people, and they'll have friends, and they'll know people.

Use social media. It's time-consuming, but it's free to join groups, sign up for news, and get yourself out there.

To save time, prescreen so you don't need to spend hours and hours in interviews. All it takes is a 10 minute call.

PT: Some people might be nervous to put themselves "out there" on TV, what made you decide to?

YW: I found out about the show through Twitter – a tweet from [season 1 contestant] Alysse. I clicked the link, loved the show, and tweeted about it. Chris re-tweeted me and we started chatting through Twitter and he asked if I'd be interested in auditioning.

My first instinct was "not really", but the team here [at AbsoluteSoftware] and my manager were so supportive. I figured it doesn't hurt to try. I saw the work last

season and it was tasteful and I felt I could handle it. I knew there were over 4,000 videos to see so I thought, "there's not a huge chance"...

When Chris called with the news [I was on the show] everyone was around my desk—it was Christmas time. It was like winning American Idol.

PT: Why should people tune in?

CL: In the first 10 seconds you'll see that it's more than a show about recruiting. It's an entertaining show about the industry. Recruiters are important. They choose the people that impact companies and their growth. There's a lot of things that people can take away. It's not completely politically correct, but it has a lot of human spirit. 📌

To see HR step into the spotlight, visit <http://toprecruiter.tv/season-2-episode-1>. To see how it all began, check out season one at the same location. A third season's already in the works. Audition information is available online.

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Bottom Up Succession: Diversity Key to Retention

By Pam Paquet

RETENTION IS NOTABLY MEASURED with numbers, percentages and metrics. While recognizing those measures is key, so too is recognizing people as individuals with skills and interest beyond their roles. Diversity surrounds us. To keep it alive and well, we must go beyond job descriptions, duties and roles to access the potential of our differences.

Though differences are often obvious, rarely are they explored, understood or optimized. Great retention strategies begin with foundations that challenge the pockets, boxes and bubbles used to categorize individuals. Respect can soar when workplaces embrace diversity, implement education and increase awareness.

The link between retention and succession is strong and well correlated. It is simple—lacking the team and talents required, succession cannot succeed. The obvious shift needed is re-thinking where succession plans should focus and how they are communicated.

People Basics

People think, feel and behave in rather habitual and predictable ways. A basic desire for respect, consideration and honesty is widely shared. Succession plans and retention strategies are only as successful as their ability to meet these basic needs. A second level requirement is to clearly communicate the succession plan to provide clarity, transparency and encourage conversation. Bottom line: building trust with staff enhances the probability of success in succession plans.

When a basic level of trust is not present in a workplace, the impact/result can

be seen daily. Employees may whisper over the water cooler, conversations can spread wildly and become heated—even boil over. Staff then stop talking because of a continuance of assumptions and unsubstantiated fears. There is a new dilemma born for employees when succession plans are devised or kept ‘under cover’. They question whether to stay: to trust it will be okay—or begin to search for a more trusting company.

“Difference is often obvious, yet unexplored, not understood, and certainly not optimized.”

This clash of allegiance and self-preservation is not minimal or insignificant. The recent *Canadian Management Centre Build a Better Workplace* survey found 61 per cent of employees have no trust in their leadership. If generational characteristics were added to this data, one might expect it to be higher for Gen Xs who strive for work/life balance and even higher for Gen Ys who want to know, in no uncertain terms, about their opportunities for learning, promotion and rewards.

On the other side of the table, companies, management and executives will profess inclusiveness with development

and communication of the plan. They believe that policy manuals and wall plaques are sufficient methods to share visions, missions and business plans for the future with staff. They will proclaim and are convinced “we told them” and “staff are very aware” of our succession plans and their role. Without connecting with employees beyond their roles, it is easy for companies to believe that the staff are on board and excited to implement.

Moving business into a position of organizational future success involves four steps/phases:

1. Avoid B2B Attitude: Be a people business rather than functionally driven.

There is no need to keep secrets and hold cards to your chest. Success and future planning are key to everyone, so treat the people in the company as assets, investments and treasures to nurture, grow and optimize. Staff is not the competition or the enemy; they are the key—they are the people who put the success into succession. Focus on their needs, wants and feelings while assessing their statistics and functionality. Make people number one rather than strictly championing optimized systems, maximized operations and financial rewards.

2. Avoid Hyper Stasis: Be present to fix the now before next or later.

Retention and succession are all about creating a future filled with personnel continuity, loyalty and business success (maintained or grown). Do not look past the problems, issues and challenges that exist today to dream of a Pollyanna

picture of tomorrow and the future. Dangling the carrot of “what will be” doesn’t bode well for those trying to survive and cope with today’s problems. Create “now” solutions so that “next” and “later” have a solid base of success and good momentum. Succession is impossible if today is laden with tension and retention issues.

3. Avoid Rote Communication: Use timeliness and clarity to create movement and forward momentum.

Repeating the company line and referencing a vision (mission or values) plaque on the wall will go a long way to cripple communication, retention and succession. Gone are the days of employees simply willing to accept messages without meaning added. Retention and succession require clear communication and explanation. If communications lack either clarity or substance, then succession is stopped in its tracks. If trust is not evident in everyday conversations, including difficult conversations and assessments, then listening and loyalty cease. Communication needs to be personalized, energized and consistent to create forward and

future movements of people (laterally and upwardly) in companies. Challenge the elephants in the room and skeletons in the closet to allow transparency and clarity to become the norm. This builds trust in people and in the future.

“Create ‘now’ solutions so that ‘next’ and ‘later’ have a solid base of success”

4. Get Your Head Out of the Sand: Stress impacts retention.

Responsibility and accountability are crucial to business success and how each is managed by management is a great predictor of retention and organization succession. The challenge for many HR professionals is finding the common denominator between operations and

“human” resources. The soft stuff, like personalized communication, enthusiasm and engagement, often gets missed by executives, but is crucial to staff at all levels. No harm, no foul will turn retention on its butt and throw success out the window. The communication of strengths and futures are just as important as talking about challenges and present issues to tie together retention and succession.

Retention is essential for succession; people are essential for succession. The anchor between good retention and succession is clear. Transparent and honest communication needs to flow at all levels when succession plans are being made. The opportunity exists to improve from the bottom up. How? By keeping our most valuable assets—people—by ensuring appreciation, inclusivity and smarter thinking. **◆**

Pam Paquet, MEd is a master level facilitator and principal of Pam Paquet and Associates (www.thepossibilities.ca). Speaking internationally, she is an instructor with BCIT and certified with the Canadian Counselling Association.



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How Accessible is Your Workplace...Really?

By **Mark Gruenheid**

MOST OF US ARE COMFORTABLE with the concept of an “accessible workplace”. Through the BC Centre for Ability, we seek to expand the definition of accessibility.

Taking AIM at Inclusion

The Abilities in Mind (AIM) program of the BC Centre for Ability currently works with prominent companies including CTV Bellmedia, TD Canada Trust, Shangri-La Hotels, London Drugs, Vancity and Spectra Energy in a consultative role, shifting corporate culture to one of acceptance and understanding of disability.

Great strides have been taken toward the physical inclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly those with mobility challenges who are wheelchair users in the work environment. New buildings are subject to stringent accessibility requirements and older, existing locations are being retro-fitted and renovated to ensure equal access for all. This is where most of the current focus on accessibility is placed.

Other areas of accessibility are yet to be fully developed. The idea of accessible job applications, interviews and job descriptions should be the next logical step in the evolution of accessibility. As an employment specialist who assists persons with disabilities to access work opportunities, I have seen through the eyes of the applicant and witnessed some startling things.

Overlooked Aspects of Accessibility

An IT specialist with quadriplegia was asked in a job interview about her typing speed. She explained that although she does not have full use of her hands she has an accommodation for this—a pair of wrist clips that enable her to type 25 words per minute. The job called for a minimum of 60 and she was not considered to be a qualified candidate. Unfortunately the interviewer did not take into account her aptitude for learning, experience with software and equally important, her

ability to adapt to situations. Thankfully, another employer did and she is now working in the field again.

In another situation, an application for an administrative position in the insurance industry was asked to answer a series of questions requiring paragraph-length answers. This individual is blind and therefore could not read the questions on the test paper. The spur of the moment solution was to have someone read the questions to her, but it put the applicant at a disadvantage—having to remember details of the question, and respond in a way that was not comfortable to her.

“disability is not well accounted for in many workplaces”

I can recall numerous instances of individuals with sensory challenges involving sight and hearing who have been unable to apply for postings online as websites have not included the necessary adaptations. Sometimes this can be as simple as a font boosting option. The good news is that many organizations are taking note of this and improving their online accessibility.

Trading Tradition For Talent

One hurdle we have not yet come to terms with is the traditional face-to-face job interview. This can be a difficult aspect of the job hunt for individuals owing to a disability. In typical hiring practice, the determination of job fit hinges greatly on one’s ability to “perform” in an interview situation.

To individuals with speech, sight and hearing challenges, as well as those with

heightened anxiety or cognitive processing challenges, the traditional interview presents all too often as a “no-win” situation. Some employers offer interpretation services or extra time to answer questions which are good steps. Unfortunately, the charismatic candidate who can think on the spot will often get the job even though the position may not require these traits specifically.

Mindsets Need Moving

All of these challenging situations point to one unfortunate conclusion: disability is not well accounted for in many workplaces. I still meet with employers who claim that “nobody with a disability works here”. This is most often said without malice and is not intended to indicate that persons with disabilities could not work there. Instead it is a reflection of the misunderstanding of disability and the continuation of the stereotype that persons with disabilities are a small minority group who traditionally don’t work and need charity. Needless to say comments like these do not promote existing employees to disclose a disability they may have.

At a recent conference I had a short conversation with an attendee who asked me why someone with a disability would want to work. I was surprised by this and went on to explain that such a person would likely want to work for the same reasons anyone else would: self-sufficiency, satisfaction, monetary gain, etc. Her response to me was surprising: “I thought the government took care of these people”.

A Disabling Sense of Definition

Such a conversation shows me that we still have some distance to travel before disability in the workplace is fully understood. “Disability” is a catch-all “category” that we have created. Disability per se is on a large spectrum involving many conditions

and situations. And, each individual with a disability is just that, an individual. One person's experience will not necessarily resemble another's even though they may have the same "disability".

What is required is an understanding that disability exists in society and that those with disabilities generally have the same desires as those without. This can include working competitively. The solution is for organizations to accept disability and build internal and external structures that not only provide accessible options for persons with disabilities, but also embrace the contribution of persons with disabilities and view this group as an integral, contributing factor to the workplace.

Individual and Societal Challenges

The social model of disability states that the "person" is not disabled. It is the restrictions that society place on the individual that cause them not to function. Therefore society is disabled if it cannot fully incorporate a person with a disability into the activities of daily living. In other words, society must change to allow persons with disabilities to function more effectively.

We are all familiar with conventional devices that allow each of us to function more effectively: eyeglasses, traffic lights, curb cuts, even computers. We take these for granted. We need to continue working on making necessary improvements for persons with disabilities to develop a truly "accessible workplace". In turn, attitudes towards persons with disabilities in the workplace will shift and this concept will become second nature to employers.

Stay Attuned

The AIM program also hosts regular awareness events and an annual conference focused on best practices in the attraction, employment and retention of persons with disabilities. The next conference called "Embracing Ability: Making it Happen" will take place on March 5 and 6, 2014 at the Marriott Pinnacle Hotel in downtown Vancouver and features local, national and international perspectives on the issue. 

Mark Gruenheid is the manager of Abilities in Mind (AIM) at the BC Centre for Ability (www.abilitiesinmind.com).

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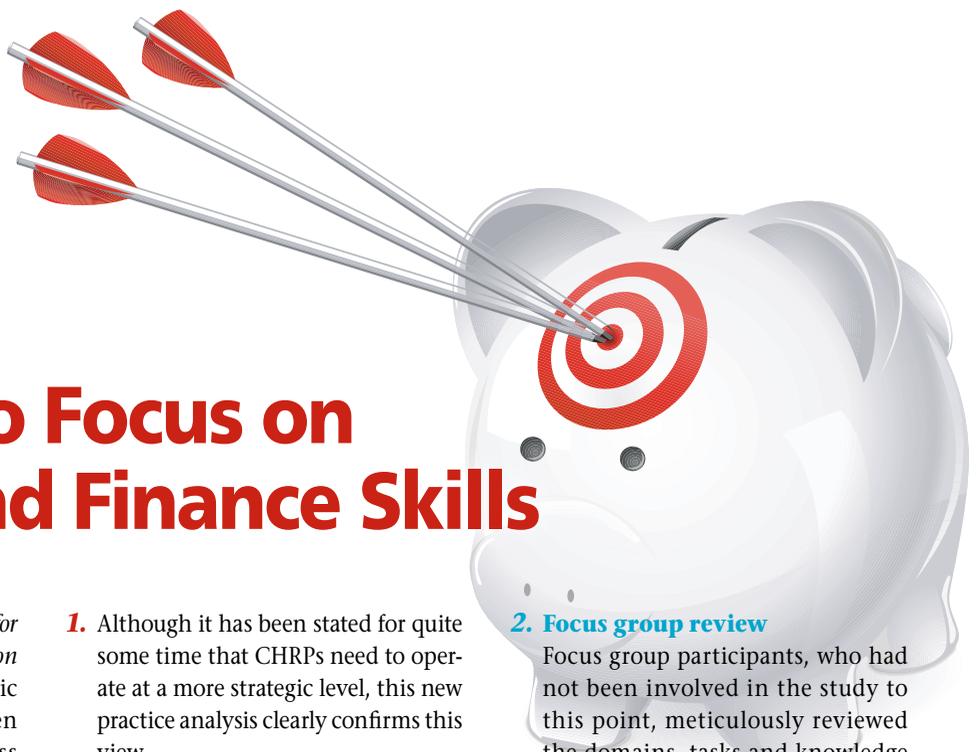
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HR Urged to Focus on Strategy and Finance Skills

The 2013 Practice Analysis Study for the Human Resources Profession confirmed the need for strategic outlook and financial acumen skills among HR professionals across Canada. These additional skills are highly valued by organizations, as well as expertise in the legal requirements pertaining to human resources policies and practices.

“When we spoke to CEOs and other organizational and HR leaders about the skills they valued in HR professionals, they all mentioned the ability to provide a broad, strategic outlook and the ability to assess the financial impact of HR decisions,” said Sharon Lee, executive director of the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA). “These competencies are in addition to the more traditional HR functions, such as compensation, employee relations, talent management and legal HR requirements.”

The Canadian HR professional practice analysis was conducted by Castle Worldwide Inc. for CCHRA. Its primary purpose is to update required professional capabilities (RPCs) and validate the content of the National Knowledge Exam (NKE), a current requirement for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) certification.

“A regular professional practice analysis is a critical component to keeping the body of knowledge relevant and ensuring that the CHRP designation remains credible, valued and recognized”, said Lee—the last one was conducted in 2009 with CCHRA planning to do a full review every five years.

The Professional Practice Analysis (PPA) Panel of the CCHRA has made some initial conclusions, based on the PPA study.

1. Although it has been stated for quite some time that CHRPs need to operate at a more strategic level, this new practice analysis clearly confirms this view.
2. In regards to competencies, nothing was taken away, but new areas of competence have been added, particularly in the areas of strategy and finance.
3. Some of the competencies which were added require CHRPs to create solutions for their organizations, rather than simply administer processes (more ‘engineers’ than ‘mechanics’).

The practice analysis process consisted of four phases:

1. Initial development and validation

This involved determining the scope of the study and identifying the domains, capabilities, knowledge and skills essential to the performance of HR professionals at various levels in a range of settings.

The nine domains or major areas of responsibility proposed by the PPA Panel were: strategy; professional practice; engagement; workforce planning and talent management; labour and employee relations; total rewards; learning and development; health, wellness and safe workplace; and human resources metrics, reporting and financial management.

The PPA Panel then developed tasks that HR professionals would actually perform under the nine domains and then developed knowledge statements regarding the knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks.

2. Focus group review

Focus group participants, who had not been involved in the study to this point, meticulously reviewed the domains, tasks and knowledge statements drafted by the PPA Panel. Participants were recruited from the education community, CHRPs and input was collected from a group of chief executive officers.

3. Validation study

All HR professionals with membership in any CCHRA member association were personally invited to participate in a national survey to determine which tasks they actually performed and the level of knowledge among practitioners across employment levels and experience ranges. Survey results from respondents were considered in the analysis. More than 10 per cent of respondents were working in British Columbia.

4. Analysis of data and decisions about levels

Based on the results of the survey, the PPA Panel determined that there was appropriate support for the RPCs. The RPCs or tasks were then classified as appropriate to several levels of practitioner. Knowledge statements were also ranked across these classifications.

The changes to the body of knowledge will, after a comprehensive communication program, be incorporated into the NKE. Recent CHRPs have been invited to provide real work-life examples of various tasks and knowledge to assist in better defining the task statements for the RPCs. **D**

Light at the End of the Accommodation Tunnel?

By **Graeme McFarlane**

THE DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE CAN BE a significant burden to employers who are trying to balance often competing business and employee interests. Employer frustration has been mounting with the seemingly unsympathetic decisions issued by Human Rights tribunals across the country. However, the recent decision in *Dotchin v. Simply Computing* and another (No. 2), 2013 BCHRT 189 moves in the opposite direction and perhaps signals an adoption of common sense.

Simply Stated Upfront

Simply Computing recruited Mr. Dotchin away from his position at an Apple store to be a store manager. During the recruitment process, he told one of the company representatives that he had a genetic disease. The evidence was equivocal about whether he provided Simply Computing with any details about his condition. At the hearing, Mr. Dotchin described his symptoms as including depression and anxiety.

Mr. Dotchin started working for Simply Computing in August of 2009; just over a year later, Mr. Dotchin's medical condition started to interfere with his ability to discharge his duties as store manager. However, he did not advise any of his managers that his health condition was deteriorating. In late 2010, for health reasons, Mr. Dotchin arranged a transfer to a lesser sales position where he did not need to attend the store premises but still had to meet monthly sales targets. In this new role, Mr. Dotchin received salary and commission payments.

Mr. Dotchin was not able to meet his sales targets. He testified that his symptoms, including depression, continued to worsen during this period. He "thought he could plough through his depression and be successful", and because of this belief he did not seek medical help or call in sick. He held this belief in spite of the fact that he said that his symptoms were so bad that he could not leave the house.

Expectations and Accommodations

By February 2011, Simply Computing had become unhappy with Mr. Dotchin's performance, and it informed him that it would be issuing a letter of expectations. In response, Mr. Dotchin informed his supervisor that he had a genetic disease that interfered with his work. Simply Computing issued the expectations letter in which Mr. Dotchin was warned that he could be dismissed if he continued to miss his sales targets.

On March 2, 2011, Mr. Dotchin was dismissed from his sales position because he could not perform his required duties. Mr. Dotchin then met with the CEO to discuss alternate arrangements. The parties entered into a subcontractor, commission-based position which also provided access to medical and LTD insurance.

In July 2011, Simply Computing terminated the subcontractor agreement after it discovered problems with purchasing and inventory documents that dated back to the time when Mr. Dotchin was the store manager. Mr. Dotchin did not allege that the termination of the subcontractor agreement was in any way discriminatory. However, Mr. Dotchin filed a complaint stating that Simply Computing's March 2011 termination action was discriminatory because it was based in part on his disability. The company did not dispute Mr. Dotchin's medical condition and the issue was whether it had discharged its duty to accommodate.

Tribunal Dismisses Complaint

The tribunal held that Mr. Dotchin had been reasonably accommodated:

Even though Mr. Dotchin had not fully disclosed his need for accommodation, Simply had earlier accommodated Mr. Dotchin's health-based request to move from the position of store manager. Later, when he could not do what was required as an account manager, the CEO had a conversation with Mr. Dotchin and Simply agreed that Mr. Dotchin's employment would change to that of a sub-contract employee. Mr. Dotchin was worried that he

still be eligible for LTD benefits and the sub-contractor arrangement provided that benefit.

I find that it would amount to undue hardship to require Simply to continue to pay Mr. Dotchin for work he could not perform. It had benefits that were accessible to employees facing health problems that rendered them unable to work. Further, I am influenced in my decision by the fact that Mr. Dotchin willingly agreed in writing to the accommodation.

While it did not engage in an elaborate evaluation of Mr. Dotchin's medical condition and its impact on his employment, I conclude that by its agreement with him, Simply accommodated Mr. Dotchin's disability.

Mr. Dotchin's complaint regarding the March 2011 termination was dismissed. The case was dismissed even though Mr. Dotchin was terminated before any sub-contract position was even discussed. The tribunal held that the employee's agreement to the new position as evidenced by his execution of the contract documents provided for the accommodation.

Tips for Employers

This decision provides some guidance for employers dealing with medical accommodation issues:

First, if an employee raises a medical justification for poor performance, meet with the employee and discuss how the condition may be a factor and explore what might be done to accommodate the position.

Second, ask the employee for medical confirmation about the limitation or disability (this was not done in the above case).

Third, try to maintain the employee's eligibility for medical benefits in any accommodate position.

Fourth, create a paper trail regarding any accommodation, and obtain the employee's agreement in writing with respect to any modified arrangement. **◆**

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



National Trends Evident In BC

By **Jock Finlayson**

STATISTICS CANADA HAS JUST STARTED TO RELEASE DATA DRAWN from its 2011 census and a major National Household Survey which the agency undertook at the same time. The results confirm what most people already know: the population is aging, with the front-end of the baby boom generation having reached 65 in 2011; Canadian society is urbanizing as more of us are living in large and mid-sized cities; there are more one-person households, reflecting the high incidence of divorce, as well as longer life spans; and the workforce and population are becoming increasingly multi-ethnic, as immigration continues to shape the nation's demographic profile.

All of these national-level trends are certainly evident in British Columbia.

Median Age Climbs in BC

By 2011, the median age of British Columbians was 41.9 years, a bit higher than the national average. The median age has been climbing steadily for four decades. Twenty years ago, it was 34.7; back in 1971, the typical B.C. resident was a youthful 28.

Of the province's 4.4 million people in 2011, almost 700,000 were aged 65 and over. And these oldsters are easily the fastest growing age group: their ranks expanded by a whopping 15 per cent between 2006 and 2011.

“the province's population is destined to become ever more diverse”

Urban Density and Rural Opportunity

While B.C. has both a vast land mass and an economy still dependent on natural resources, a large majority of the people live in a handful of urban centres, mainly clustered in the southwestern corner of the province. Metro Vancouver (population 2.3 million) is home to 52 per cent of all British Columbians, a share that's expected to keep rising over time. Greater Victoria, with 345,000, has the second biggest concentration of people, but has experienced sluggish population growth

since 2006. Like Metro Vancouver, the census metropolitan areas of Kelowna (2011 population: 180,000) and Abbotsford-Mission (170,000) are growing faster than the province as a whole.

In aggregate, the northern two-thirds of B.C. has just 10 per

cent of the population. Given the B.C. government's strong focus on energy and natural resource development in the north, one has to wonder where the workforce to build and operate these industries will come from.

Census Families Shrinking in Size

Statistics Canada defines "census families" as households of two or more related individuals. There were 1.23 million of these in B.C. in 2011, up 7 per cent from five years earlier. More than 70 per cent of them were married couples, with the remainder living common-law or as one-parent families. Of interest, approximately three-fifths of all British Columbians aged 15 and over are either married or living with a common-law partner. So the institution of marriage remains intact.

Not everyone, of course, is part of a census family household. Indeed, half a million British Columbians live alone, which represents 28 per cent of all households. Another 50,000 are part of multi-family households (two or more census families in the same dwelling). More than 80,000 B.C. residents are classified as "other" households – where two or more unrelated individuals share a single dwelling.

As in so many other advanced economies, average family size has been decreasing in Canada, largely due to lower fertility rates. Here in B.C., the average number of children per family is now 1.9, down from 2.7 half a century ago. With fewer children, the typical household has also been shrinking in size. In 2011, the average household in B.C. had 2.5 persons, identical to the national figure. An interesting trend that's garnering plenty of attention from social scientists is that one-person households are becoming more common, rising from 23.5 per cent of all B.C. households in 1981 to 28.3 per cent today. Fifty years ago, only 13 per cent of British Columbians lived in single-person households.

Immigration Drives Further Diversity

A final demographic development that warrants mention is immigration and its role in creating a more diverse population. Globally, Canada ranks near the top in the number of immigrants admitted measured relative to the size of the existing population. In an average year, Canada

welcomes 240,000 – 260,000 permanent newcomers. On top of this are sizable inflows of foreign temporary workers and students. According to the 2011 census, foreign-born residents comprise 26 per cent of British Columbia's population; in the Lower Mainland, the proportion is much higher at 41 per cent. Estimates suggest that by 2020, half of all Greater Vancouver residents are likely to have been born outside of Canada.

As immigration continues to drive

demographic growth, the province's population is destined to become ever more diverse. For employers and human resource managers, this underscores the need to plan and prepare for the increasingly heterogeneous workforce that will be staffing and operating our businesses and public institutions in the years ahead. **PD**

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



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Olga Shcherbina: Seeking Diversity Clues

As founder of the Vancouver-based Diversity Clues Consulting Inc., Olga Shcherbina's favourite quote has always been M. Ghandi's: "Be the change you want to see in the world". Diversity Clues promotes livable and welcoming communities and inclusive workplaces by assisting organizations to plan and deliver their workforce strategies, services and programs. For the last four years, she co-chaired BC HRMA's Diversity in the Workplace Roundtable and led over 50 discussions with diversity experts. Holding a M.Sc. in Planning from UBC, Olga most recently launched a new online publication www.thinkimmigrants.com which offers an independent platform for exchanging knowledge and opinions between scholars, policy makers, immigrants and employers.

How has the workplace perspective of diversity changed in recent years due to labour shortages and demographic shifts?

As Canada becomes more diverse so does the Canadian workforce. Approximately one in five people living in Canada is a visible minority and in many communities visible minorities are becoming the majority. British Columbia is expected to have over one million job openings over the next decade; since only 650,00 people will come out of BC's school system, policy makers predict that internationally trained workers will fill one-third of these job openings through to 2020.

As more BC sectors experience skills shortages, employers are becoming more open to diversity in the workplace and are increasing their efforts to reach out to untapped labour and skills sources. In particular, the BC's Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) has been gaining momentum as it allows employers to bring workers overseas to meet current labour needs. While I am not questioning the effectiveness of the PNP to address immediate skills shortages in our province, I do advocate for getting local employers to become more knowledgeable about and interested in the diversity of skills and expertise of local foreign trained professionals, i.e. those who are already in Canada and looking for jobs.

What are the practical steps involved in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce?

There are many ways by which employers can diversify their talent pools. These strategies are discussed in detail in many online and printed resources that have been developed in the last few years,

including *A Cultural Competence Toolkit* developed by BC HRMA in 2009. The strategies will be different depending on the size of an organization, the make up of its current workforce and many other factors.

However, some practical steps apply to all organizations. Building relationships with local agencies serving different population groups allows companies to expand their talent pools. Separating job requirements into essential and "nice-to-have" categories provides clear guidelines both for applicants and the decision-makers during the selection process. Finally, using plain language and avoiding slang allows hiring managers to better connect with potential immigrant employees and ensures that candidates are better positioned to demonstrate their core competencies during interviews.

What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?

I think one of the most challenging aspects of working in a diverse environment is to overcome our individual biases or at least be aware of them. As humans we tend to discriminate based on our personal preferences and past experiences.

Challenging our unconscious biases is difficult, as it requires consistent efforts in questioning our thoughts and actions. I found that learning to recognize my discomforts, pause and think about my feelings were the first steps towards becoming less biased. I have also accepted that this learning process is a life long journey: moving beyond tolerance and remaining curious and open to new ways of being.

With such diversity within BC, in what ways are we defining the opportunity of the diverse workplace?

In this knowledge-based economy, the majority of new jobs will require people with post-secondary education and skilled immigrants are becoming important players in the highly-skilled job market. For example, in 2012, foreign-trained professions accounted for 46 per cent of newly registered pharmacists and 38 per cent of newly licensed engineers with local regulatory bodies.

Local employers have tremendous opportunities to take advantage of this culturally-diverse and competent workforce. To tap into immigrant talent pools, employers may participate in the initiatives developed and/or funded by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC and/or partner with established immigrant serving agencies, such as MOSAIC, S.U.C.C.E.S.S, ISSofBC and others. Moreover, there are a number of training opportunities for employers ranging from seminars on diverse workforce offered by BC HRMA to a certificate in Intercultural Communication by UBC Continuing Studies.

Additionally, companies can also learn from outstanding local employers who were awarded with local and/or national diversity awards. At the BC HRMA Diversity in the Workplace Roundtable, we had the good fortune to learn from a wide variety of local diversity champions. I would like to thank all the presenters for volunteering their time to share their expertise and generate lively group discussions at our roundtable from 2009 to June 2013—and I hope the group will continue with new leadership this fall. 

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