# HR Edge

THE MAGAZINE OF LEADING EDGE IDEAS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

FALL 2015

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Fall 2015

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HREdge

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## features



# Welcome to the ever-changing

## A message from our Editors

**Althea Gordon**
MRHM, York University
2010

**Tania Magloire**
MRHM, York University
2012

As we celebrate the launch of the Fall 2015 Edition of the *HR Edge*, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the success of the magazine—editors, designers, authors, alumni and our readers. We are also grateful for the support and collaboration of the York University, School of Human Resource Management staff for their ongoing support and commitment to making the *HR Edge* a reality.

The *HR Edge* provides an important forum for the exchange of information and insights regarding the diversity of issues we encounter as HR professionals and leaders. It is our hope that this resource will lead to greater enquiry and knowledge transfer as we support organizations in the achievement of their strategic goals through the implementation of modern HR strategies.

This publication introduces a range of relevant topics—from the challenge of developing and retaining HR Senior Leaders to new ideas such as allowing pets in the workplace. These questions and many more, make up the dynamic field of Human Resource management reflected in the Fall issue.

We would like to extend a very warm welcome and best wishes to the York University, School of Human Resource Management incoming cohorts.

Happy reading!
Tania & Althea

**Tania Magloire** is a graduate of the Masters of Human Resources Management program at York University and HR professional in the federal public sector. Tania's expanding HR experience includes job evaluation, labour relations as well as training and development on HR subjects such as values and ethics and performance management. She is excited to take on her new role as HR Edge Editor.

**Althea Gordon** is a graduate of the MHRM program and has extensive experience providing strategic HR services in various roles in multidisciplinary environments, including corporate, government, and educational sectors. She is presently the Human Resources Manager, HRMS Business Solutions at Humber College. Althea also helps the next generation of HR professionals hone their skills through a part-time faculty position at York University in the School of Human Resource Management.

**Dr. Marie-Hélène Budworth** is the Director, School of Human Resource Management, York University, Toronto, Canada

## A message from the Director

When the School of Human Resource Management was formed in 2009, the founding members went through a strategic visioning exercise. As we move into our eighth year, and I enter the final year of my mandate, I find myself reflecting on how far we have come.

Most significantly, we aspired to be the 'destination' for HRM education in Canada and beyond. With a vibrant and rigorous program at the undergraduate and graduate levels, we have made significant progress toward this goal. Our application rates for all programs are competitive and the students that we find in our classrooms are engaged and intelligent. Althea Gordon and Tania Magloire, editors of this edition of the *HR Edge*, are perfect examples of the quality of our students. With the support of Dr. Len Karakowsky, they have done a fantastic job with this issue.

On the faculty side, I am continually impressed by both the breadth and quantity of research contributions. This is also the case among our doctoral students. The list of publications highlighted in this issue is an excellent indication of our collective continued success in making significant contributions to thought leadership in HR in Canada, and internationally.

As I credit the faculty for their contributions to HRM, I need to take a moment to acknowledge the retirement of Dr. Monica Belcourt. As the founding Director of this school and a pioneer for HR Education in Canada, she leaves a significant void in her wake. I am personally immensely grateful for her achievements. There is a place for me here at York largely due to the work that Dr. Belcourt did in championing the importance of HR and HR education.

In this final year of my term I hope that we can continue to sharpen our academic programs, support the research of our faculty members, and provide our students with challenging and engaging academic and practically oriented experiences. If you would like to become involved in our community either through our academic programs or by supporting our students, please reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Marie-Hélène Budworth

by Dr. Jelena Zikic

# High-quality mentoring

## A valuable career resource and tool for both the protégé and the experienced professional

**Job search and unemployment are some of the most stressful times in our careers. Yet, in today's economy it is not uncommon to experience this situation several times over the course of one's career. Despite sending out resumes and responding to many job postings, research shows that up to 70% of jobs are obtained through social networks and relationships. However, what happens when you are a newcomer to the labour market and there are few if any relationships that you can resort to for any job search advice and support?**

**A recent study** (Zikic, 2015) examined a successful mentoring initiative that is meant to assist foreign professionals in their local job search process. At the same time this mentoring program also contributes to building and enriching careers of local professionals as well. Developed by Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), Mentoring Partnerships is an extremely successful program (10000 matches made in the last 10 years) that provides newcomers with an opportunity to connect them to other professionals in their occupation. Yet this program also benefits local professionals; mentors who volunteer their time to assist newcomers in their job search gain valuable first hand insight into diverse human capital and resources that newcomers bring to the local economy. The study reports on specific outcomes that both mentors and protégés are able to gain through knowledge exchange and successful mentoring process. Specifically, it is found that mentoring relationships varied in quality and the focus on this article is to examine what kinds of characteristics defined high quality relationships, namely those that are often described as 'life giving' (Dutton and Heaphy, 2013); these relationships are flexible, resilient and lasting connections, that involved mutuality and special meaning and benefits for each party.

Based on an in depth study of 100 mentors and protégés (that is 50 mentoring relationships), this study reports unique findings on three specific characteristics that make these mentoring relationships successful and lead to benefits for both mentors and protégés. Below is a summary of these key findings that will assist local professionals in building successful mentoring relationships.

## Foster authentic communication

1 Whether you are part of the formal mentoring program (i.e., formal matching is performed by a third party) or informal mentoring relationship (i.e., individuals spontaneously engage in this type of relationships), one of the key findings leading to high quality relationships is the ability to establish authentic communication between the mentor and the protégé.

Communication is the foundation of any relationship. Yet, when connecting with professionals in the mentoring relationship it is of extreme importance that the mentor and the protégé establish authentic communication early in the relationship. Authentic communication involves: openness to information exchange whereby both parties feel 'safe' to share their insight, stories and experiences without being judged; they are able to openly ask questions, seek feedback and most importantly feel comfortable to share their career challenges or current stressors.

One of the conditions that may promote this type of communication is active listening and sharing of expectations early on in the relationship. Once mentoring partners are clear about each other's career goals and motivations to be involved in the relationships, there is a much greater chance for the relationship to grow and develop into a high quality relationship.

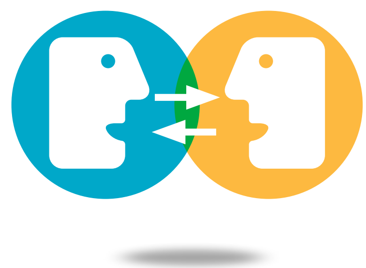
The 'art of listening' may seem as an intuitive requirement and an obvious component of any communication. Yet, it is also one of the most common communication barriers. As busy 'careerists' we are often eager to share our own stories or ask our own questions. Authentic communication will allow space and time for each partner to hear each other's story with an attentive and curious ear and in this way further allow for information exchange, learning about each other and eventual growth in the relationship.

MENTORING continues on page 8

**The 'art of listening' may seem as an intuitive requirement and an obvious component of any communication. Yet, it is also one of the most common communication barriers.**

## Ensure emotional presence

2 Mentoring involves sharing personal stories, past work experience as well as job search or career challenges. These personal experiences are very meaningful to individuals and are often marked by strong emotional presence. Individual stories involve describing times when our careers were on the upraise and jobs that took us places, but also we ought to be sharing times when challenges and career disappointments' occurred and together with the mentoring partner trying to understand the reasons and potential remedies. This was especially the case with foreign professionals facing very challenging experiences in the new labour market and often having to come to terms with difficult career decisions, like accepting lower level jobs for the moment and thus downshifting in their careers. Emotional connection is also critical in situations where the mentor and the protégé come from diverse backgrounds where mutual understanding, sharing and perspective taking is of outmost importance. Relationships that were described as especially beneficial and long lasting for both the mentor and the protégé were those where both partners experienced and were able to empathize with both positive and negative emotions. In order to be of assistance and understand the needs of the protégé, the mentor must be able to identify with their needs and experiences. While some mentors will be learning about specific issues faced by foreign professionals for the first time, many Canadian mentors were actually in the similar situations before and are thus able to empathize even more. Mentoring partners must also be ready to share some of the more difficult realities of the local labour market (i.e., inability to continue one's career at exactly the same level as before). Finally, when dealing with a protégé who is facing an extremely stressful situation, such as job loss or unemployment, it is found that even just mentor's emotional presence as the 'face of the jobs search' process who will reassure them to continue, and not to lose their self-confidence is of utmost importance. Sometimes, even without a job in sight, protégés reported feeling better on a weekly basis, simply as a result of a meeting with their mentor face to face and sharing their weekly experiences and frustrations. They felt more hopeful and had strength to approach another week of job search.



## Create unassuming-holistic connection and collaborative approach

3 While typically mentors are seen as more senior and knowledgeable gurus, the findings of this study show that quite the opposite approach is the one that may lead to much stronger and more lasting outcomes. The key to success in these mentoring relationships was collaborative approach, whereby both the mentor and the protégé would contribute and share. Thus, the more they were able to be equal partners and exchange knowledge as equal level professionals (this was often the case given the extent of protégé's work experience back in their home country) the more satisfaction was reported on both sides. This can be described as strong emphasis on 'mutuality' that is involved and mutual exchange of knowledge, emotions and information. Mutuality resulted in an atmosphere whereby the mentor was not necessarily the only expert or the more 'powerful' (i.e., based on local knowledge and experience) partner in the relationship—but rather that the protégé, in this case foreign professional with often the same or even more experience and the education—also had a lot to contribute and share in these interactions. Successful relationships were those where

partners willingly bounced ideas off each other, and both took a proactive approach in each meeting. Thus, commitment and active engagement in the mentoring relationship was clearly evident on each side. This relationship dynamic consists of constant back and forth between learning from and about the protégé and then allowing the mentor to provide feedback and specific advice was an important ingredient in the success of mentoring.

Sharing was both of professional nature, but often also spilled into domains related to family, hobbies, values etc. This holistic type of conversation enriched the ability of the partners to understand each other beyond strictly career domain and allowed them to connect in more personal ways. This holistic approach coupled with the collaborative nature of the relationships led to discovering 'deeper level similarities' between the partners. These could be described as the 'bonding tissue' and major building blocks for the continuation of the relationship (i.e., work values, family experiences, spiritual connection).

## Mentoring outcomes

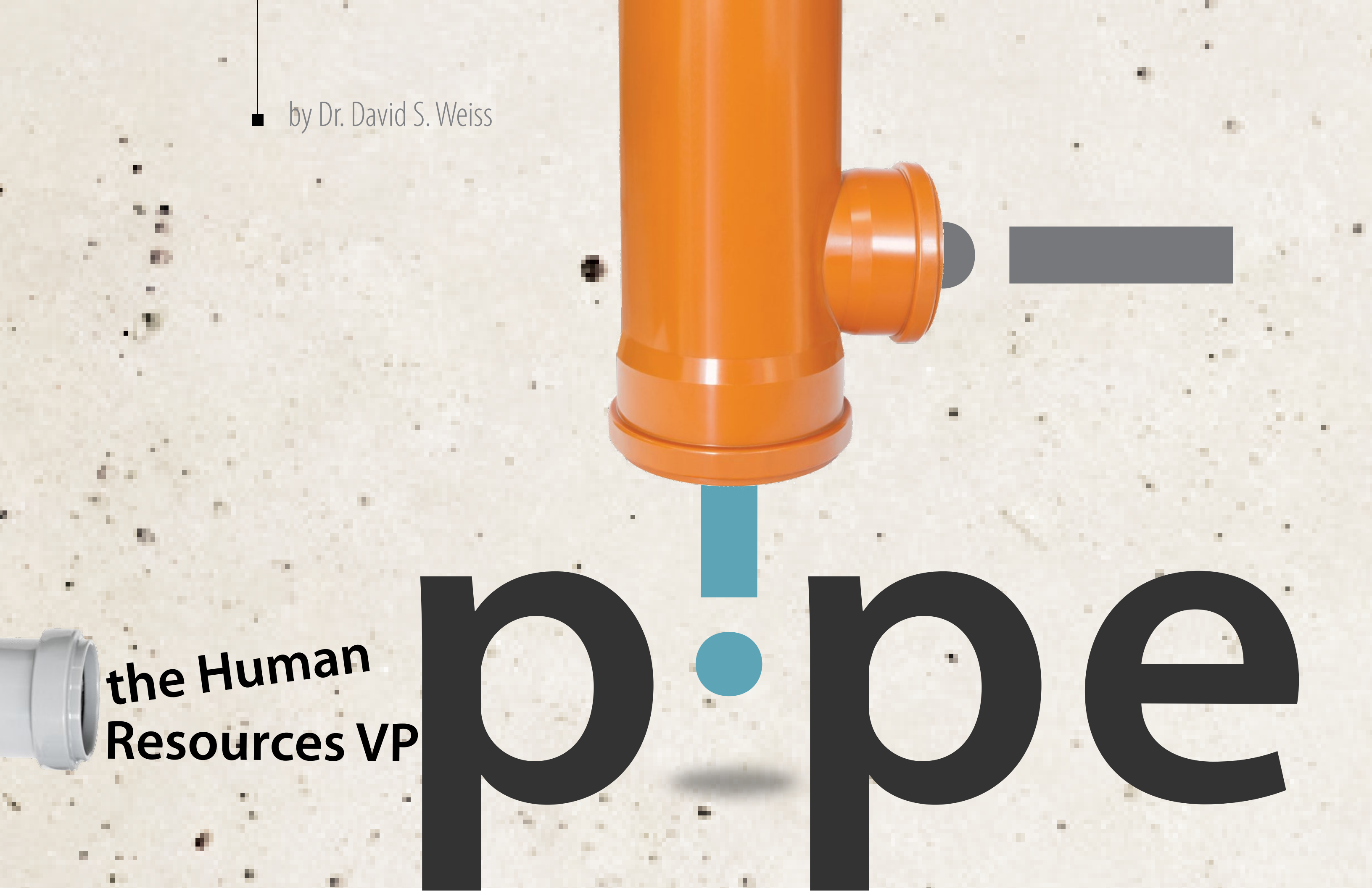
As mentioned earlier, successful mentoring relationships were characterized by constant 'mutuality' that is the understanding that each partner in the relationship had something to offer to the other. This was evident also in the type of learning that was reported by the mentor and the protégé. This type of relational tone also led the mentor to present themselves in an unassuming way and resulted in conversations where the mentor may for example suggest course of action (e.g., offer advice on local job search strategies for example), or share valuable insight into specific types of networks and organizations; however, it was very much up to the protégé to take this advice or perhaps reconsider it and/or ask more questions. There were also occasions where the foreign professional had an opportunity to share and let the mentor learn about how the specific occupation functions in their home country or the specific types of experiences that the protégé gained over the course of their career and that was of benefit in their local job search. Mentors were often surprised to learn about the challenges in navigating the external labour market and specific job search techniques that as employment professionals they may not have been aware of.

Both mentors and protégés reported outcomes related to their career as well as personal development. Protégés described learning about job search and networking strategies. Introducing protégés to other professionals locally was also of special benefit and contributed to gaining local network of contacts that they otherwise would not be able to meet. Mentors provided insider's knowledge about the local labour practices, but also occupation specific knowledge. However, some of the most significant outcomes were the increased level of confidence and continued persistence in their job search despite the challenges. High quality partnerships were those where mentors and protégés talked about continuing the relationship despite the formal ending of the mentoring program. Mentor's reported learning about diversity and specifically the value that foreign professionals bring to the labour market. Yet, through these relationships they also became aware of the many barriers and even inequalities that foreign professionals experienced locally. At the same time mentors learned and gained admiration for the resilience and persistence that foreign professionals demonstrated. Through this mutual learning and knowledge exchange, mentors were learning about occupational norms in other countries, international experience and unique type of settlement and transition experiences of newcomers in Canada. Mentors often realized certain aspects of their own career that they could further develop (e.g., engage in more networking or improve their coaching and communication skills).Finally, successful partnerships reported deeper connection in their partnerships, such as similar values, spiritual beliefs and common interests. Mentors even mentioned that engaging with their protégé was a welcome moment of reflection and time away from their daily routine. Thus, benefits and positive outcomes were multiple not only on the traditional protégé side but importantly for the mentor as well.

## Conclusions

While mentoring relationships may develop spontaneously (i.e., informal mentoring), some career situations, such as coping with unemployment, may call for deliberate matching and formal mentoring assistance. This study of formal mentoring relationships based on occupational matching identified several dimensions that may lead to higher quality relationships—that is successful, longer lasting and resilient relationships benefiting both parties. Three critical building blocks of these relationships were described: Authentic communication, Emotional presence, and Unassuming - holistic connection and Collaborative approach all leading to mutual benefits and longer lasting connections. Thus, successful mentoring partnerships provide social support and assistance that may be especially relevant during times of career crisis and challenging transitions. HRE

**Dr. Jelena Zikic is Associate Professor of Human Resource Management in the School of Human Resource Management at York University.**



by Dr. David S. Weiss

# the Human Resources VP pipe

**For the past fifteen years, many leading HR thinkers, including those I have referred to in my HR strategy books[1], argued that HR leadership needs to demonstrate a high level of HR professionalism with very strong business acumen. With that kind of leadership, the HR function will be positioned as customer focused, strategic asset business partner. However, events have not unfolded exactly as forecasted.**

First, HR is a local responsibility, so understanding the local culture and demonstrating business acumen about your specific business have become key success factors that are as important as having generic HR professionalism. HR needs to focus on the people and organizational capabilities within their own business. A deep understanding of the unique local business requirements are essential for HR to make the best choices that fit the business needs.

Second, when an HR VP is a business-focused HR professional and understands the local culture and unique business needs, that leader is often seen as a key business asset. Many companies have transferred HR VPs with this focus to a new role as the vice president of one of their other lines of business that have direct customer contact. In one case the VP HR became the head of retail banking, in another the HR VP was transferred to lead the company's human capital consulting business, and in a third situation the HR VP became the president of the college. There are many other similar examples. Business leaders have come to believe that they don't want to expend such a talented leader on the HR function, and they think it


would do greater good for the business if that VP HR led a business area. As a result, HR VPs have become a key resource to fill the pipeline for other business functions. The negative side effect is that transferring HR VPs has limited the VP pipeline for HR. A scenario such as the following has occurred numerous times:

The HR VP galvanized her HR department to focus on excellence in HR professionalism, emphasizing a strong customer focus with a line of sight to the external customer. As a result, the HR department was positioned as a strategic asset for the business. At the same time, the President had a strong need for leadership in one of its lines of business that required strong people and business leadership in order for it to succeed. He identified the HR VP as a key resource and decided to offer the business line VP role to the HR VP. After the HR VP became the new business leader, HR no longer had a strong talent governing it. HR's pipeline of future leaders included talented career HR directors who did not bring the same level of business credibility and business acumen as their previous VP HR. Over time, HR regressed to a non-strategic service provider function rather than sustaining its former status as a core strategic partner and asset for the business.

The desirability of business-focused HR VPs means that HR needs to have a continuous pipeline of potential HR vice presidents. HR leaders may depart the HR department at any time, not because they are underperforming but because they are so strong strategically, and the business needs their leadership for these kind of challenges. HR needs to have a well-developed pipeline of ready-now candidates for the HR VP role in order to sustain HR's position as a strategic asset for the business.

So where can HR find leaders who are business-focused HR professionals with a deep understanding of the local culture and the unique business requirements of their own organization?

There are four different sources to fill the HR pipeline for the role of HR VP. Each one requires generic HR professionalism and business acumen. However, the differentiating factors are the extent to which individuals for these positions have a deep understanding of the organization's local culture as well as a good understanding of the company's business needs. The table on the following page shows the four areas.

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**So where's the next HR VP and how can you fill the HR VP pipeline? Each of the four options has a clear logic for why it can be a potential source of talent, but each also brings specific challenges.**

**DOES NOT KNOW THE LOCAL CULTURE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Does not understand the unique business requirements of their own organization | **Hire a new VP HR from outside the business** |
| 2 | Understands the unique business requirements of their own organization | **Transfer a business leader from another area of the business into the role of HR VP·** |

**KNOWS THE LOCAL CULTURE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Does not understand the unique business requirements of their own organization | **Promote an HR director from within your HR organization** |
| 4 | Understands the unique business requirements of their own organization | **Promote an HR director from within your HR organization who has worked in a business area of your organization** |

## 1. Hire a new VP HR from outside the business

A very common approach to filling the HR vice president role is to do an external search and hire someone from outside the organization. The logic is that external HR vice presidents bring new levels of HR professionalism that will enable them to translate their previous success into a new success for their new business. However, there are challenges and key success factors that should be considered.

**Challenges:** The new HR VP enters the organization without an understanding of the internal culture and often does not have the credibility with the local business as someone who understands their business requirements. In the worst case scenario, the new HR VP believes that what was done in the previous organization can simply be duplicated in the new organization. However, HR is a very local business, and without the full understanding of the culture of the business locally and the application of principles to that environment, HR vice presidents will often fail. Too many new HR VPs are unsuccessful because they push the new organization into an area that the organization is unwilling to pursue, is not ready for, or does not fit with the organization's context.

**Key success factors:** The HR vice presidents who are hired from outside the organization need to demonstrate tremendous humility when entering a new organization. Certain protocol should be observed. They should avoid referring back to their previous organization as the model by which they want to build the HR function in the new organization. They should spend the first three months understanding the business and its unique cultural patterns. They also should build credibility with their business colleagues by studying how the business creates value for their customers. In other words, although they have entered the business externally, they should focus on filling their deficiency by accelerating their understanding of the unique business requirements and the organization's unique local culture. Only after they establish a level of local credibility will their new initiatives have a reasonable probability of acceptance.

HR VPs have become a key resource to fill the pipeline for other business functions. **The negative side effect is that transferring HR VPs has limited the VP pipeline for HR.**

## 2. Transfer a business leader from another area of the business into the role Of HR VP

This is a popular approach used in many businesses. For example, in an insurance organization the Head of Audit was moved to the role of HR VP only to return to a bigger role in the organization two years later. This organization used the HR VP role as a flow-through developmental position whereby the leader was given the HR function for two or three years as a developmental opportunity that helped her as a leader after she returned to the line of business. In another situation, a veteran VP of pharmaceutical products was moved to the role of VP HR. This organization used HR as a place for veteran leaders to spend the final years of their career. The approach assumes that the HR function is a low-risk area to lead without a professional background and that any business leader can make the HR function work effectively. However there are challenges and key success factors that should be considered.

**Challenges:** These leaders sometimes see their role as a caretaker for the HR administrative functions. They don't see the opportunity or understand HR's potential to build significant organizational systemic capacity that will be transformational. Rather, they view HR as an administrative function that allows the business to support managers in doing a series of tasks that are necessary but not strategic for the business.

**Key success factors:** These leaders are most successful when they recognize that they need strong HR directors reporting to them who bring HR professionalism. Their key assets to drive the HR function forward are to bring both the voice of the customer, which they understand from their previous work as business leaders, as well as their local credibility with business leaders. They should focus on filling their deficiency by empowering their HR directors who have HR professionalism to backfill for their areas of weakness and to show their HR leadership as effectively as possible.

## 3. Promote an HR director from within your HR organization

In some situations, high-performing career HR directors are offered the opportunity to become new HR vice presidents. They bring to their new role of vice president their overall HR professionalism and their local understanding of the organizational culture, which will be important assets for HR's continual strategic contribution. Promoting someone within also sends a very powerful message to other aspiring leaders that excellent employees are given internal career opportunities.  However, there are challenges and key success factors that should be considered.

**Challenges:** When HR professionals are promoted from within and their entire careers have been within HR, they may be viewed by line business managers as not understanding what the business is trying to achieve both strategically and in regard to delivering customer value. For these reasons HR professionals may be viewed as service providers to the business leaders. They may understand HR but not have the knowledge and experience to understand fully and address the organization's business concerns. In these situations it becomes a significant challenge for the HR VP to become strategic partners with the business leaders to deliver strategic and customer value.

**Key success factors:** The HR leader who is promoted into the vice president position should spend an inordinate amount of time with the business leaders building credibility and demonstrating a full understanding of their businesses. Business leaders need to be able to trust their directors of HR to lead the HR function internally even in situations where their own expertise exceeds the expertise of their HR directors. The HR leader should focus on filling any deficiency and building credibility by engaging in partnership discussions that deliver strategic business and external customer value.

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## 4. Promote an HR director from within your HR organization who has worked in a business area

This novel approach has been implemented in a number of organizations. What they have done is move a high-performing HR director to a line business position for one or two years to gain direct business experience. In one situation the HR leader in a pharmaceutical company was moved into a government relations leadership role for two years and then returned as the HR VP. In another situation a high-performing HR director transferred to a satellite sales leadership role. This individual learned the business and at the same time leveraged HR skills. These leaders gained firsthand experience of how to develop business strategy, how to run a business, and how to deliver external customer value. They also understood more fully what it felt like to be a recipient of HR policies, practices, and procedures and experienced what it was like to be a client of HR. After the two years in that role, they were brought back into the HR VP role to leverage their local business experience and credibility along with their deeper understanding of the organizational culture. This source for the pipeline of HR VPs has been highly successful in a number of organizations. However, there are challenges and key success factors that should be considered.

**Challenges:** This is a highly successful approach to developing HR talent, but it requires several years of thinking ahead. In many cases former HR VPs knew they were departing the role because of retirement, so it was easier to plan for this transition. It may be more challenging to use this approach if the current HR VP is not expecting to leave the organization. Also, some existing HR VPs are unwilling to release the strongest director of HR to another business department because it would deplete the talent within their own HR organization. Finally, it is possible that the HR professional may prefer to stay in the business function and may not wish to return to HR even if offered the role of HR VP.

**Key success factors:** The idea of transferring HR directors to the line of business should be an explicit talent management strategy to develop HR professionals into future HR VPs. This approach can be a very strong method to build the HR VP pipeline. The same approach can be used to developed future VPs of finance and information technology. However, it requires thoughtful planning to engage the talent with this approach and to develop them as strategic assets for the business.

## Conclusion

HR has developed a generation of leaders who are demonstrating business acumen with strong HR professionalism, but it has become a strength that has caused a new problem for HR. When HR leaders are transferred to business lines to give the business greater value, it has the negative side effect of depleting key talent from HR. As a result HR needs to continually focus on how they can fill the pipeline for their future HR VPs with professionals who are business-focused HR professionals that both understand the local culture and also have credibility with the local business. HRE


### About the author

Dr. David S. Weiss is the President & CEO of Weiss International Ltd, an international consulting firm based in Toronto, Canada, that focuses on innovation, leadership, and HR consulting. David recently conducted executive sessions in Canada, USA, China, Russia, Israel, Uganda, Malaysia, Chile, Hungary, Paris, and England on his leading edge ideas about leadership and innovation. He authored or coauthored six business books, including the bestselling books Leadership-Driven HR, Innovative Intelligence, and The Leadership Gap, and he has published over fifty professional articles. David is guest faculty for executive programs at three universities and he has been honoured with the "HR Leadership Award" at the Asia-Pacific HR Congress, the "HR Distinction Award" from HR Israel, the "Distinguished Lecturer" certificate from the Government of Canada, the lifetime achievement designation of "Fellow" from HRPA, and the first lifetime achievement designation of "Fellow" from CSTD in Canada. For more information, visit www.weissinternational.ca or follow David @ DrDavidWeiss.


### Endnotes

[1] The two books authored by Dr. David S. Weiss on strategic HR are *Leadership-Driven HR: Transforming HR To Deliver Value For The Business* (Jossey-Bass. January, 2013) and *High Performance HR: Leveraging Human Resources For Competitive Advantage* (John Wiley & Sons. 2000).

by Brad Wiseman

# The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's practical approach to managing change

**Over** the past 14 years of being in the change management practice, I've had the good fortune of working with a variety of industry leaders. I began as a Change Practitioner at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in March 2000. Since then, I have worked with each of the "big four" consulting firms and benefited from their leading practices, methodologies and tools.

To advance my understanding of managing change, I have completed a number of executive level certification programs at higher education institutes. I've even met John Kotter in person at the Global Change Management Conference. Formal education and training, hands-on experiences and interaction with change leaders and academics have all greatly influenced and shaped my approach to leading change at the WSIB.

Prior to my foray into change management, I worked in the operations side of the WSIB. I started on the frontline as a Claims Adjudicator and then spent time in training as well as management.

This front-line experience and my increasing understanding of the change practice left me facing a burning question that I wanted and needed to resolve for our organization: **how do I make change feel less academic for managers and staff, and how can I operationalize change theory to make it practical for those who are charged with delivering the change for our business?**

At the WSIB, we are facing the same challenges that most employers in Ontario are experiencing. That is, how do we manage the complexity and pace of change with an aging workforce, in a competition for top talent and with technology that is constantly evolving.

In 2008, I was tasked as the Change Management Lead with the oversight and implementation of our new service delivery model. The objective of the new model was to improve return-to-work and recovery outcomes, enhance customer service and drive efficiency. The new model would result in a change in roles and responsibilities, behaviour, reporting relationships and work practices for more than 1200 front-line staff.

In 2008, we used "Kotter's" change model to guide the planning and implementation of the new ways of working. And, while we successfully implemented a new service delivery model that is yielding significant improvements to our business outcomes, the feedback and lessons learned from our front-line management and staff indicated areas that worked really well and opportunities to more effectively manage change in our business.

The learnings from the implementation of the new service delivery model served as the foundation for the creation of a new WSIB organizational change framework that is now being used to guide the strategy and planning for implementation of change throughout our organization.

Management and staff shared that having a framework to guide the implementation of the change was critical; however, a common theme that emerged through the lessons learned was the need to have the change framework be more relatable to the front lines and better reflect the language commonly used in our organization.

With those learnings top of mind, and being guided by Kotter's approach to managing change, we set out to create an organizational change framework specific for the management and staff of the WSIB.

This framework provides a practical approach to leading change. It is intended to align all WSIB employees' understanding of the vision and benefits of our transformation and prepare management to visibly and actively lead change. The framework enables the understanding of the people-related risks and the impacts of a series of changes and the development of appropriate and targeted change management action plans to get people ready for change.

## BUSINESS VALUE

At the core of the framework is business value. Business value is about understanding what the project hopes to achieve, what risks it will address and why we need to make the changes. Full business value is achieved when the project is successfully completed, all risks have been identified and mitigated and when the intended changes have proven to be sustainable. As a change leader, all of your change activities should be designed to influence the realization of business value.

## CONDITIONS

Spanning outward from business value are four necessary conditions to lead change:

1. **willingness**
2. **ability**
3. **capacity**
4. **capability**

**Willingness** speaks to how you motivate internal stakeholders to adopt the needed changes, while **ability** speaks to how you enable people to adopt the changes by providing them with, among other things, the right tools, processes, technology, skills and structures. These two conditions work hand-in-hand to create readiness for change in an organization.

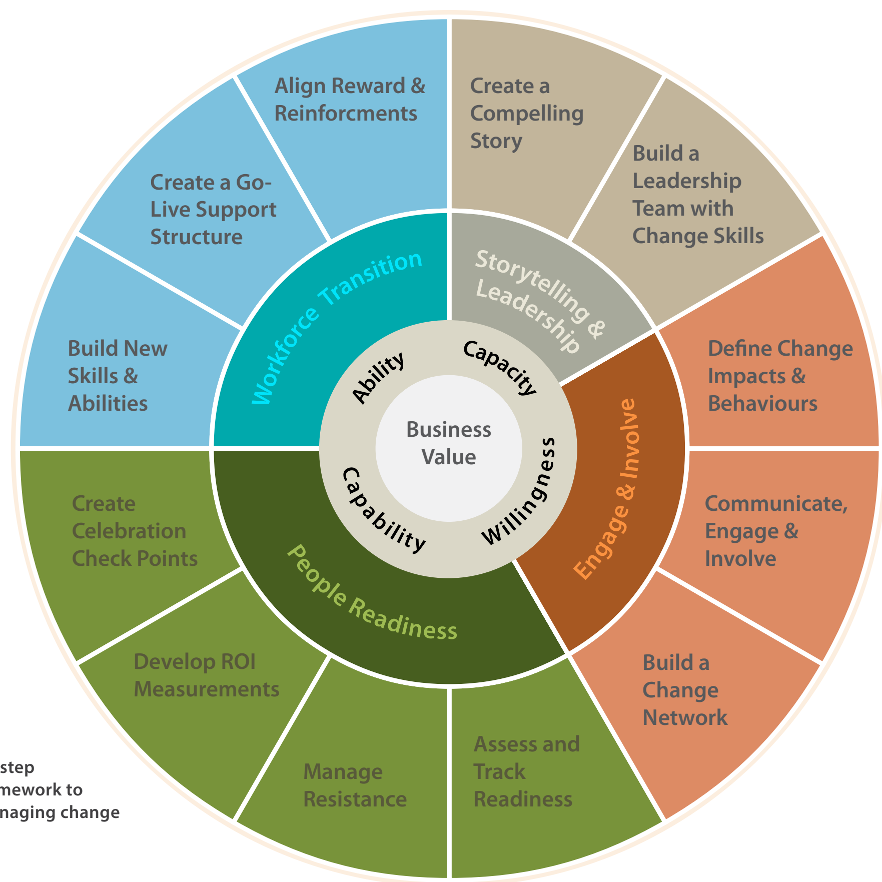
**Capacity** for change speaks to the extent to which an organization can manage a significant number of changes simultaneously. Capacity is integrally linked to **capability**, or our collective and individual ability to understand and manage change. Together, these conditions create the basis for successful implementation of any business changes. They help to accelerate the time to successful implementation while increasing the chances of making the changes "stick" over time.

## CRITICAL AREAS OF FOCUS

The framework has four critical areas of focus, or quadrants, in which change management activities occur:

**Storytelling and Leadership:** These activities are about generating a shared understanding by stakeholders of the project/program objectives and vision, people's roles in the change and what it is going to take to achieve the vision. To that end, leaders need to drive awareness and motivation, building on organizational knowledge and experience to engage people and show them what's possible.

**Engage and Involve:** These activities are about effective two-way engagement and communication with key internal stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of change. Activities focus on engagement and involvement to increase commitment and decrease resistance of key stakeholders in the business.




12-step framework to managing change

MANAGING CHANGE continues on page 18

The framework enables the understanding of the people-related risks and the impacts of a series of changes and the development of appropriate and targeted change management action plans **to get people ready for change.**

**People Readiness:** These activities ensure potential people-related risks are clearly understood and mitigated. Change readiness activities are in place to assess and monitor the degree to which the organization is prepared to accept, support and execute the new ways of working. In short, the purpose of people readiness activities is to understand the risks associated with the change program and manage them to focus on business results.

**Workforce Transition:** Workforce transition involves developing and delivering strategies and tactics that focus on moving the organization from the current state to the future state, while minimizing the potential disruption to the business. Activities should enable people to perform new ways of working and reinforce and reward new behaviours that support changes in the business.

## COMPONENTS

The framework has 12 components, each associated with a quadrant. The components are the steps leaders can take during a change project or program. Change is generally not a linear process, and this means that sometimes activities may not necessarily occur in a logical order. With that in mind, the numbering of activities is not intended to suggest that these are linear. They do tend to build on one another, but you will likely need to revisit some "early" activities at various points throughout the life of a project.

Each of the steps described below can be translated into a set of relevant actions to ensure that internal stakeholders understand what is needed of them and what we will do to help them adopt new ways of working and behaving.

### Storytelling and Leadership

**1. Create a Compelling Story:** Helping people make sense of the different reasons for and benefits of undertaking a major change is a critical first step in any change effort. Creating a compelling story helps to knit the transformation together for employees. It builds hope and motivates people to continue to pursue the changes moving forward. Critical elements of the story include the sense of urgency for and/or case for change along with the vision of the future state. The individual projects help shape and inform the overall chapters of the story.

**2. Build a Leadership Team with Change Skills:** Every successful change effort is driven by a set of dedicated and committed leaders. Leaders play a central role in building "willingness and ability" to make change happen in an organization. Therefore, creating a leadership team with the needed capability and capacity to lead is a key success factor in any project.

### Engage and Involve

**3. Define Change Impacts and Behaviours:** Understanding how work is changing for key internal stakeholders and the extent of those changes is an important step in understanding where potential resistance is likely to occur. Identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to support changes in the business will help to define the kinds of learning and other support needed to help people transition successfully

**4. Communicate, Engage and Involve:** Identifying the right activities to address impacts, manage risk and generate needed commitment to changes in the business is key. To that end, communication and engagement activities will be defined as a way to inspire and move target groups to the appropriate level of commitment.

**5. Build a Change Network:** Having an extended network of people involved in building and monitoring commitment to changes in the business can help accelerate their adoption by key internal stakeholders. Building a network of front-line employees to assist the change team and business leaders in engaging the business in a meaningful way can help manage expectations and prepare the organization for what lies ahead.

## People Readiness

**6. Assess and Track Readiness:** The extent to which key internal stakeholders are willing and able to adopt the changes in the business can influence the type and timing of change interventions needed. When people are able to successfully transition as they have, or will have the skills and knowledge needed to work differently, they are also more willing. Willingness is "sealed" when people believe in and are motivated to working and behaving differently. As mentioned earlier, building sufficient levels of commitment is an important part of the equation to successfully manage change and deliver the full value of transformation to the business.

**7. Manage Resistance:** Resistance is a sign that the change is beginning. In effect, it's an important part of getting to "readiness" for change. Acting on resistance requires that it is first identified and understood. Only then can actions to manage it be identified.

**8. Develop Return on Investment (ROI) Measurements:** Identifying change risks and the actions to address them is a significant and necessary part of the change effort. However, understanding the effectiveness of your actions is perhaps even more important to the success of your change program. There are a variety of ways to measure effectiveness including using throughput measures, such as training sessions held and communications delivered, and outcome measures, such as mastery of training delivered.

**9. Create Celebration Check Points:** Taking stock of and celebrating early wins in a project can be an important motivator for people, particularly over the course of a long and complex project. Maintaining momentum for change over the course of a long project or a large program like transformation is vital to project/program success. The ability to maintain momentum depends on providing people with some demonstration that the need to make major changes and difficult choices is worth the investment of time and effort.

## Workforce Transition

**10. Build New Skills and Abilities:** Successful adoption of change involves not only motivating people but enabling them to take on new ways of working by providing them with the opportunity to build new skills and practice new ways of working. To that end, new skills and abilities will be developed and fostered based on the identified impacts, ensuring employees receive adequate training and opportunities to practice the new skills.

**11. Create a Go-Live Support Structure:** Managing the risk in the period leading up to and immediately following implementation of changes in the business can significantly influence the realization of business value. More specifically, minimizing disruptions to the business and potential dips in employee productivity can affect the ROI to the business. To address this, employees need to be, and feel, entirely supported throughout the transition period.

**12. Align Rewards and Reinforcements:** Providing people with the structures, tools, processes and skills to adopt new ways of working is only part of the formula for making change "stick." Sustaining change is also dependent on aligning rewards and reinforcements with the new behaviours and work practices. New performance measures must be developed and must align with new ways of working and behaving in the business.

This new organizational change framework has been well received by the business and is guiding our change approach and activities for the transformation initiatives currently underway at the WSIB. In addition, the framework identified the need to strengthen the capacity and capability to effectively lead and manage change in our organization. To address this, the Organizational Change team partnered with the Leadership and Development team to create an in-house Lead Change Certification program for our front-line managers, which has had an extremely positive response.

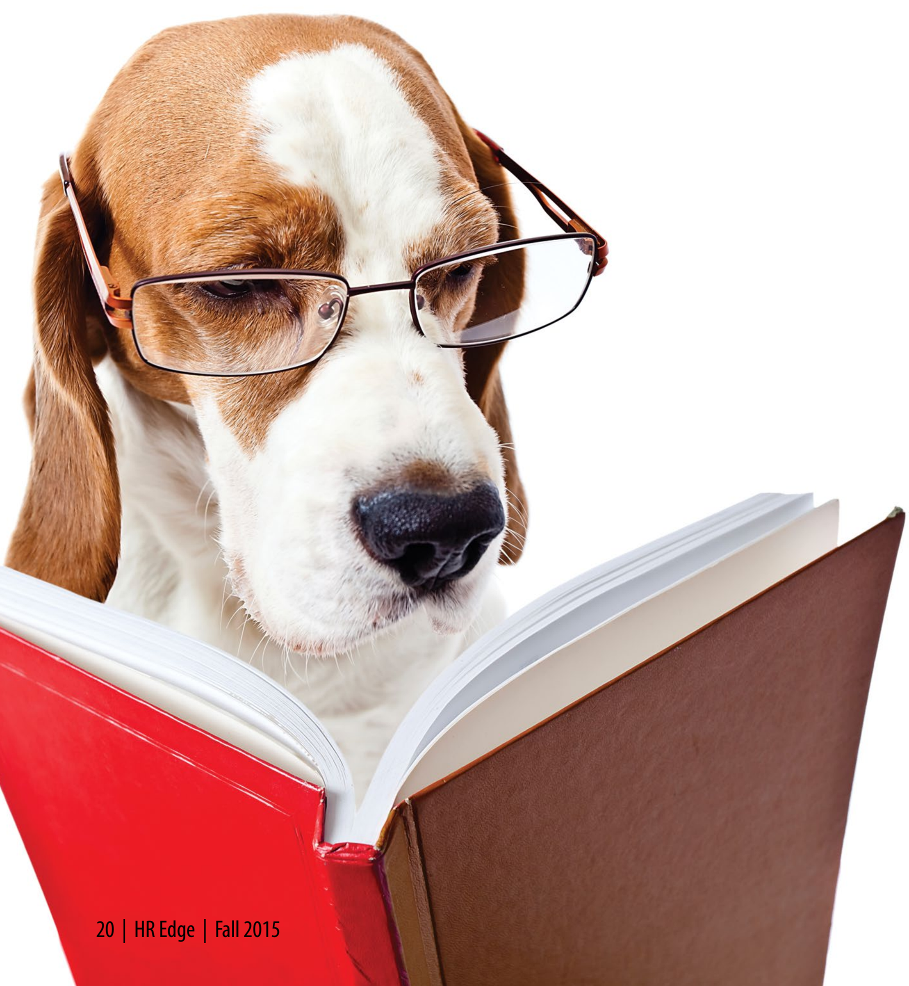
While we are still challenged by making the practice of change management feel more practical, our homegrown model has positioned us well. As a result, we are able to talk to the business in terms they are familiar with and provide a change management guide for those who need it most—our front-line management team. HRE

Brad Wiseman is Senior Organization Change Lead at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

by Dr. Christa L. Wilkin, Dr. Paul Fairlie, and Dr. Souha R. Ezzedeen

# Who let the dogs in?

## A look at pet-friendly workplaces



**Organizations** are taking note of the pet-friendliness trend by instituting policies that are sensitive to pet ownership so that they can enhance their employees' work lives. There is a misconception that being a "pet-friendly workplace" (PFW) only includes bringing pets to work, however, our research suggests that pet-friendliness involves a range of efforts that may apply to any workplace interested in improving employee recruitment, retention, and productivity, among other outcomes. Technology firms such as Google and other well-known companies such as Ben & Jerry's, Build-a-bear, Cliff Bar, Electronic Arts, Nestlé Purina, and P&G Pet Care lead pet-friendly initiatives and allow their employees to bring their pets to work.

Studies have documented the range of positive benefits that pets can have on physical and psychological health, social support, and civic benefits such as facilitating interactions among strangers. At the same time, the financial costs of pet ownership such as veterinary services and the urban pet lifestyle of pet sitting and training can be staggering. Despite these concerns, approximately half of Canadian households and three-fifths of US households have at least one pet, considered by many as genuine family members.

Anecdotal benefits that extend to the workplace are reported in the popular press, including improved retention, however, research is lagging on examining this trend, despite calls for more research on the topic, likely because the scientific community remains reluctant to study the topic as pets are seen as "too cute" for serious minds.

The purpose of our study was to present an overview of pet-friendly trends, because despite its growth, there has been little research on the benefits and potential risks of pet-friendly workplaces. Considering the growing recognition between healthy workplaces and organizational performance, it behooves us to consider how pet-friendliness can help organizations become more responsive to employee wellness and work-life balance.

### Scope of pet-friendly workplaces

Based on our review, we characterize pet-friendly policies and practices as ranging from simple or low-commitment, to more complex or high-commitment measures. Because pet costs can be high, offering group pet insurance, much like other benefits such as travel and life insurance, is an example of a simple measure that can be offered to employees. Pet insurance provides employees with coverage should their pet become unwell or suffer an accident, and can also be used for preventative care such as annual wellness exams.

This simple measure is a popular option among organizations such as Chipotle, Deloitte LLP, Delta Airlines, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, UPS, and Xerox.

Another simple option is to offer employees discounts on pet products and services such as food, merchandise, and grooming at local pet stores. Companies such as Build-A-Bear and the University of Alabama offer these types of discounts in their comprehensive benefit packages.

Another avenue to becoming pet friendly is to extend flexible work arrangements to employees in order to accommodate their pets, which is offered at companies such as Confirm BioSciences. For example, employees may have flextime walk their dog before it gets dark, or check during the day on young or senior pets that may require extra care.

Should employees lose a pet, organizations can also offer bereavement leave as a simple measure to employees who need personal time to deal with the loss of their companion animal. Based on our review, it is not as common as some other simple options, but it can be helpful for employees with strong connections to their pet, connections that to some are more impactful than losing a distant relative.

Complex measures include allowing pets in the workplace, which is on the rise with a growing number of organizations such as Amazon and Google regularly allowing pets at work. Some companies even offer onsite services such as dog walking, grooming, and pet daycare. Other companies have implemented additional efforts such as dog water fountains at Amazon and "barking lots" for bathroom breaks at Zynga.

## Benefits and concerns of pet-friendly workplaces

In our review, we found that the pet-friendliness trend is associated with a number of positive benefits such as enhanced attraction and recruitment, improved employee retention, enhanced employee health, increased employee productivity, and positive bottom-line results, although many of these benefits are largely anecdotal. For example, one case profiled a candidate who accepted a lower wage so that he or she could bring a pet to work. Other reported benefits include showing employees that organizations are concerned about their well-being, which is important for the attraction and retention of employees. Organizations may retain employees who are not worried about their pets being at home unsupervised, thus experiencing less stress, and who may work longer hours because they do not need to let their pets out.

Despite the potential benefits, there are concerns associated with PFWs in the areas of health and safety, property damage, distraction, and concerns stemming from religious beliefs. Regarding health and safety, pet allergies are a primary concern among employees and customers. Sanitation issues related to pet hair is also problematic for certain industries such as hospitality. Employees or customers may also have safety concerns if pets are present in the workplace. As well, property damage can occur when pets are left unattended or as a result of accidents arising from rambunctiousness. Allowing pets in the workplace may also be distracting because of the noises they make (e.g., barking, whining, panting, etc.). Individuals with certain religious beliefs may also have concerns about pets in the workplace. For example, some religious faiths consider dogs to be unclean and recommend that adherents avoid contact with them. HRE

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To leverage the benefits associated with PFWs and mitigate the concerns, we offer organizations the following recommendations:

- Consider the various forms of pet friendliness from simple options to more complex efforts. Begin with simple measures and gradually adopt more complex measures.
- Gauge employee readiness to determine whether simple or more complex efforts should be adopted.
- Ensure compliance with legal matters such as leash laws and additional liability insurance.
- Balance employee needs surrounding attracting the right talent, who may be more or less attracted to PFWs.
- Create comprehensive organizational policies and procedures by codifying appropriate behaviour through clear policies and practices.
- Share the responsibility with employees for being a pet-friendly workplace.
- Regularly audit employee attitudes and pet-friendly measures to determine the success of the pet-friendly initiative, provide evidence for the impact that it has had on the workplace, and improve the program for future efforts to be implemented more effectively.

# Getting Canada's youth to understand their labour rights

Michael Burzynski is an HR professional and a part time student of the MHRM program

**The need to empower Canadian youth with a solid understanding of their labour rights is of particular interest to me. My experience as an HR professional and as a Masters of Human Resources Management candidate has further fuelled this interest—particularly, the practice of unpaid internships in Ontario.**

Recently, I experienced an "ah-ha moment" during Dr. David Doorey's Workplace Policy class discussion regarding a case highlighted in the Canadian media—two individuals filed complaints against Bell Mobility for not receiving compensation for work completed as interns.

The headline made news across the country as the interns claimed that the telecommunications giant breached labour laws by not compensating them during their internship with the company. The case sparked new conversations amongst HR professionals and the general public. For the most part, until this recent case, the practice of unpaid internships was widely accepted and not challenged in the workplace—in other words, "free" work for employers!

In many ways, the interns' case was the catalyst that led to the Ontario Ministry of Labour (OML) deciding to take action. Last year, the OML carried out a "blitz" amongst targeted industries aimed at determining whether unpaid interns in these sectors were truly "interns" and therefore exempt from the ESA. It was during this time that I began to question whether there was more to this story than meets the eye.

## The heart of the matter

In my opinion, the questions surrounding the legality of unpaid internships are a serious matter, deserving national recognition. However, there seems to be a deeper, underlying social issue at the heart of why this question is not getting the attention it deserves by the media as well as in various educational institutions across Canada and North America. My own research into the matter has revealed that the question of unpaid internships is not limited to a small number of employers that are perhaps misinformed of their obligations under the Employment Standards Act (ESA). The extent to which the practice of unpaid internships is challenged is also influenced by the lack of knowledge and understanding of employment rights amongst specific segments of the population, namely youth. Teenagers, while they represent future employees in the workplace, have little understanding of their employment rights and risk being in an employment situation where they are subject to manipulation and unfair labour practices. This could be avoided with increased support and education on employment matters early on in the school system. Thankfully, Canada is taking steps in the right direction to better equip our youth. In the fall of 2013, The Learning Partnership embarked on a project titled It's My Future! which involved hosting a series of student-focused consultations across Canada to talk about their futures. The result? The core issue identified by Canadian students was that their public education curriculum does not reflect the world that they believe they will live and work in. In other words, younger generations believe that they are challenged by their ability to gain career-related experiences in addition to a lack of knowledge about how to make the critical decisions that will impact their future. If the two interns at Bell were well informed regarding their respective provincial labour policies before entering the workplace, would their internship term have been impacted and how?

When examining closer to home, students in Ontario are also feeling neglected when wanting to learn about careers and what it entails for their futures. For example, all high-schools in Ontario offer Civics and Careers as a compulsory course, introduced into the Ontario curriculum in 1998-99. This compulsory course is offered in Grade 10 to teach students how to prepare for their job and provide information about workplace safety and employment standards. However, while the foundation of the course may be based upon good intentions to educate youth on employment matters, it appears that the program is not favoured by many students. A 2009 survey of 7,000 high-school students from the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) found that 74 per cent of students considered the course to be of low importance. Such numbers demonstrate that the goal of the course has become blurred over the years and has failed to empower these students as they begin to enter and navigate the working world.

## Need for change in the curriculum

Due to the fact that Canadian youth workers in high-schools are usually significantly younger and more inexperienced than their fellow workers and/or supervisors, they are often the targets of illegal discrimination and/or harassment. We continue to hear of examples where employed youth were subject to difficult and/or unfair work arrangements. Whether it is the use of unpaid interns being dropped from Rogers-owned magazines, or the death of a young worker in Montreal not given any form of fall protection, the picture becomes quite clear—organizations appear to be taking advantage of teen workers because they think they don't know any better. What is also adding to this problem is the fact that teen workers often do not know whether they are being harassed or what matters and or conditions contradict established Canadian employment standards. With little education on this topic—students simply don't know what they don't know. The central issue to be addressed is how best to equip our youth with information so that they enter the workplace empowered and knowledgeable about employment standards.

As a student and HR professional, I strongly believe that with recent abuses being exposed by the media, it is time that the provincial governments step-in and open discussions around teaching employment standards in Canadian high-schools. This can take place by reaching out to local school boards as well as partnering with HR experts on how to incorporate the teaching of employment standards into our school curriculum. While there are a number of paths that Provincial governments can take in addressing the root of the problem the goal of what is to be accomplished is quite clear, greater emphasis is needed in recognizing the need to educate young students about their rights and responsibilities on the job.

The extent to which the practice of unpaid internships is challenged is also **influenced by the lack of knowledge and understanding of employment rights amongst specific segments of the population, namely youth.**

## The next steps

While provincial governments seem to be doing everything in their power to enforce protection for youth workers in recent years, schools need to also play an equal role and proactively inform students about workplace rules and standards. Countries such as Sweden have adopted this approach quite well over the past decades by allowing students in their later years of comprehensive school to visit a variety of work sites. In addition, there are even vocational guidance officers in all schools, and the Labour Market Board (a tripartite board which carries out labour market policies) provides personnel from its Public Employment Service to talk to secondary school students and parents' meetings. Such a model demonstrates that the ability to build special courses in the school system is an achievable objective and one that our educators and politicians need to consider in order to bring about the changes. While education and training seem to have fallen short of meeting the objective one can only hope that at some point we can witness the creation of well-developed education and training programmes that are aligned to labour market needs and support effective transitions for our own high-school students.

# The School of HRM
## Some thoughts about the beginning and the future

Dr. Monica Belcourt, Founding Director of the School of Human Resource Management

Retirement is a fine time for reflection. As I think about all that has been accomplished with our educational programs in the School of HRM, I and my colleagues feel a great sense of achievement. When I started my career at York, our HR unit in ADMS offered two courses in HR and two in LR. In a period spanning about 10 years, we created North America's (and probably the world's) first BHRM, MHRM, and PhD degrees and the School of HRM.

That is quantity. What about quality? We just had a review of our programs from two extremely well respected academics. Their conclusion is that our programs are of high quality, that they are viable and exceed the requirements of the professional associations. Our faculty and doctoral students publish more than any other unit in FLAPS. Can we do better? Yes, many of us would like to see more options for students such as minors in other disciplines and of course, more practicum work or opportunities to apply learnings in real work situations.

And the future? As many of you know, I am a disciple of evidence based management and distrustful of trends and fads in HR. However, there are some trends in the field of HRM which I think will influence our teaching and research. Skills in quantitative methods will be in high demand, and we need to do more to prepare our students for professional careers where data will drive decisions. Currently, I think that we do a good job in preparing students to assess "fads" and ask the tough questions about proof that these work and under what conditions. Our students know what is good research design, and can use this knowledge to query consultants and evaluate the effectiveness of their work. What I foresee is a high demand for HR professionals who not only understand research design, but also are capable of very sophisticated statistical analyses. Data are already being used extensively to manage employees in firms like Google and Amazon. This trend will spread, and at its worst, employees will be subject to Skinnerian type management practices. At its best, data will be used to promote high levels of engagement and performance among employees.

A second trend is emerging where different groups of employees are being subject to different types of HR programming. As marketing programs segment customers, so too will HR programs segment employees. Different HR programs will be developed to motivate and manage different skill sets. So our HR educational programs will be adding a wide range of HR theories, programs and practices, not to be applied universally to all employees, but to be adapted to meet the needs of types of employees.

Our timing of the introduction of our HR degrees coincided with the demand for HR professionals, who were well educated and possessed knowledge based on research and practice. Like other organizations, our viability depends on continuing to adapt to emerging issues, and being flexible and innovative.
The rise of the need for HR professionals over the past 40 years (my career span) has been spectacular. An accepted and increasingly valued member of any management team, the HR director will solidify this position by proving that HR programs work. Our students will graduate with the knowledge and skills to contribute to organizations, solving performance and operational problems, and using HR tools to meet organizational objectives. Simply put, I am confident and excited about the career opportunities for our students in HRM.

## Tracey Rickaby
## Senior Director of Human Resources

Tracey was recently promoted to Senior Director of Human Resources supporting a global organization with approximately 17,000 employees. She will lead a team of senior HR professionals providing strategic human resources partner support to employees and global leadership teams in Europe, Asia Pacific and the U.S.

## Sarah Hannigan
## VP, HR Business Partner

Sarah relocated from Princeton, NJ to San Francisco, CA to assume the position of VP, HR Business Partner for the Distribution organization at salesforce.com. She now leads the HR Business Partner team of 16 for the U.S., Canada, and Latam after seven years in various HR positions at salesforce.com.

## Marvin Kalchman
## Director of People Services

Marvin has re-entered corporate HR in the role of Director of People Services at Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centre.

## Edina Ramic
## Area HR Manager

Edina was recently appointed Area HR Manager-Eastern Canada at Sherwin Williams. In this new role she will be responsible for providing Human Resources support for Eastern Canada, District Managers, and the Sherwin Williams expansion. She is based out of the Canada Division Office in Oakville.

## Althea Gordon
## Human Resources Manager

Althea will pursue Doctoral studies in Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Toronto beginning in the Fall 2015. She admits that her interest in research was stimulated and further heightened while pursuing the MHRM program. The program allowed for strong research and critical thinking skills in examining a broad range of people and workplace issues and she is looking forward to further push the boundaries of enquiry through this advanced program.

# Publications

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