

Focus IPMA - CANADA Alberta & North Chapter

A publication for Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, N.W.T. and members of the International Personnel Management Association - Canada

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

The world is changing and numerous outstanding leaders are beginning to express their concerns about the rate at which we are adjusting. As awareness is the first step in any change process strategic information gathering has become a critical skill in capturing information and interpreting the ramifications.

As quickly as we gather and store information we are bombarded with additional and new information which may help clarify our understanding or clutter the real message. Being able to share information and develop a dialogue with others in order to glean the essential message is one of the first steps in drawing conclusions and identifying risks and opportunities.

So what is the first thing typical organizations are doing to anticipate, gather information, asses and begin to actively redesign new more sustainable and economical business plans? In most cases they have cut back on research, sent vital pieces of their corporate memory down the road and reduced and/or eliminated training and development. In essence they have become turtles. We all know where that will lead them. However, it is difficult to convince a shareholder who is trying to squeeze that last dollar out of the organization before it goes belly up.

I strongly recommend that individuals start looking to strategic information management as a long term solution. This short editorial cannot outline the dramatic steps that need to be taken nor the pitfalls to be avoided. A more extensive review of this issue is available in a 16 page article recently published by Doug MacNamara, President & CEO, Banff Executive Leadership Inc. In his article he draws on the works of several other renowned thinkers to make his point that the world is changing and it is now that we must start to act responsible about how we design and run the businesses of the world.

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Leading For Positive People Outcomes

Why does it always seem like you are dealing with people issues? First, the economy is red-hot and you can't find them or keep them. Then, the economy is blue-cold and you aren't sure whether you should initiate lay offs or hang tight. The truth is that, as long as you are in business, you will need to deal with people and people always bring issues with them.

Remember that the economy changes. Long-term success is brought about by how well you position your company to survive and prosper when the turnaround comes along.

What do you know about the people you have now? You hired them for a purpose. Are they working out well? Are they productive? Do they work together? Do they think you have

employee friendly policies to keep them here? How much do you know? The best place to start in order to position yourself for the future is to find out as much as you can about your present. Here are two best practices that you can use to help you understand your present.

Employee Surveys

Some organizations conduct employee surveys to help them understand what it is like on the inside for the average employee. This is a good place to start. You can work with a consultant to customize the questions you want to ask so you can get at the issues that are important to you. You can ask closed questions to get data across the board and you can ask open-ended questions to give you good insight into what is really happening and to supplement your data. Good questions are: What should this company start doing? What should we stop doing? What is one message you want to send to the Owner/CEO/ Deputy Minister/President/Head Honcho?

One important thing to think about when you agree to conduct an employee or organizational culture survey is what you are going to do with the results? If you just put them on a shelf, you have wasted your time and investment dollars. But, if you engage your employees with the results, you can do magnificent things for your total organization. I have done follow-up task teams in a few public sector organizations over my career. In one organization in Alberta, we were able to improve employee satisfaction by 24% in one year. These kinds of numbers can really help you to be prepared when the economy takes off again. You will know what your organizational culture is all about and you will have a plan to improve where you are weak and a plan to continue to build where you are strong. You will be an organization that people will be attracted to and you will have data to sell to prospective new employees and current employees to help in your retention of quality

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employees. Even if you are a very small business, there are ways to gain input and to plan for your future.

Stay Interviews

As a matter of practice, when the economy was good, did you do exit interviews to find out why employees left? You may have but I want to tell you there is another way to get feedback before they have checked out mentally. A good tool that we have used to retain key employees is to implement “Stay Interviews”. What do you think you would find if you had someone interview your best employees to find out what makes them stay? Why do they come to work day after day for you? How are they motivated to give their very best? If you could find this out, you could create an organization that supports these principles for all your employees and those you have yet to hire. You would know the best qualities of your organization and you could build those practices in for all employees. Have you noticed that some work units/areas have great morale, while others never seem to be able to get it together? Of course you want to find out what makes those positive areas/units tick along and you will want to recreate this positive environment across the board.

Whether you have five employees or 500, it is still a good idea to take the pulse of your organization and know your culture so you know your corporate health. Your greatest competitive advantage is to be the best that you can be which means that the people who work for you are engaged and productive every day. It makes your job both easier and more pleasant.

Let me show you how: Bonnie Nixon,
butterflyhr@telus.net;
www.oyginc.com,
or 780 459-5034.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Membership Survey – It's that time of the year again! The Alberta & North Chapter would like your feedback on a few key areas of interest including programming, training and development and membership value. Your feedback last year was quite valuable to us as it influenced our programming and helped us ensure that we were delivering relevant professional development sessions based on current challenges and emerging trends in the HR field. We look forward to receiving your feedback again this year – watch your inboxes for the survey! The survey will be sent via e-mail in the early part of November.

Membership Committee – Are you interested in being part of a membership advisory committee? We are currently looking for members to sit on this committee. For more information, please contact Aminata N'Doye at:

membershipabnorth@gmail.com

FROM JOB TO FREEDOM: MAKING THE MOVE SUCCESSFULLY!

Thousands of people retire each day in Canada. Most of them will retire for the first time, unsuccessfully. Why “unsuccessfully”? Because many pre-retirees plan and calculate their financial resources to ensure an adequate nest egg to fund their retirement, almost none of them invest time and energy planning the *non-financial* aspects of retiring.

Successful retirement must take into consideration developing a retirement lifestyle plan, which will ensure your retirement decision is not only financially viable, but emotionally and personally satisfying as well.

A Retirement Coach will assist you with:

- Setting priorities, developing a plan and timeline, and work toward it.
- Determining whether you will work and how it will be structured if you do.
- Overcoming fears and other mental and emotional barriers.
- Testing your assumptions, ideas and models about retirement.
- Resolving timing issues, and factor in needs for care of family members, etc.
- Brainstorming ideas for entrepreneurship.

Are you ready for an uplifting, energizing, fun retirement full of new discoveries and adventures? Is it your goal to experience a retirement that will truly meet your needs? A retirement coach can help you avoid being one of those who retire and find that they dislike their new lifestyle.

Donna Galay, B Admin, CHRP, ACCC is a successful Career & Retirement Transition Coach, workshop facilitator and speaker, who uses a simple step-by-step process, to assist individuals and employees in businesses with career issues and retirement readiness.

www.coachingthatworks.ca

DEAR BLUE GURU

From Self-Starter:

I have been asked to help bring all the foremen in the plant up to date on the new control systems. As a fellow foreman I do not mind helping, however we have a training area and the staff there are making a lot more money than any of us on the shop floor. I got chosen to help because I am new to the plant. In some ways I don't even feel like I know my way around the plant yet as it is quite an extensive operation. I have recently graduated from a technical program after going

back to school. One of the components of the program was a practicum at another organization that has been using the new technology for some time. I feel I will be making a lot less than anyone here and yet I am in a key role to help upgrade everyone. One worry I have is the fellows that have been here for a long time will see me as some type of green-horn know-it-all. I never expected to be placed in this position when I started here. Sometimes it does not seem worth while being a self starter and going back to school to improve yourself. What can I do?

Dear Self-Starter:

Since you have just come out of school and have the latest training in the new technology you may have been recruited specifically because of the training and to fit into the training role. Being a new foreman may only be one of the roles you were hired for. It is common for the rookie to get tested and this is a great opportunity. Had the plant not planned to go to the new system may have resulted in someone else getting the job that had more experience in a similar plant. Your challenge will be to get a good enough understanding of the old system that you can see where the new improvements will make a difference for everyone. You will need to ask for help from you fellow foremen and the sooner you let them know you want to work with them the better. You will need all the coaching on the old systems that you can get. When you get a handle on the old system you can provide information to the gang you have developed a rapport with. It is important to let everyone know that you feel the training role is going to be a challenge as you are not a trained instructor and you will have to feel you way into it. Keep in mind that this opportunity can add an important new element to your skill bag and will be valuable when future opportunities arise. Some organizations have responsibility premiums and this could be a place where they apply. It is worth while enquiring if this company has them. Since you are a self starter take the opportunity to learn as much as

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you can. When the training is done the knowledge of both the old and new control systems of the plant increase your value to the company. This is also an opportunity to learn about the training activities and to watch for additional carrier opportunities with the control distribution company or as a “Commissioning Supervisor” when new systems are acquired.

BLUE GURU is submitted by W Betteridge
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UPCOMING LUNCHEON DATES

November 18, 2009

“Hay Group’s National Compensation Survey Results Disclosed” - Presenter Herb King

- Salary forecasts for 2010 - both national and regional results
- Actions taken by organizations to cope with the economic conditions of 2009
- Top human resource priorities for 2010

December 16, 2009

January 20, 2010

February 17, 2010

March 17, 2010

April 21, 2010

May 19, 2010

June 16, 2010

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOPS

“HR Rising to the Challenge”

IPMA-Canada’s 2010 National HR Training Conference, **June 6 - 9, 2010**

Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario

More information available at:

<http://www.ipma-aigp.ca/conferences/2010Pre-ConferencePoster.pdf>