

Focus IPMA - CANADA Alberta and North Chapter

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – JUNE 21st.

This year's program is full of draws for goodies as well as the review of last year's activities.

We look forward to the event each year as it is an opportunity for members to become more involved with the inner working of IPMA-CANADA, Albert and Northern Chapter.

The meeting will be held on June 21st, and we have already received requests by individuals to join the Executive Committee in a few of the portfolios. We hope others will put their name forward for the few remaining opportunities.

The vacant portfolios that are still open include: President Elect (as Ron Cooke will be running for President), Secretary, Assistant Program Director, Federal Sector Director, and as many Director – at Large positions as we can fill.

You may ask, "Why do you need several 'Director – at

Large positions filler?" We plan to expand our program schedule over the next year and this may require volunteer support in a number of areas yet to be identified.

This year's program along with the election of executive positions will include several draws. The premier draw is payment of Registration for the **2006 IPMA-HR International Training Conference "Solving the Generational Puzzle"**.

This conference will be held **October 7 – 11 at The Flamingo, Las Vegas**. Other good news about this conference is the commitment by the Chapter to subsidise 10 members, to the tune of \$100.00, if they attend this conference. Can you afford to miss this draw?

Dr. Phil and 6 other dynamic speakers will be here in Edmonton July 28th. TWO tickets to this even will also be part of the draw prizes. The regular price for public attendance to this event is \$329.00. This is another good

reason to be present when we make he draw.

As you can see, being at the June 21st Annual General Meeting is a bonus filled adventure. Mark your calendar and/or register with Pat McLaughlin at 441-6120 or e-mail mclaughlinpa@ecsd.net

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Religion in the Workplace: Some Proactive Approaches for Human Resource Policies

By Mark S. Wheller

On some level it is thought that work is work and church is church. It may be that we automatically assume that when people are at work they are thinking about work.

Sometimes, the fact that people are religious may not enter into workplace conversation, unless it is highlighted (i.e., possibly through wardrobe). The reality of the situation is that implicitly people are religious, and it comes through in other ways like values, morals and ethics. On an implicit level, a person may say, "I am Christian," but not outwardly speak about Christianity; however, they will still hold Christian views and will apply their view points in their everyday work.

A study by Frank Jones, "Workers who are Religiously Committed, and Workplace Religion in Canada" done in 2001 based upon information collected in 1997 states, that 16% of workers attend religious ceremonies weekly, 14% consider themselves "very religious", 12% are members of a study group, and overall 25% of Canadian workers have at least one religious commitment. (i.e., they either attend religious

weekly ceremonies, volunteer at the religious institution, and are members). The industries and occupations that are represented with religiously committed employees are: 1. Community Services (24%); 2. Service Sectors (18%); 3. Manufacturing (16%); Faiths represented in the study are 68% Christian, 28% No Religious Affiliation, and 4% Non-Christian.

If you take a look at Statistic Canada data which was collected in 2001 approximately 86% of Canadians have a Religious Affiliation, and 14% do not have a Religious Affiliation. Of the people who have a religious affiliation 75% designate Christianity as their religion. The remainder 11% are composed of Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, and Other Eastern Religious Traditions.

Two studies on religion in secular settings help clarify how religion enters into the workplace. Don Page in "From Private to Public Religion," using a historical approach explains that in the 1970s and 1980s a group called PSCF, Public Service Christian Fellowship, merged federal bureaucrats and members of the House of Commons into Bible Study and Prayer groups who were Protestant, Catholics, and Baptists. Page explains that members assembled in Bible Study and Prayer Groups not

along party lines, but by religious beliefs, and this group influenced public policy within the Federal Government. The second example is Don Grant, et al study, "Spirituality in the Workplace: New Empirical Directions in the Study of the Sacred," that studies nurses in a university hospital. Where 88% of nurses in the study said they were interested in spirituality, and 91% considered themselves spiritual. Further, 41.6% saw themselves as religious. The nurses in the study viewed themselves as undertaking a caring labour and were spiritually and socially efficacious.

The statistics explains that 1 in 4 Canadian workers are religiously committed.

So we know that a significant portion are religiously committed, then further there religion influences who they are interacting with, it prompts them to advocate social and political change, and perhaps even more importantly, it helps feel effective and fulfilled with their careers.

As this applies to business, Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor's article "Workplace Spirituality and Organisational Performance" reveals a study done by Harvard Business School examined 10 companies with strong corporate cultures (workplaces open to spirituality and pluralism) and 10 weak corporate cultures, drawn from a list of 207 leading corporations. In an 11 year period, the

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researchers found a dramatic correlation between the strength of an organisation's corporate culture and its profitability. In some cases, the more spirited companies outperformed the others by 400 to 500 percent in terms of net earnings, returning on investment, and shareholder value.

The Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act recognises that all persons are equal in a variety of ways of which religious beliefs is one criteria. This is the legal Duty to Accommodate which protects a person's rights in the workplace. In 2004-2005 Complaints filed against companies number 872 accepted complaints out of 2, 224 in total. Out of the 872, 74 were based upon religious beliefs or 3.3% overall.

It is important to put in place policy which is open to diversity, and accommodating to a variety of religious beliefs. Some suggestions include:

1. Change workplace language. Christmas Holidays, Easter Break etc...taking out Christian based language. Changing language is important because it begins to set the stage for pluralism.

2. Workplace Wardrobe or Dress Codes: As long as it does not violate Health and Safety of the individual or fellow workers, have a practical policy in place of where variety is acceptable. Example: Sikh's Turban.

3. Workplace Art: Allowing religious art to be in offices or

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cubicles, again as long as it is appropriate. That is does not demean other groups.

4. Holiday Program: Where holidays can be taken instead of the company standard ones. For instance, a Muslim taking part of Ramadan off instead of Christmas Holidays.

5. Religious counselling where elders or leaders of a religious community are hired or made available to employees.

In conclusion, religion is present in the secular workplace. A company installing proactive approaches to religious diversity through policy is certainly commonsensical if not prudent.

National Newsletter (Have you taken a look?)

Member of IPMA-Canada can access the on-line IPMA-Canada National Newsletter.

The URL address is:
www.ipma-aigp.ca/mainpage.htm

If you have any problem entering your name or accessing this newsletter please contact me (William Betteridge) at:
ipma@interbaun.com

Employers Cite Communication Skills as Key, By Say Many Job Seekers Lack Them

BETHLEHEM, Pa. –
Employers say they consider

communication skills to be important in job candidates, but find that many potential employees don't have them, according to a report published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)
<http://www.naceweb.org/> .

When asked about "soft" skills, qualities, and characteristics in job candidates, employers responding to NACE's *Job Outlook 2006* report cited communication skills as most important. At the same time, however, when asked about candidate "holes," most identified communication skills.

"For more than 10 years, we've asked employers about key skills, and they have consistently named communication skills as critical, yet have also said this is something many candidates lack," said Marilyn Mackes, NACE executive director. Mackes said. "Communication and teamwork skills, flexibility, a strong work ethic, honesty and integrity, interpersonal skills— all of those things help the candidate work effectively."

"The candidate's GPA (grade point average) can also play a big role," Mackes said. "More than 70 percent of the employers who participated in our survey said they screen candidates on their GPA, and more than half of those said they look for a GPA of 3.0 and above."

In addition, “employers place a lot of importance on relevant work experience,” explained Mackes. “For new college graduates, that experience is typically gained through an internship or participation in a cooperative education assignment.”

Although NACE studies indicate that employers expect to hire nearly 14 percent more new college graduates in 2005-06 than they did in 2004-05, Mackes cautions new college graduates not to take the good job market for granted.

“Finding a job really is a job,” she said. “As our study shows, employers have a substantial set of criteria against which they judge potential employees. Students need to demonstrate to employers that they have what it takes.”

Since 1956, the NACE has been the leading source of information about the job market for new college graduates.

Excerpts from the May 5th, 2006 issue of IPMA-HR HR Bulletin

Employers say Unscheduled Employee Absences a ‘Serious Problem’

From the April 28th, 2006
IPMA-HR HR Bulletin

CCH, Inc., headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands <http://www.hr.cch.com/> is a Riverwoods, Ill.-based provider of human resources and employment law information. As part of Wolters Kluwer <http://www.wolterskluwer.com/WK/> the company, recently released its 15th annual *Unscheduled Absence Survey*.

According to the survey, personal illness accounts for just 35 percent of unscheduled absences. More often than actual physical illness, family issues, personal needs, an entitlement mentality, and stress are the reasons employees call in sick.

Thirty-one percent of employers surveyed called unscheduled absenteeism a “serious problem,” and 87 percent said they expect the problem to stay the same or get worse over the next two years. The average per-employee cost of unscheduled absenteeism has jumped to \$660 per employee, costing some employers more than \$1 million per year.

For more information about the problem of unscheduled absenteeism and to read about ways to control it, click <http://hr.cch.com/press/releases/absenteeism/default.asp>

UPCOMING EVENTS

**“Annual General
Meeting” June 21st.**

Agenda

11:30 Registration & Coffee
11:45 Buffet Lunch
12:15 Annual meeting
1:00 on is networking

Location

Monthly luncheon meetings are held the third (3rd) Wednesday of the month at the Royal Glenora Club, 11160 River Valley Road, south of the Legislature Buildings, west of the bridges.

Registration

Registrations are recorded up to noon Monday before the meeting by contacting

Pat McLaughlin:

Phone

780 – 441 – 6120

E-mail:

mclaughlinpa@ecsd.net

ADDRESS CHANGES

Keep us posted.

Let us know by sending your new information to:

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