

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

GREETINGS FOR 2007

By Loverne Gretsinger

On behalf of the Chapter Executive, I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2007. We hope that the break you took over the festive season was refreshing and recharged you for an active year.

The New Year has just begun and already we have a ton of news. As you will see in this issue, our monthly Luncheons have provided great resource material for the support and just treatment of employees. We encourage you to consider attending these monthly sessions and the up-coming networking session offered by UAHRMA.

This year the Annual Training conference will be held in Toronto, June 3rd, to 6th. The theme is "The New Generation: New Expectations, New Opportunities. Key speakers already lined up include Craig Kielburger, Ian Chisholm, Kathy Brooks and David Irvine.

U of A Student Initiate First Ever Student Conference

February 3rd and 4th, 2007, will be active for students enrolled in secondary education. All students are invited to attend this first ever conference. Organized by UAHRMA, the student group on the U of A campus, the sessions provide an outstanding program of speakers and meet and greet sessions.

Of interest to we Human Resource professionals is the late afternoon networking session held January 3rd, 2007 from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM at the Stollery Centre, 5th floor of the School of Business. Consider registering and attending. The fee is \$20.00 with the promise of lots of food. There are 40 plus students registered already and they have just announced the conference. For more details see their wed site: www.studentweb.bus.ualberta.ca/uahrma

For more information you can also contact UAHRMA President, Trina McCarroll, at trina.mccarroll@ualberta.ca or call 780 – 492-5036.

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Depression in the Workplace

The October Luncheon was presented by John Betton and he had a great message. He has provided the following summary:

Depression has become a commonplace part of modern life. Each of us will have one or more people in our lives that suffer from, and are being treated for, depression. Statistics indicate 10 to 25 % of all women are at lifetime risk of experiencing depression. The rate for men is about ½ of that for women. It occurs most often in the age 25 – 44 group.

Sadness is not depression. Life brings with it a range of ups and downs. Most of us will feel sad at one time or another, especially when we must deal with loss of any kind. Sadness becomes depression when it persists too long and causes noticeable changes in us, changes that affect our work, relationships, view of self, etc. These changes may be emotional (sadness, hopelessness, despair), physical (fatigue, loss of libido, changes in appetite), cognitive (negative or dark thoughts, intrusive thoughts, cluttered or impaired thinking, indecision), behavioural (withdrawal, irritability, crying, poor work performance, increased

absenteeism, sleep and eating changes).

In the work place, depression accounts for 3% of all short term disability leaves (3/4 of those on leave are female). One recent survey in the US claims 200 million lost days of work were due to depression.

The causes of depression are complex and, in many ways, remain a mystery. Genetics, physiology, behaviour, life events, spiritual questions as well as one's psychological make up all come into play. Sorting out the causes is often one of the challenges of treatment.

Work itself is rarely the cause of depression, perhaps as little as 3%. However, high levels of stress often lead to depression, and work is a major source of stress. One report stated that 50% of those workers surveyed experienced such high levels of work related stress that medical or psychological help were required. Work then, becomes an indirect source of depression.

Treatment of depression is hit and miss. It is estimated that 50% of all depression sufferers do not seek or receive treatment. Of those treated 20% are given anti-depressants, 10% get tranquilizers and 20% receive psychotherapy. Research at this time indicates a combination of anti-depressants and psychotherapy is the most

effective approach in treating depression.

If you experience signs of depression take an active approach in dealing with it. Identify the sources and take steps to counteract them. Exercise may be the single best anti-depressant. If needed, seek professional help. If you see the symptoms in a colleague or employee, again, be active. Approach the person with care and consideration; listen, support, offer help, identify resources. Always try to be alert to suicidal thoughts and, if these surface, take gentle but firm action (get the person to a professional as quickly as possible).

Those returning to work after being off for depression need support to aid their recovery. Treat them as you would anyone else; that is, maintain a normal work relationship. At the same time, listen, don't gossip, and be supportive.

There are many good online and community resources, including Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca nationally and, in Edmonton www.cmha.ab.ca or phone 780-414-6300

Prepared by: John Betton, M. Ed., R. Psych, Staff Clinician, Wilson Banwell Human Solutions www.wilsonbanwell.com

DISCIPLINE – Dos Don'ts and Everything in Between (Guiding You through the Maze)

Novembers Luncheon session was presented by Sandra J. Croll. Summarized by William Betteridge

Discipline is something that many have experienced and the fairness of when it happens and what action is taken may seem at times unfair. "Just Cause" is what must drive discipline if it is to weather the test of 3rd party scrutiny. Once "Just Cause" is determined then the equation of the punishment equalling the crime becomes important.

Throughout the session Sandra emphasized the importance of maintaining records and keeping consistent and focused on what is the work related issue. Do focus of the work being performed, or not being performed. Don't focus on personalities and issues that are outside of the workplace. The issues the want to focus on are called "Culpable". Basically meaning the activities and items the employee can be held solely responsible for. "Solely" is the key here as it is easy to spread around blame when something happens. Getting down to just what someone has done or not done can require a lot of digging through rumours and none related fact or circumstances. Sandra did not want us mixing

in the "Non-Culpable" issues that have arisen because of other people's actions or failure to act. Identifying issues that even the company policies could have contributed to the failure on the part of an employee are hard to get at because of their systemic nature. "Stay on the path" was one of Sandra's catch phrases.

If we have kept these principles in mind we are still not any closer to a situation that warrants a progressive approach to discipline or identifying this as a culminating incident. To resolve this question we have to identify the "Nexus" of the transgression. "Nexus" identification takes us into the realm of how severely has the company been injured by the transgression. Did the company suffer financially, in public image, does anyone else see the transgression important enough to penalize an employee, etc.

Sandra provided numerous examples of how to identify the "Nexus", the connection of how the transgression or act affects the employer. Even the issue of the effect on the image of the employer was a difficult issue to resolve. We have all seen how opinions about what is "politically correct" have changed over the years. Standards for dress codes, issues related to privacy, acceptable language and when different issues like the role model that the company wants employees to present all impact the

question. "Stay on the path" and find the pieces that can lead to the construction of a culpable transgression. Don't mix responsibilities of the company and other employees into the final package.

If you have gotten this far and think there is a case for discipline it is time to meet the test of 3rd party scrutiny. Has your process of investigation and assembly followed a solid administrative process that meets the conditions of labour law and/or the collective agreement? Have you involved the Union? Are there others you should have involved like the Employee Assistance group or perhaps family members? Have all the employees and supervisors that may be aware of the transgression been interviewed. Has the employee file been kept up to date with prior or similar transgressions? Getting a tight file that can stand up to a grievance appeal is as important as the final decision regarding what the discipline will be. "Make sure the facts are the facts!" was a warning which Karen emphasized. If you are responsible for making the final decisions or making a recommendation don't take any fact at face value until you have checked it yourself.

The final summary Karen offered to those needing to scrutinize a case were brief. Do the what, who, where, and why test. What happened? To who

and by whom? Who was hurt or harmed? Where – on or off the job? Why is it bad? Do your research and make sure you can defend all the facts.

Grant MacEwan Human Resources Management Student Society (HRMSS) Update

For 2005/06 the Human Resources Management Program at MacEwan College had 100 full time students and 300 part time students. Of the 400 students, six are international students. There were 50 graduates from the program this year. Thanks to the hard work of the executive committee and volunteers of the HRMSS, we had one of the largest student clubs (105 members strong) at the college. The HRMSS held an election this spring and I am happy to announce the president for next year is Ms Lisa Arcand and the newly elected Vice-president is Mr. Paul Avery. Graduates from this program have gone on to work in such parts of the world as Hong Kong and the United States. In fact, the newly elected president for the IPMA-Alta & North Chapter is a graduate from the program. The MacEwan School of Business provides e-learning in Human Resources Management for students in remote northern communities. The School of Business has submitted a

proposal to offer a Human Resources Management minor degree program and has future plans for a major program as well.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Future Dates of Luncheons

January 17th, 2007
“Discover Your Inner Neat Freak” by Lynn Fraser

February 21st, 2007
March 21st, 2007
April 18th, 2007
May 16th, 2007
June 20th, 2007

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 High Level Bridge.

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 address to:

IPMA-Canada National Office
14868 - 41 Avenue
Edmonton AB, T6H 5N7
By telephone: (780) 433-0234
By toll free: 1-866-433-0234
By fax: (780) 433-0295
By-email: info@ipma-aigp.ca

National Newsletter (Take 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 accessing this newsletter please contact me (William Betteridge) at: ipma@interbaun.com