

Focus IPMA - CANADA Alberta and North Chapter

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

President's Message, from Loverne Gretsinger

Hello. I hope you all had a great summer. I would like to introduce myself. My involvement with IPMA-Canada (and previously CPPMA) has been a long and rewarding one, 21 years. During that time, I have served on the Membership committee, been Communications Director and Program Director, luckily not all at the same time.

My career as a HR professional has been, and continues to be, rewarding and enriching. I am currently with the University of Alberta as a HR Advisor (job design and evaluation and recruitment). Prior to coming to the University, I was with the Province for 14 years, Economic Development and International Trade (1981 to 1984) and Public Safety Services (1984 to 1995).

The new program year will begin September 17, 2003 with our second annual mixer and round table event. The theme will be "What Did You Do On Your Summer Vacation?" and we are again promoting the event as a two-for-one luncheon

The Chapter plans to deliver ten luncheon events and one workshop during the 2003-2004 program year. These sessions may include the following themes: Edmonton Police Service Mentorship Program, Challenges of Leadership in the Armed Forces, Emotional Intelligence, What Value Can HR Add to Organizations, and Employee Self-Service in the Government of Alberta.

The Chapter has introduced a new position on the Executive, Conferences Chair. As the Joint Conference is held in Edmonton every two years, and in anticipation of a future IPMA National Training Conference, it was decided that having a person in this position was definitely an advantage.

If you would like to volunteer for one of the three vacancies on the executive please contact me. To entice you, serving on the Executive earns points towards the maintenance of certification. As many may know we have three years to collect activity points to ensure we can re-certify. Working on the executive is one of the easy ways to have fun and develop your portfolio of professional activities.

I look forward to meeting you at one our luncheons and invite you to contact me if you have suggestions for presentations or workshops, or any questions.. My phone number is (780) 451-5213 and my e-mail is

loverne.gretsinger@hrs.ualberta.ca.

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Thank you Pat!

What a year or was that several years that Pat stood in as our President. Yes, it was several years and we are grateful for her work.

Our chapter of IPMA is the most successful in the West and we mean from the Maritimes this way. Yes, we are in a great financial position, how else could we offer two years

running the 2 for 1 season opener on September 17th.

Thanks to Pat's leadership our membership list is strong, our executive is very complete (13 out of 16 positions filled), and new and excited members ready for the coming year.

Thank you Pat for your leadership and for your continued support.

Your New Executive

The elections for the Executive were held on June 18, 2003 at the AGM. Your new Executive members are:

President Elect: Loverne Gretsinger

Past President: Pat McLaughlin

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Michelle Jennings

Conference Chair: Cynthia Caskey

Director, Certification: Kim McCrary

Director, Communications: William Betteridge

Director, Education Sector: Vacant

Director, Programs: Pat McLaughlin

Director, Membership: Karen Romaniuk

Director, Municipal Sector: Donna Galay

Director, Northern Sector: Gordon Graydon

Director, Pay & Benefits Sector: Vacant

Directors-at-Large: Cynthia Caskey

Elaine Duggan
Cara Jones

Student Liaison: Aurora Espejo Atienza

This group is ready for the new year and at our recent executive meeting we started putting together an exciting program for the coming year.

We look forward to seeing you on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, so mark your calendar now. The meetings will be held on:

September 17th, October 15th, November 19th, and December 10th, Ops, that is the 2nd Wednesday, for December only.

Has Loverne Been Busy?

Here is part of a HR Main Story in OTJ by Nancy Argyle

A career in a progressive human resources department can be much more than just administering payroll and pensions - it can be the very rudder that business uses to negotiate the shark-infested waters of competition.

"Human resources should be an integral part of business plans," says Loverne Gretsinger, a human resources advisor at the University of Alberta and president of the Alberta chapter of the International Personnel Management Association - Canada.

"It's the expertise to help people re-design the work force in a pro-active manner, and contribute to the well being of the organization," says Gretsinger. "And the larger the organization the more you need a formal HR department."

Traditionally, human resources officers have been tasked with the typical internal functions of hiring new staff and personnel administration duties.

For employees, that often meant that once you were hired, you never saw the HR department again. Now, with many companies operating in a global marketplace, the issues that face human resource departments have changed considerably over the years and so to has their interaction with staff.

"Certainly, today, there are more legal aspects and more international employee issues where employers need to be sensitive to cultures and customs," says Gretsinger. "HR people also need to be more aware of, and continually keep up-to-date on such things, as collective agreements, changes to labour relations and employment, health and wellness, mediation, and job analysis.

"HR is a big part of the team...it's an opportunity to help people - to know what makes people tick," says Gretsinger, who left her accounting position 20 years

ago to become a human resource specialist. "I've never been sorry that I decided to change from accounting to HR - I met nice people working in the field that I respected and I saw what a difference they made in people's work life." She says. "The rewards of the job appeared to be greater than the disadvantages." While the rewards may be many and varied, the disadvantages can be just as wearying. With grievances, staffing issues, downsizing and under resourcing, a HR department can be sorely tested in its ability to remain positive. Gretsinger admits, "It's not all good stuff because sometimes you have to tell people what they don't want to hear - like you didn't get the job." "And, today, most departments have to do more with less."

Measuring success in the human resources world can be tough simply because many of the accomplishments are intangible and difficult to demonstrate. "That's one of the challenges of working in human resources," says Melanie Rowan, director of membership development for the Human Resources Association of Calgary and a human resource specialist in learning and development for Canadian Pacific Rail. "There are definitely rewards to helping an organization but sometimes they are difficult to see," she says. "When you invest in

people, sometimes it is hard to see a return on the investment."

Fortunately, changes in the HR role have helped to create new responsibilities and functions that are easier to demonstrate success in. As Rowan explains, "the biggest trend is the shift towards being a strategic player." "In the past, we had more transactional services but now we show how to leverage a competitive advantage using intellectual capital," she says. Ultimately, that shift in roles is helping to bring more value to human resources departments as well as to help gain more recognition for the people who've made it a career choice.

"People are starting to realize that a progressive HR department can help achieve business performance goals through its people," Rowan says. "As an HR professional, you cover a lot of ground...it's truly a multi-faceted career field."

Advice for HR Hopefuls

Here is an update on what is available on the HR scene when it comes to programs offered in Alberta. This is taken from a recent article by Nancy Argyle entitled **HR Educational Requirements** in OTJ.

More than 1,600 Albertans are employed in the 'personnel and recruitment officers' occupational group, which is predicted to grow 2.5 to 3.5 per

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cent each year from 2002 to 2007 in Alberta. With above-average turnover as well as baby boomer retirement, many new job opportunities will become available, but what kind of training does it take to become a human resources professional?

"It helps if you are employed in the field but if that's not a possibility be sure to take a Human Resources Management Certificate course," says Loverne Gretsinger, president of the Alberta chapter of the International Personnel Management Association - Canada. "Also, talk to other HR people and get involved through a work experience program...research what you are getting into," she says.

Most employers prefer to hire personnel officers who have a degree or diploma in a field related to human resource management – for example, business administration, commerce, industrial relations or a related social science.

While suitable post-secondary education programs are offered by many universities, colleges and technical institutes throughout Alberta, the following institutions offer programs *specifically* in human resources.

Athabasca University, a distance learning institution, offers: a three-year Bachelor of Administration degree program

with a specialization in Industrial Relations and Human Resources; plus a three-year Bachelor of Human Resources and Labour Relations, and a post-diploma Bachelor of Administration degree program in Industrial Relations and Human Resources.

Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton offers: a two-year diploma program in Human Resource Management, plus a post-diploma Bachelor of Applied Human Service Administration degree program (part-time self-study or distance delivery).

Keyano College in Fort McMurray offers a two-year Human Resources certificate program (part-time).

Lakeland College in Vermilion and Lloydminster offers a one-year certificate program in Human Resource Management.

Mount Royal College in Calgary offers: a one-year Business Administration certificate program with a specialization in Human Resources. This program is intended for working adults who wish to improve their business knowledge; plus a two-year Business Administration diploma program with a specialization in Human Resources.

The **Northern Alberta Institute of Technology** in Edmonton offers: a

management diploma program with a Human Resources Management specialization, full-time (two years) or through continuing education; plus a 12-course certificate program in Human Resource Management through continuing education.

The **University of Alberta** in Edmonton offers: four-year and five-year (co-op) Bachelor of Commerce degree programs with a specialization in Human Resource Management; plus an eight-course Human Resource Management part-time certificate program through the faculty of extension.

The **University of Calgary** offers: four-year and five-year (co-op) Bachelor of Commerce degree programs with a specialization in Human Resources and Organizational Dynamics; plus a 300-hour Human Resource Management certificate program through the faculty of continuing education (distance and non-distance delivery). The entrance requirement is a high school diploma or over 23 years of age, and suitable business experience. This program is also offered on-line.

The **University of Lethbridge** offers: four-year Bachelor of Management and five-year combined degree programs with a specialization in Human Resource Management and Labour Relations; plus a post-diploma degree program in Human Resource Management

and Labour Relations. This program is designed for business administration diploma program graduates; and a ten-course Human Resource Management and Labour Relations certificate program.

Upcoming Events

September 17th, What Did You Do On Your Summer Vacation? the **"Two for ONE" lunch** celebrating the new schedule of Luncheons.

DO NOT MISS THIS!

Future dates to note:

Our monthly meetings are the third Wednesday of the month, except this December. We have moved the December meeting up to the second Wednesday. Note these times in your daily time book:

October 15th,
November 19th, and
December 10th.

Web Sites to Remember!

IPMA has a national web site that ties you into our monthly newsletter as well as lots of other useful stuff. Make a note to check these two sites out: www.ipma-aigp.ca and/or www.ipma-aigp.ca/chapters/alberta/index.htm

The above two lines are all part of the same web site address.