



Kingston District
Human Resources
Professionals
Association

Shaping Organizational Excellence

HR Dimensions

April 2007

Developing and Implementing Effective Strategies to Attract, Engage and Retain Employees

Your people, being your most important investment/asset, go home at the end of each day/shift. What are you doing to ensure they return? In an increasingly competitive, global economy, if employers are to exceed customer expectations and improve productivity in an environment in which the best employees can choose where to work, owners / managers need to ensure they are constantly using effective strategies to attract, engage and retain employees. Based upon my 30+ years of experience in working with organizations of all sizes the following are some of the effective strategies I use in helping organizations develop and implement effective attraction, engagement and retention strategies.

1. We need to determine why employees have left your organization. Leigh Branham indicates 7 hidden reasons employees leave include:
 - the job or workplace was not as expected;
 - a mismatch between the job and the person;
 - little coaching and not enough feedback;
 - few growth and advancement opportunities;
 - people feeling devalued and unrecognized; and
 - a loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders/manager.

By improving your hiring practices and leadership / management competencies you can reduce the risk of people leaving for any of the above reasons.

2. As Steve Jobs of Apple Computer said, "The foundation of a great company are talent and culture." You need to examine the current culture of your organization (how do we do things in the company, what gets rewarded, etc.). Ashley and Pell, in their book "Embracing Excellence", indicate a great company culture will include the following ten features:

- an almost missionary zeal;
- a sense of pride, sincerity and cooperation;
- an attitude of constructive discontent;
- a value based mind-set and management style;
- an emphasis on creativity and innovation;
- a focus on building role models not just leaders;
- a sense of high expectations and professional standards;
- good compensation and incentive programs;
- a habit of celebrating success; and
- adhering to the golden rule.

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It is extremely beneficial for members of management and employees to examine their current culture against these ten attributes and to make required changes in order to attract, engage and retain the best people.

Two organizations that incorporate these 10 attributes in their culture are WestJet and Novelis in Kingston. At WestJet, the management mantra is “friendly service can result in a profitable airline.” WestJet’s culture has enabled West Jet stock to increase 21 times since 1996. The average bonus paid to WestJetters (the employees) in 2006 was \$2500. Eighty five percent of WestJetters own stock in the company and consequently think like owners. Novelis in Kingston has a voluntary turnover rate of .06% even though half the workforce had changed since 1998. They also have an outstanding record of safety, working without a lost time accident since November, 1998.

3. Hewitt Associates defines employee engagement as, “the state of intellectual and emotional involvement employees have with the company . . . a measure of the energy or passion employees have for their organization or the extent to which the organization has captured the hearts and minds of its employees.” Some of the top drivers of employee engagement include:

- specific actions/behaviours of senior leadership and the immediate manager;

- recognition strategies;
- career opportunities;
- people practices; and
- adequate resources available to do the work.

Management needs to assess how many of the top drivers are well developed within their organization and make required changes.

4. One study indicated 75% - 85% of employees leave jobs because of relations with their bosses. Another study indicates that, of employees who leave voluntarily, almost 60% have less than two years of service. To ensure you are not hiring people and training them for someone else, you need to determine the gap within your organization between your current practices when compared to the following top drivers of employee retention.

- Do you have supportive leaders/managers?
- Do you provide challenging work?
- Does everyone know the expectations of performance including measurable objectives / service standards and competencies (how one is expected to behave while at work) and do you hold people responsible and accountable?
- Do you have recognition policies and procedures so people feel valued?
- Do you provide developmental opportunities for your people?

5. Marcus Buckingham of the Gallup Group in his book *First Break All The Rules* wrote, “Managers who create an environment where 12 elements are present are 50% more likely to

deliver on customer loyalty and 44% more likely to produce above average results.” I have found it extremely useful to assess an organization against these 12 elements and to make necessary changes to attract, engage and retain employees.

6. Another useful strategy is to ensure you understand the values of the people of various generations (e.g. Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y) and build into your policies and processes the ability to meet or exceed their needs, wants and expectations. Among other things, best practice organizations need to be flexible to offer work life balance, to provide employees with the freedom to make decisions about how work gets done and to provide input into decisions that affect the people.

The above strategies are a sample of those strategies required to attract, engage and retain great people. If implemented effectively, these strategies will result in improvements in customer service, productivity, innovation, quality, turnover and a return of equity/investment.

Gord Stewart, CHRP

Gord Stewart is an independent organizational change management and strategic human resource management consultant. He helps organizations lead and manage change as well as improve customer service, productivity, engagement, retention and profits. He does this by: aligning people, policies and processes with business strategy; improving an organization’s hiring practices; designing effective performance management systems and total rewards policies; improving leadership and management capabilities; and designing lasting change management strategies. Gord can be reached at (613) 542-2388 or at stewartg@sympatico.ca.

Welcome to our . . .

New Members

By Steve Wowk, *CHRP*
Membership
Director

As of March 10, 2007, KD-HRPA had 197 members versus 172 at this time last year (14.5% growth). KD-HRPA would like to welcome our 9 new members:

Joshua Beavers

Sherri Collions

Justin Halpenny

Leonard Irwin

Marie-Claude Van Der Merwe

Kathleen O'Neill

Claudette Richardson

John Russell

Shannon Soares

We are surpassing our membership goal of 10% growth this year, but still encourage people to become new members. If you know of anyone who may be interested in membership information, please email our HR Administrator and I will ensure that the individual is contacted and receives the necessary information.



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Why Don't Small Businesses Become Large Businesses?

(Editor's note: this article was written from the perspective of the United Kingdom)

We are a country of small to medium sized business which is the strength of our economy. Of all people employed, 36.7% of them work for small sized companies and 11.7% work for medium sized companies. Only 36.9% work for companies that are already large.

Why do so few of these small and medium sized organisations not make it to be large? Surely some of them should be able to grow and become a major corporate or at least of a significant size? Yes, there are some, the most famous ones are Richard Branson with Virgin and Anita Roddick with Body Shop. However, the number is low.

Money is probably a significant reason in many cases. The finance needed is, for many, a hurdle that is difficult to overcome even with the range of finance organisations in place to provide the support.

One of the significant reasons for the lack of growth is the person leading the organisation. Think of the person who set up his or her business. They are often experts in a particular skill or have a specific knowledge that enables them to develop a product or service. However, that very ability is often the reason for the inability to grow the business above a certain level.

The ability to step away from being 'in' the business to working 'on' the business, is a big step that few can manage. It requires a new level of courage.

- The courage to let go and allow others to do things that they once did.
- The courage to think bigger.
- The courage to stop managing the day to day and start leading.
- The courage to stop doing what they have been doing and try something different.

Many are under the impression that their ability to get the business to this level is what will also en-

sure that they can take it to the next level. The truth is that the skills needed to set up a business are not the same skills that are needed to grow the business. In many cases the skills needed to set up the business are the very skills that hold the business back from growing.

We only need to look at what is happening in many schools. Teachers become teachers because they like teaching.

They don't become teachers to run a business. If they wanted to manage they would have gone to management school or do a BBA rather than a teaching degree.

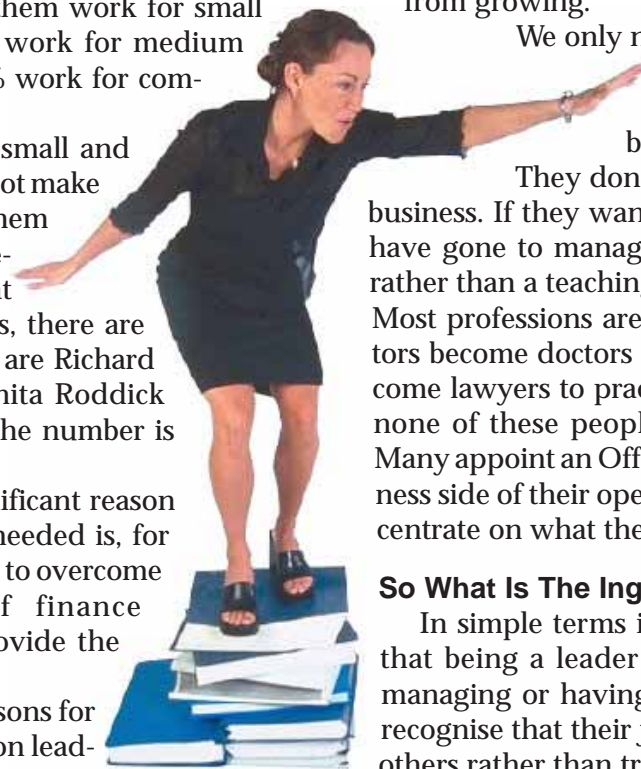
Most professions are limited by this issue. Doctors become doctors to heal people; lawyers become lawyers to practice law; etc. In most cases none of these people want to run a business. Many appoint an Office Manager to run the business side of their operation so that they can concentrate on what they do best.

So What Is The Ingredient That Is Needed?

In simple terms it is the ability to recognise that being a leader is completely different to managing or having a particular skill. Leaders recognise that their job is to get the most out of others rather than trying to do it themselves.

Managers see people as a necessary evil that they endure and wish that people would just do as they are told.

A manager is a manager of 'things'. They generally have a specific skill or knowledge and so are good at what they do and manage resources (of which people are seen as one) and implement systems to achieve what they want to achieve. So a chef will manage the way the kitchen is run, make sure that the things are done in a particular way, produce is of a certain standard and food is prepared in a way that they believe is just right. The restaurant



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owner makes sure that they have the right Chef with the right staff to support the Chef. The owner is making sure that all the components are working in harmony so that they get the best result for the restaurant. The owner is a leader.

The owner may also manage a section of the restaurant, but they will know the difference between managing a department and leading a business.

Leadership is about getting the best out of people or making sure the right people are in the right place and all facing the same direction. The Leader is setting the tone for the business. The Leader is defining the culture of the business and ensuring that people know what is expected of them. The leader is making sure that all the players are going in the same direction. It requires managing expectations of both people and customers. It is about being hands off rather than hands on in many cases.

When starting a business from scratch it requires being hands on. It is about knowing everything and in most cases being able to do just about everything in the business.

Paul Bridle

Paul is a Leadership Advisor for the Institute of Leadership and Management and a faculty member and regular international speaker for the Institute for Management Studies. His work is devoted mainly to developing and training people to build successful organisations. His specialised area is in 'Leadership' where he has spent nearly two decades researching the subject and developing training and coaching programmes. Paul can be reached at (202) 657-4408 or at info@paulbridle.com or www.paulbridle.com.



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HR & Globalization

Introduction/Background

We read a lot about globalization these days in various contexts, usually economic or political. This article will endeavour to suggest a few ideas on Human Resources (HR) and globalization. As a backdrop to these ideas, we should be reminded of some realities that we sometimes do not like to be reminded of! In North America, we are affluent and isolated . . . the isolation perhaps a form of denial and suppression. We tend to think that what we have is “right” and to be emulated by others.

As Canadians, we are proud of our social justice, values and the way we have translated them into law (human rights, gender equality, etc.). The stage of development of these values and concomitant litigious and bureaucratic culture, however, do not always “fit” well today in the countries that comprise the majority of the world’s population. To not understand this element of “fit” can adversely affect the effectiveness of Canadian organizations trying to achieve their business goals in an international setting. In the context of this background three ideas are suggested on the importance of HR and what Canadian HR professionals could pursue.

- Promote general principles and values of HR through their respective organizations (those organizations involved in the global economy);
- Play a role in contributing to the international communications strategies of organizations having direct dealings internationally;
- Develop knowledge and understanding to enable these organizations to follow-through effectively on the first two suggestions.

HR Principles and Values (Relevancy to Today’s World)

HR is the only profession whose fundamental principles and values relate to many if not most of the social and human rights issues and gaps in many parts of the world, including in developing countries as well as countries that are participating successfully in the global economy. Some examples of these principles and values would of course include: development of peoples’ potential, employment equity, gender equality, pay equity, respect for human dignity, fair treatment of people, avoidance of any form of overt or systemic discrimination (race, religion, ethnicity, disability), etc. In other words, HR professionals could get “outside of the box” of HR in a local domestic setting and become (as well) facilitators and catalysts for thinking in a global setting.



Many HR professionals work for private sector organizations that do business internationally. They could promote through these organizations that the aforementioned HR principles and values be transmitted to their international customers and suppliers, either informally or formally (perhaps in some cases as conditions for negotiated deals). Yet other HR professionals work for non-profit organizations and consulting firms that deal internationally. Some of these

organizations’ missions involve “some” of the HR principles and values, but their HR professionals could promote the totality of them.

Many international funding agencies (including our Canadian International Development Agency – CIDA) support “projects” that are dedicated to “some” aspects of HR principles and values, plus of course other economic, political, social and environmental issues. The promotion of HR principles and values discussed above could, on a day-to-day basis, subtly supplement what these agencies do.

HR Role in Organizations’ International Communications Strategies

As well as generally promoting HR principles and values up through their respective organizations, and hence subtly filtrating these values to other countries, HR professionals could be key contributors to the specific communication strategies used by organizations dealing internationally. They could assist organizations in achieving their business/marketing goals in other countries by providing advice on how to adapt communications to the realities of cultural “fit”.

Development of HR Knowledge and Understanding Base

To fulfill the role of promoting HR principles and values and contributing to organizations’ international communications effectiveness, HR professionals would need to develop knowledge and understanding of the relevant external cultures. Development of this knowledge and understanding

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base could form part of the spectrum of HR functions along with employee development, compensation and benefits, labour relations, etc.

Following are a few illustrative examples of the kinds of things that could comprise this knowledge and understanding base . . . some factors that comprise the analysis of cultural “fit”:

- In many Asian countries, negotiated “deals” cannot be made effectively until a period of time is first invested to achieve a trust and mutual respect with the Asian partners;
- In North America, we are obsessed with output and accomplishment goals (i.e. performance). In talking performance with most Asian partners, it is necessary to go slow and reconcile the fact that face-to-face dealing with “negatives” and performance gaps is foreign to their cultures

Note: It is perhaps appropriate to cite a personal experience I had in India while supporting the development of a performance management system in a large non-profit hospital. The hospital wanted desperately to introduce a system akin to what was deemed to be contemporary performance systems in North American organizations...i.e. systems based on the premise that one cannot improve or develop unless one can identify gaps or weaknesses. In an employee performance review, for example, the person being reviewed expects to hear about gaps or weaknesses (areas for improvement). In this eye hospital it was challenging to develop a system when it is not culturally acceptable to (eye-ball-to-eye-ball so to speak) identify “negatives” in performance.

- A more poignant example is gender equality. Gender discrimination is very engrained in many cultures, so it is important to not only go slow and strategically, but also without a “self-righteous” attitude in trying to introduce or influence gender equality in organizations in these cultures. In other words, the kind of strategy to influence the development of gender equality has to involve careful sequencing and organizational readiness.

Conclusion

We in Canada are an isolated affluent minority in a world that is “closing in on us” so to speak, closing in on us economically, politically and socially, and confronting us with realities of deep cultural and religious differences. We in the HR profession, given the nature of our principles and values (as well as our skill/knowledge set) are in an ideal position to filtrate a positive influence to the world through the organizations we serve, and to help our organizations to achieve their international business goals by helping them to effectively adapt their international communications strategies.

Hal Holt, CHRP

Hal is a Human Resources Consultant with 20 years HR management experience in the private sector (Toronto / Montreal), 9 years HR management experience in the hospital sector (Kingston) and over 6 years international HR development experience (India, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia). Hal is also a longstanding member of HRP AO. Hal can be reached at (613) 544-1033 or at hal_hlt@yahoo.ca.

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