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SPRING 2019 VOLUME 17, No. 2



Nathaly Pinchuk  
RPR, CMP  
Executive Director

# HR and IT: Harmony works!

## **Working together helps organizations thrive**

Which came first, the computer or tech support? If we listen to the IT specialists, it was clearly technical support. The conflict that arises between HR and IT is real and sometimes visceral. Some of it is turf and some of it is older thinking. But smart organizations are sorting through this mess because they can't afford not to. They also need both these parts of the organization to work together in order to achieve business success.

## **Different Roles – Same Goal**

The IT role in organizations is fairly straightforward. They are the human interface between the employee and machine, between technology and the rest of us. They keep us linked, networked and connected, and if any of these break down, they are there to help. They are more focused on nuts and bolts and bits and bytes. Their job is to determine the technological requirements of an organization and then to deliver and maintain them. They are guided by their expertise and the budget and priorities which are handed to them.

HR on the other hand has a much more complex role. HR handles a series of issues and problems that are not as regulated as the IT section. They have to manage people's expectations in addition to their own priorities and budget. This means dealing with both employees and managers often at the same time. It means that they have to develop plans and procedures to resolve issues. HR may have a policy manual, but it is likely to be more of a list of guidelines rather than instructions on how to fix something.

This makes both sections very different. What makes them similar is that both of their

roles and responsibilities are evolving. This can lead to common ground and help both parts of the organization realize that if they work together, they will not only survive, but thrive and grow.

## **Three Ways that HR and IT Can Work Together**

Technology affects all of us personally and professionally. We live and work in a connected and interconnected world. Technology exists to help us do our jobs. When HR and IT work together, magic can happen. Here are three areas where HR and IT can work together effectively. In fact, they already are.

### *Recruitment*

Social media and analytics are transforming staffing and recruiting across the globe. HR departments and recruiters are much more likely to advertise on social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook or Indeed than in traditional media. Not only that, but they are identifying candidates and checking their references, even before posting a competition. They are also working with IT specialists to develop data analytic programs that prescreen candidates and prepare behaviour questions for the interview team in order to find the best and brightest for their organization. This partnership between HR and IT is already paying dividends and we have just begun to scratch the surface of its potential.

### *Professional Development*

Professional development has changed drastically over the years. Most employers see the benefits of investing in training their people, including onboarding new employees. This is not a 'maybe' anymore — it has become a 'must-have' and it has been proven to show a positive return on investment for the organization. One of the

shifts has been to incorporate technological advances into employee development programs. IT helps HR offer and deliver online training programs that their employees can access from anywhere. Many use technology to allow their employees to take Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Most HR departments also have an electronic tracking system that marks each employee's career development. This teamwork is improving the effectiveness and lowering the overall costs of corporate professional development programs.

### *Performance Management*

Not many people like to give or receive performance evaluations, but technology makes a difficult process a bit faster and a lot easier. There may still be an annual review process where paper and feedback are exchanged, but the current trend is towards ensuring people are being supported throughout the year with continuous monitoring and feedback. This includes incorporating coaching and development and managing goals. To make these processes easier, technology provides backup support, reminders and generates automatic reports that make constant communication and timely interventions possible and practical. IT specialists are working with HR to continually improve their performance management systems and to help managers and employees track their progress at work.

The lines of communication between HR and IT must always remain open. Make sure your teams are on board and working together for optimal results!

*Nathaly Pinchuk is Executive Director of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].*

Perspective



Brian W. Pascal  
RPR, CMP, RPT  
President

President's Message

# Engaging the Older Worker

*The risk-free relationship pays great dividends*

Despite the fears that baby boomers would desert the workplace in droves, many older boomers are continuing to work. Some of them are not being utilized properly and many are being sidelined by their employers. While it is true that some older workers "check out" in the period before their impending retirement, this certainly does not apply to everyone. While there is no normal or mandatory retirement age anymore, this resource can and should be fully utilized.

In some ways, older workers are the ideal workers. They know the ropes and where the bodies are buried in the organization. They may have even dug a few holes themselves during their careers. They have little to lose and lots to offer if you want to take advantage of their skills and abilities. The first thing we must do is change our attitudes about older workers as being too old to contribute or learn.

Instead of isolating them in a corner, older workers do best when they are acknowledged and celebrated. It's not showing respect for their age, but their experience. They are great sounding boards for new ideas

and to help point out the pitfalls of the past. They can help you learn from your previous mistakes so you and your organization don't repeat them in the future. This is a win-win situation. You keep them engaged and interested and they help you improve your problem solving.

Older workers can also do well as mentors and trainers. They can inspire the rookies and even some of your seasoned veterans. And it's not just war stories or an enhanced corporate history that they can pass along, it's real life experience. Assign them to work alongside a new employee as they learn the ropes and don't be surprised when you find them having coffee together. It's a risk-free relationship that can pay great dividends for both employees and your organization.

Older workers don't need a lot of attention. They are often self-motivated and just need a little nudge to keep them interested and engaged. Appeal to their sense of pride and commitment and they will rise to the challenge. Smart employers are taking advantage of the many attributes that these older workers can still bring to the table.

Don't let them coast into retirement — use them before you lose them. They will be happier and so will you.

*Brian Pascal is President of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].*

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*"You're in luck. Word from upstairs is that a position just opened up."*



**Kyle MacIsaac**  
LL.B.  
Partner,  
Mathews Dinsdale  
& Clark LLP



**Caroline Spindler**  
J.D.  
Associate,  
Mathews Dinsdale  
& Clark LLP

# Nova Scotia Aligns with Federal Changes to EI Benefits

*More leave time for employees and their families*

Amendments to the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* (the "Code") were recently proclaimed that extend unpaid leaves available to new parents and parents of critically ill children in order to take into account recent federal changes that extended EI benefits.

*The Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, 2nd Sess, 63rd Leg, Nova Scotia, 2018 ("Bill No. 29")* adds provisions to the Code relating to unpaid leaves in order to align with federal employment insurance benefits.

Bill No. 29 amends the Code by:

- reducing pregnancy leave from 17 weeks to 16 weeks;
- increasing parental leave from 52 weeks to 77 weeks;
- increasing combined pregnancy and parental leaves from 52 weeks to 77 weeks;
- extends eligibility for critically ill or injured child leave to employees who are family members of the child; and
- establishes a 16-week unpaid leave for an employee's critically ill or injured adult family member.

To be entitled to critically ill adult care leave, a legally qualified medical practitioner must issue a certificate stating that the adult is critically ill and requires the care and support of the employee and must also set out the period during which the adult requires the care or

support and an employer may request a copy of the certificate in writing. The new provisions also prescribe details as to when it can be taken and return to work following the leave.

The passing of Bill No. 29 was not without debate. The NDP proposed amendments to the Bill which would have granted job protection to employees who take leave after only 17 weeks of employment. The Legislature rejected the amendments and Government promised to address the issue through Regulations.

Bill No. 29 was given first reading on September 13, 2018 and was given Royal Assent on October 11, 2018.

Another Private Member's Bill was introduced to the Fall sitting of the Nova Scotia Legislature by a member of the NDP that would offer employee-friendly changes to the *Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code* (the "Code").

Bill No. 46, *An Act to Amend Chapter 246 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Labour Standards Code, Respecting Sick Leave*, 2nd Sess, 63rd Leg, Nova Scotia, 2018 ("Bill No. 46") was given first reading on September 20, 2018. Bill No. 46 adds provisions to s.60G of the Code which currently provides employees with a maximum of three (3) days of unpaid leave per year due to sickness of a child, parent or family members or for medical, dental or other similar appointments.

This Bill also recognizes the prevalence of mental health issues in our society.

The new provisions introduced by Bill No. 46 would supplement the current provisions and would entitle employees to a paid leave of absence of one-half day per month of employment to a maximum of six (6) days per year for personal illness, injury or medical emergency. These provisions are in addition to other leaves provided under the Code relating to illness, injury, death or care of family members of the employee or employee's spouse. This Bill also recognizes the prevalence of mental health issues in our society by specifically including personal illness, injury or medical emergency associated with mental health.

Be sure to keep an eye out to see how things shake out.

*Kyle MacIsaac is a Partner with Mathews Dinsdale Clark LLP in Halifax and can be reached via email at [kmacisaac@mathewsdinsdale.com](mailto:kmacisaac@mathewsdinsdale.com). Caroline Spindler is an Associate with Mathews, Dinsdale & Clark LLP in Halifax and can be reached at [cspindler@mathewsdinsdale.com](mailto:cspindler@mathewsdinsdale.com).*

Feature



**Kyle MacIsaac and Caroline Spindler will be presenting on:**  
*Today's Critical Issues in Employment Law*  
at the IPM Halifax Half Day Workshop on May 1, 2019.

FOR DETAILS, GO TO [WWW.WORKPLACE.CA](http://www.workplace.ca) (CLICK ON EVENTS).



Colin Fetter  
LL.B.

Partner,  
Brownlee LLP

# Prohibitions on Social Media: Not Your Best Solution

*Draft the right policy to balance the interests*

We are lucky when we work in a place where we make friends. Feeling a personal connection to the work you do and the people you work with can be an instrumental part of feeling engaged and happy in our professional lives.

Like anything, it's all good until it's not. As an example, sometimes colleagues fall in love and then sometimes they break up. And when that circumstance starts to affect people's ability to work, be productive and feel safe at work, you've now made it your employer's business.

It doesn't make sense to prohibit workplace friendships, but we do pay attention when those relationships negatively affect the workplace. The same is true for social media.

Some people are of the view that they should have separate accounts for personal and professional purposes, and in a lot of cases that makes sense. School teachers are a great example of that. People should take whatever precautions they feel are appropriate.

But like friendships, social media does not have a clear boundary between personal and professional personas. For the most part, maturity, not regulation, is the most effective strategy.

Employees have a right to a private life and frankly, employers generally aren't interested in becoming a part of it. But when you post something online that negatively affects your employer's business or workplace, you're making your post their business. Freedom of speech is not an exclusive right — it is not only yours. If you have a right to



post your opinion, remember that your employer has corresponding right to not like it, subject to human rights laws and similar. How would you feel if your company tweeted that all of its employees are morons? Probably the same way your company would feel if you called your boss a moron online.

Then there's the flip side. Many employers encourage their employees to promote the company through their personal networks. In order to create a healthy, constructive conversation, companies often provide approved messaging or themes, as well as guidelines on how to effectively post while being mindful of confidentiality and other similar risks. Maturity says, "When in doubt, ask." Prohibiting employees from posting anything at all about their companies is really just punishing those who can handle themselves because of a small minority who can't.

Social media is never truly private, even if that's what your account settings say. We've seen what happens with Facebook. Because of

re-posting, re-tweeting, screen captures and so forth, social media is ultimately a permanent public billboard that forever memorializes your thought or conversation.

In drafting social media policies for workplaces, employers must be practical. There is a balancing of interests that must occur. Employers are often best advised to think of risk mitigation rather than risk elimination in order to achieve that balance. Here are some considerations for employers in drafting social media policies:

- What role, if any, do you want your employees to play in your corporate social media strategy?
- What do helpful or positive employee contributions look like? What does negative or unhelpful content look like?
- How do you intend to distinguish or balance employees' private and professional roles in social media?

*continued on page 15...*

Feature



Brady Wilson  
Co-Founder,  
Juice Inc.

# Conversation: The Ultimate of Operating Systems

*What operating system does your organization run on?*

Think outside the realm of technology. Consider what else in your company is powerful enough to keep employee behaviour in check and your business running smoothly.

It's not traditional employee engagement methods like surveys, town halls, newsletters and departmental action plans. No, it's something much more fundamental than that.

*It's conversation.*

Conversation, the ability to connect with people, understand them and partner with them, is the operating system (O/S) that drives vital "apps" like great sales, customer service, coaching, problem-solving, innovation and strategy.

As with any O/S, all these business apps rely very heavily on conversation. How do we know this? Because without conversation — that is, if the system "crashes" — the entire organization is disabled.

## **The brain science**

Conversation is, essentially, the O/S of the human brain.

This is because every single message transmitted from one neuron to another enables each of us to see, hear, move... and think. If all those 100 billion neurons in your brain were to stop talking to one another, your body and ability to process information would cease to function.

Interestingly, research also shows that neuronal conversations within our brains are significantly strengthened and enhanced by social conversations "between brains."

## Why aren't organizations integrating conversation into their own employee engagement initiatives?

As such, it shouldn't surprise us that conversation is also the O/S of entire organizations. That's because as neuronal conversations are the way the individual brain gets things done, employee conversations are the way that organizations get things done.

With this in mind, then, why aren't organizations integrating conversation into their own employee engagement initiatives?

### **Why this matters**

Let's look at employee engagement surveys as an example.

Rather than pause to consider the context behind results, leaders often rush to create strategies — "one-size-fits-all" broad-brush strategies built on nothing but numbers.

Employees do not respond well to global solutions. They want to know that they have been listened to. Leaders who draft plans without taking time to consider the "backstory" practically guarantee employee non-compliance to any engagement initiative.

That's where the need for conversation comes in.

Here's why: science shows that when you have meaningful, face-to-face conversations that demonstrate value, respect and care, this boosts the brain's processing power — forming a feel-good energy cocktail of

connection, calm, concentration, creativity and curiosity.

As such, conversation can:

- create natural opportunities to unlock insight and possibility in employees' minds;
- deepen the leader-employee relationship;
- energize employees; and
- power those apps that make a business so successful.

In addition, by enabling the co-creation of conditions that generate meaningful, sustainable energy, conversation can also lead to employees beginning to manage their own engagement.

Because of all this, conversation is an O/S that costs little — but yields much, much more than you likely ever thought possible.

### **No time to talk?**

Don't feel you have time to talk to your employees?

Consider this: concerns that are unaddressed tend to fester and simmer. Then they turn into "crucial," "fierce" or "difficult" conversations-consuming multiples of energy, time and mind-space from everyone in the organization.

Leaders save themselves a lot of headaches when they move beyond engagement as we know it today and honour how the brain works.

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# Conversation

... concluded from page 6

Also keep in mind that conversations don't have to take up a lot of time.

Short, simple "Energy Check" conversations are a proven and effective way to unlock insight and possibility in your employees' minds. It can be as simple as asking employees what is energizing them at the moment and what is depleting their energy. Done systematically, this technique can catch issues

before they become calamity-based, saving time in the process.

### **No installation needed**

Everything changes for the better when leaders use conversation to draw out what matters most to employees. And here's the great thing: it already exists within your organization.

It's simply up to leaders to embrace it as the key operating

system that drives the business — and shift their mindset to include conversation in all engagement endeavours.

*Brady Wilson is co-founder of Juice Inc. and author of Beyond Engagement: A Brain-Based Approach That Blends the Engagement Managers Want with the Energy Employees Need. He can be reached via email at [brady@juiceinc.com](mailto:brady@juiceinc.com).*



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**Dan Palayew**  
LL.B.  
Partner/Regional  
Leader,  
Borden Ladner  
Gervais LLP



**Odessa O'Dell**  
J.D.  
Associate,  
Borden Ladner  
Gervais LLP

Feature

# No Short Notice for Short Service Employees in Ontario

*Don't rely on the "rule of thumb"*

When it comes to assessing an employee's common law reasonable notice period, employers are generally quite familiar with the judicial "rule of thumb" — one month of notice per year of employment. When applied to short service employees, this rule clearly translates into shorter notice periods... right?

Not so fast!

In fact, courts in Ontario have been consistently awarding notice periods for short service employees that far outstrip the "rule of thumb." In 1999, the Ontario Court of Appeal rejected the "rule of thumb" in *Minott v O'Shanter Development Company Ltd.*, 42 OR (3d) 321 (ONCA) as being largely inapplicable to employees with very short service.

In the 2011 decision of *Love v Acuity Investment Management Inc.*, 2011 ONCA 130 (*Love*), the Court of Appeal again raised doubts about the weight that can be attributed to an employee's length of service when assessing reasonable notice. In *Love*, the Court cautioned placing a disproportionate weight on length of service, particularly where it may underemphasize the nature of the employee's work or their age.

In the years that have followed *Love*, the notice periods awarded for short service employees at common law has steadily risen.

## Recent Decisions

Generally speaking, the courts have been consistently awarding notice periods in the range of four to six months for employees in middle to upper management, even where there are no aggravating circumstances.

Employers should be cognizant of the fact that the courts continue to award notice periods that go well beyond one month per year of employment for short service employees

In the past two years, the following common law notice periods were awarded to short service employees:

- In *Nemirovski v Socast Inc.*, 2017 CarswellOnt 14948, a Product Manager employed for 19 months was awarded a notice period of nine months following his termination. The Ontario Superior Court paid particular attention to the fact that the employer did not provide the employee with a reference letter, and it took him more than nine months to find alternate employment, albeit with a lesser salary. There was also a particularly onerous non-competition clause in the employment contract.
- A Sales Manager in *Nogueira v Second Cup*, 2017 CarswellOnt 16262 was awarded a notice period of four months following the termination of her employment after 8.5 months.
- In *Van Wyngaarden v Thumper Massager Inc.*, 2017 CarswellOnt 9833, a 59 year-old Electric Designer was awarded a four-month notice period after a mere six months of employment. Key to this award was the employee's unsuccessful mitigation attempts and his age.

- In *Raposo v CA Canada Company*, 2018 CarswellOnt 12044, a Senior Business Technical Architect employed for 2.7 years was awarded a five-month reasonable notice period.
- A 38 year-old General Manager employed for 1.4 years in *Bergeron v Movati Athletic (Group) Inc.*, was awarded a three-month reasonable notice period. The notice period was on the lower end because of the employee's age and the fact that she became gainfully employed within one month of being terminated without cause.

## The Takeaway for Employers

Employers should be cognizant of the fact that the courts continue to award notice periods that go well beyond one month per year of employment for short service employees, particularly where they are in middle to upper management and where age is a factor.

Practically speaking, when preparing termination materials for short service employees, employers seeking to avoid litigation over the applicable notice period should seek legal advice as to the appropriate

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# No Short Notice

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notice periods or payment in lieu thereof. Employers who base the notice period on length of service for short service employees do so at their own peril. This can be particularly challenging given the disparity between minimum statutory entitlements for these employees compared to notice at common law.

Employers should also take a look at their existing employment agreements, particularly termination clauses as they pertain to notice periods. While the law in this area is also

somewhat in flux, employers should seek legal advice as to appropriate language that may allow for enforceable pre-determined notice periods that are also compliant with minimum standard obligations.

*Dan Palayew is Partner/Regional Leader Labour & Employment Group with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and can be reached at [dpalayew@blg.com](mailto:dpalayew@blg.com). Odessa O'Dell is an Associate with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and can be reached at [oodell@blg.com](mailto:oodell@blg.com).*

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**Monika Jensen**  
RPT  
Principal,  
The Aviary Group

# Embracing Civility

*You lead the way*

Complaints of harassment, discrimination, bullying, violence and disrespectful workplaces are now a major concern for employers. As we cope with the escalating situations, I found the word “incivility” is becoming frequently used.

What does incivility mean? Let’s look at how the Institute of Civility describes it. Civility is about more than merely being polite. Civility requires a deep self-awareness being characterized by genuine respect for others. Civility involves the tremendous efforts of remaining present even with those with whom we have inherent and perhaps fierce differences. It is about continuously being open to hearing, learning, teaching and changing. It pursues mutual ground as a start point for discussions when differences occur while at the same time being aware that differences are heartening. It is persistence, grace and strength of character.

Recent research has expanded our practical understanding of incivility by identifying behaviours which employees have deemed disrespectful. The most frequently occurring forms include: neglecting to turn off cell phones; talking behind someone’s back; doubting someone’s judgement, using demeaning or disparaging language, gestures or behaviours; communicating with the intent to belittle or degrade, eye rolling, giving the silent treatment and using sarcasm; gossip and slander; paying no attention or ignoring someone; taking credit for someone else’s work or ideas; intimidation by intentionally using fear to manipulate others. It may also include yelling, invading personal space, throwing or slamming things and losing one’s temper, sabotaging by setting someone up to fail or intentionally creating a

situation to make another person look foolish or incompetent. This also may include hate-ism by deliberately pointing at a victim based on age, gender, race or sexual orientation.

Many examples include: blaming others rather than accepting responsibility; checking email or texting during a meeting; using email to send a confusing message to avoid facing the person, which may be misunderstood and misinterpreted; not saying “please” or “thank you”; not listening and talking over or down to someone.

The cost of incivility is high. It is not only about money! There is research to support impacts on performance through lost time and absenteeism, lack of creativity, less helpfulness and less likely to assist another employee. The impact of teams is on the level of energy, emotional engagement and performance. The conduct reaches into our physical health. It also impacts our customers and commitment to the organization and willingness of employees to stay with their companies. These all affect the bottom line.

How do we address these issues? It all starts with us as individuals. We must manage ourselves. If you throw a ball at the wall, it comes back. This works with people too. If you are mean or disrespectful, it comes back. People will be mean and disrespectful with you.

How can you be kind and patient all the time when life is so stressful and just plain hard? You do it by embracing civility!

Civility requires self-awareness. With self-awareness, you can control your attitude, manage your moods and choose behaviours that do not

negatively impact your life or disrupt those around you.

Can you...

- Feel and express annoyance, irritation or frustration without hurting others— and then let it go?
- Accept and even appreciate that other people have needs and opinions which are different from your own?
- Encourage and enjoy the successes of others?
- Recognize when someone else feels irritated, upset or frustrated and keep yourself from reacting impulsively in response?

As leaders, we need to model. Leo Tolstoy said “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing themselves.” Employees look to leaders for guidance and someone to aspire to. What are they seeing? Watch your language and put away your smartphones when engaging with your employees. Be mindful of the perils of emails and other electronic communication. Choose your method of communication carefully, be it by phone or face to face meeting. Take immediate and corrective action when warranted. Rude and disrespectful behaviours emerge quickly and often without warning. As the leader, you need to respond at the moment. By delaying a reaction or action, it sends out mixed messages to the offender as well as the entire team. Take all complaints seriously, realizing that coming forward by the individual is difficult and they need to know they are supported.

*Monika Jensen is Principal of the Aviary Group and can be contacted by email at [mjensen@aviarygroup.ca](mailto:mjensen@aviarygroup.ca).*

Feature



**Duncan Marsden**  
LL.B.  
Partner/Regional  
Leader, Borden, Ladner  
Gervais LLP



**Lorelle Binnion**  
J.D.  
Associate, Borden,  
Ladner Gervais LLP

Feature

# Calculating Damages in Wrongful Dismissal Claims: Don't Forget Income Tax

*A case comment on Schram v Government of Nunavut*

It is a well-accepted principle in Canadian employment law that when a non-unionized provincially regulated employee is dismissed without cause and the employer elects to provide pay in lieu of notice, the amount of compensation that the employee is entitled to should equal the compensation the employee would have earned had the employee worked through the applicable notice period. This is simply an application of the principles governing recoverability of damages for breach of contract, which require the plaintiff to be put in the same position as if the contract has been performed. Such compensation normally includes items such as the salary and commissions the employee would have earned, any bonuses that the employee would have become entitled to, and any shares or options that would have vested during the notice period.

A recent case from the New Brunswick Court of Appeal has highlighted another source of compensation that is not as routinely considered as part of employee entitlement calculations: income tax liability.

In *Schram v Government of Nunavut*, 2018 NBCA 41, the employee was a resident of New Brunswick and was hired by the government of Nunavut as a Staffing Consultant. The employee subsequently relocated to Iqaluit and worked for the government of Nunavut for approximately three and a half years, following which her employment was terminated without cause. She was required to vacate her employer-provided housing in Iqaluit and she returned to New Brunswick. The employee subsequently sued for

wrongful dismissal and was awarded additional damages at trial. While the employee was living in Iqaluit, she paid income taxes in Nunavut. However, as she received her damages from her wrongful dismissal claim after she had returned to New Brunswick, she paid taxes on those amounts in New Brunswick at a higher tax rate.

At trial, the judge rejected the employee's claim for additional tax liability as a result of having to pay taxes in New Brunswick rather than Nunavut, stating that: "As a practical matter, I fear that wrongful dismissal cases in New Brunswick, which have generally not considered the tax consequences based on residency or the consequences of larger lump sum payment of damages, would become overly cumbersome as litigants try and add another layer of analysis beyond that which is necessary for what is essentially a breach of contract case. Each jurisdiction has its own complicated income tax structure. It is best left to those in the business of drafting or applying the income tax laws to resolve what tax a person is required to pay."

The New Brunswick Court of Appeal overturned the trial judge's decision to deny compensation for the employee's additional liability for income tax, noting that the principle in *Hadley v Baxendale* is that damages are recoverable for a contractual breach if they are "such as may fairly and reasonably be considered either arising naturally... from such breach of contract itself, or such as may reasonably be supposed to have been in the contemplation of both parties." Given that the lower tax rates in Nunavut compared to New Brunswick, as

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Each jurisdiction has its own complicated income tax structure.

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well as the employee's return to New Brunswick following the termination of her employment, were both found to be within the contemplation of the parties at the time the employment contract was entered into, the New Brunswick Court of Appeal allowed the employee's claim for an income tax gross-up.

Employers should consider potential income tax liability on pay in lieu of notice when hiring employees from out of jurisdiction. If the employer is aware the employee is moving to the jurisdiction for the purpose of accepting the position, it would be open to the courts to find that it was within the contemplation of the parties that the employee would return to their original residence upon termination of employment. Conversely, if an employee's home jurisdiction has a lower tax rate than the jurisdiction in which they were employed, employers could consider making the argument that the amount of damages to be awarded should be reduced by the amount of the tax savings the employee will receive by virtue of paying taxes on the settlement in their home jurisdiction rather than the jurisdiction in which they were employed.

*Duncan Marsden is Partner/Regional Leader with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and can be reached via email at [dmarsden@blg.com](mailto:dmarsden@blg.com). Lorelle Binnion is an Associate with Borden Ladner Gervais LLP and can be reached via email at [lbinnion@blg.com](mailto:lbinnion@blg.com).*



**Judy Suke**  
President,  
Triangle Seminars

# Understanding the Intergenerational Workforce

*Harmonious relationships at work*

Picture a large family reunion with the old grandparents, older parents, younger parents, newly married couples, university and college graduates and teenagers — now picture them in your workplace. Scary, isn't it? There are five generations in the workforce right now and they don't always understand each other and they don't appreciate each other. To create harmony amongst our intergenerational workers, we need to overcome the animosity between the generations by understanding them and educating them so that they can appreciate each other.

In addition to the familiar character styles identified through Personality Dimensions, Myers-Briggs, DISC and other such tests, we have values that have been created through the times when we grew up. These values affect our work ethic, our beliefs, our fears, our hopes and change how we are motivated.

I believe that the key to successfully managing a team of intergenerational workers is to maintain that each individual is

a valued contributor. You can do this in four steps: identify and use their strengths, show appreciation, motivate and encourage them using their values.

The Traditionalists who were born between 1922 and 1945 are now 74 and older. Surprisingly they are still out there and usually directors or senior executives of companies. They were influenced by the Second World War and want dedication, loyalty and respect for authority. They don't like change, so explain carefully why their procedures need to be changed.

The Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 are now 55–73 and in 2015 made up 31% of the workforce (Bureau of Labour Statistics). Influenced by the Moon Landing, Woodstock and the Vietnam War, they are idealistic and challenge authority. They want job security and live to work. They are known for their loyalty and spend too much time at the office. They want recognition for their hard work and expect promotions, titles and bonuses.

Generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1980 and are now 39–54 years old. Having witnessed the collapse of communism, space shuttle explosions and environmental disasters, these latchkey kids are self-sufficient, family oriented, media and tech savvy and they work to live. Work-life balance is important to them. They see the Baby Boomers as a warning and don't want to sacrifice their family for their jobs.

The Millennials are the Y generation, born between 1981 and 1994, they are 25 to 38. Along with the newest group, Generation Z (under 24 years old), they made up 35% of the workforce in 2015 (Bureau of Labour Statistics). The defining events in their life have been school shootings, terrorism, corporate scandals and huge strides in technology. They are connected to the world, have a moral mindset and want meaningful work. They have been given ample reason to question authority, not bow to it. Cam Marston, an expert on the impact of generational change and the workplace, noted that the younger generation has often told their Baby Boomer managers "We define success differently and will pursue other rewards for our work" (*Motivating the What's in it for me? Generation*).

They place a high value on individuality, creativity, personal freedom and professional flexibility.

In the very near future, the Millennials and Generation Z will make up 50% of the workforce. Graham Scott stated in 2015, "Companies of all sizes



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Feature



**Murray Janewski**  
President,  
ACT One  
International Corp.

# It's Time to Change the Way We Talk About Conflict

*Don't avoid it — Steer through it*

There are some things in this world that are just inevitable. As much as we try to avoid those things that we can't get away from, what we are really doing is avoiding dealing with them, which doesn't work. This isn't like driving around a pothole in the road. It's more like driving with a flat tire because you don't want to face the cost of buying a new tire. Avoiding your problems will only lead to bigger and more destructive ones.

One of the many things in life we all try to avoid and fail at is conflict. In life there will always be moments where you disagree with others, that's just how it goes. Most of us really don't like engaging in conflict at all. So our natural tendency is to find a detour around it if we can, because that is how we were raised, taught or trained to react. Seeing conflict as negative and destructive is learned behaviour. What is truly destructive and negative is not conflict itself, but the unproductive ways we engage in and deal with it or avoid it. The truth is that we need to change our thinking. If we learn to see conflict as part of the process — an inevitable reaction to working, building and growing as a team, we can learn to see how conflict can be productive and constructive.

The first step to changing our thinking and seeing conflict differently is to understand how we all engage in conflict in different ways. Some people are very blunt and direct; others hold back and are wary of engaging forcefully with people. That's ok, the approach is valid. The behaviour is what we need to examine. That's where conflict becomes destructive. Often

Digging into some self-reflection and taking time to learn about our own tendencies as well as others can really help hit the reset button on our negative thinking.

when people are frustrated, they resort to negative behaviours such as name-calling, gossip, backstabbing, belittling, caving-in to pressure and the list goes on.

With someone who has a more dominant personality, they may resort to being pushy and aggressive with their ideas. If the person on the other end has a more calm steady personality, he or she may very well just cave in and give the other person their way. Both reactions are counterproductive and in fact unproductive conflict because no one is going to get anywhere. The dominant person might get their way, but the whole team will likely not truly buy in and they end up moving forward on something that should not have been approved in the first place.

The second step is to actively work on changing those negative behaviours so your team can learn to engage in conflict around ideas, rather than attacking each other and getting nowhere. Digging into some self-reflection and taking time to learn about our own tendencies as well as others can really help hit the reset button on our negative thinking. Ultimately, if we can learn to see conflict differently, acknowledge our own negative behaviours and learn how to use conflict as a means of positive, productive engagement, the inevitability of conflict becomes something we no longer avoid, but steer through with intention, as a team.

*Murray Janewski is President, ACT One International Corp. and can be reached at [murrayj@aoic.ca](mailto:murrayj@aoic.ca).*

Feature

**Philip H. Gennis, J.D., CIRP, LIT**  
Senior Principal



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**Carol Ring**  
President,  
The Culture  
Connection

# Five Steps to Lead Your Troops Out of the Trenches

*How do you improve your workplace culture?*

Life is too short to be working in a miserable environment. But what can we do from the trenches of management to make change? We can't authorize the building of gyms, introduce new policies giving employees more paid days off or front expensive employee development programs. That's done by the senior executives. They're the ones responsible for creating amazing workplace cultures, right?

It's true that the culture of an organization is based on the behaviours of its leaders. However, even middle managers are leaders. I once thought that I had to wait for head office to drive change and set the stage for how we worked together. Then I decided to become the general of my own army.

As the leader of a regional team, we went to work on becoming a high performance team. This included addressing how we worked together as a management team and also how we could pull together to better manage our employees. We developed a vision for our business unit and agreed on the values that were most important for our combined success.

Over the course of several years, we were able to shift things from being silo functions merely existing in the same building to a cohesive, aligned and committed, results-oriented team. When we felt that our head office wasn't providing enough information, we didn't complain about it. Instead we invited key players with the information our team needed to our management meetings. We became proactive. It wasn't long before senior executives began to send compliments our way.

We developed a vision for our business unit and agreed on the values that were most important for our combined success.

So what can you do to make your business a better workplace for your employees? Here are five steps to help you.

- #1 Assess what your current environment is really about.** Is it filled with teamwork or mistrust?
- #2 Get crystal clear on the purpose of your business unit and how it contributes to the greater organization.** Communicate to your employees the purpose and how each and every one of them can contribute to its success.
- #3 Define what you'd like the workplace to look like.** Perhaps you'd like more social activities or more ongoing professional development. Outline what is needed in order to deliver most effectively.
- #4 List the things you can change within your own sphere of influence.** If you don't feel your team has the right information to get the job done, how can you improve it? Be proactive.
- #5 Build an action plan** with dates, resource requirements and accountabilities. Build it into your annual business plan.

Don't let the fact that you're working in the trenches of middle management stop you from improving your culture. Every operation needs a strong line of defence as well as an offence that keeps everyone moving forward. You can and should be the commander in charge of the corporate culture around you.

Share.

*Carol Ring is the Founder and President of The Culture Connection. She is the author of Ignite Your Culture: 6 Steps to Fuel your People, Profits and Potential and Awakening the Workplace. She can be reached via email at carol@carolring.ca*

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Feature

## Social Media

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- How will you support employees in effectively using social media for your workplace, even if they do not support your company's social media strategy? (They're going to use it whether or not you've asked them to.)
- Do you have a plan for when things go sideways?
- How do your social media expectations dovetail to your respectful workplace expectations?
- Have you clearly communicated your expectations to your employees and educated them on positive uses of social media?

At the end of the day, there are no longer any clear or impenetrable boundaries between workplaces and the rest of the world. Corporate social media policies are inextricably tied to respectful and healthy workplaces. Rather than policing the issue, employers are well advised to embrace the benefits and challenges of social media and work with employees to strike a healthy balance.

*Colin Fetter is a Partner and Practice Group Leader in Employment and Labour Law with Brownlee LLP in Edmonton. He can be reached via email at [cfetter@brownleelaw.com](mailto:cfetter@brownleelaw.com).*

## Intergenerational Workforce

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and across all sectors need to know how they are going to recruit, train, retain and advance these employees as Baby Boomer retirement accelerates."

### ***How should employers handle these new workers?***

To survive, we need to acknowledge that the world has drastically changed. We need to embrace the desires of these new employees: to use their talents through customized job descriptions; to work remotely and avoid long commutes; to have flexible hours to be there for their children's plays, or accommodate their interests in sports and continued desire to take additional courses. Because they are hopeful and optimistic, try not to burst their bubble. They want meaningful work so show them how they will be helping and contributing

to the company goals, and how these company goals are in line with their personal goals. As graduates of schools that involved them in required community service, let them head up some company charity endeavours. They value diversity and change. Reward their initiatives and give them the opportunity to play the lead in change. They are technologically and globally aware and can be used to access and share information quickly. Use their skills to troubleshoot problems.

Given the opportunity, they will shine. When they are challenged and succeed, they will be satisfied and stay.

*Judy Suke is President, Triangle Seminars ([www.triangleseminars.com](http://www.triangleseminars.com)) and can be reached via email at [judysuke@bell.net](mailto:judysuke@bell.net).*

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