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HR Links

Happy New Year!

While *HR Links* undergoes a facelift, the editorial board is endeavoring to continue publication. To that end, we have a new issue to welcome in the New Year with lots of tidbits about who has moved where, diversity, performance management and the 12 workplace gifts to give employees.

To submit articles for publication, please send them to any member of the editorial board or to hrlinks@gov.ns.ca by the 15th of each month.

Colleen

Members of the HR Links Editorial Board are:

Jane Allt
Michelle Collins
Vanessa Hammock
Donna Hendy
Jeannette Sanchez-Smith
Alexandra Smith
Editor
Colleen Gareau
gareauc@gov.ns.ca
902 424 7280

Comings and Goings

News on the Justice CSU Homefront!

Margie LeClair, OH&SC is leaving the provincial government on Jan. 16/06 for a challenging OH&S opportunity with the School Board.

Justice Learning Centre has expanded their team to include two additional HR Development Consultants **Paul Cole** (Jan. 4/06) and **Noreen Stadey** (Oct 19/05), as well as two Administrative Assistants **David Librach** (Halifax location - Dec. 12/05), and **Lisa Devine** (Truro location -October 24/05).

Heather Bowser, from TPW/Finance CSU, accepted a one year secondment with the Justice CSU as an HR Consultant effective Nov. 28/05.

Of very special note: Donna Pettipas, Coordinator Employee Benefits, is retiring Feb. 28/06 after 34 years &10 months of service with the province. Many thanks to Donna for her years of dedication to Nova Scotia and many warm wishes for a wonderful retirement.

Brian Carter a Police & Public Safety Consultant, Police & Victim Services Division, Department of Justice has accepted a two year secondment to the Justice CSU- HR Division as the Manager of OH&S effective Dec. 5/05.

Ernesta Colley joined the Justice CSU-HR Division as the Administrative Assistant to the Office of the Director effective Nov. 7/05.

Judith Crosby, Junior HR Consultant, moves from SAP Payroll/Benefit Administration to the Employee Relations section of the Justice CSU - HR Division effective Jan. 9/06.

Sandi Little joined the Justice CSU HR Division in a two year term HR Consultant position effective June 27/05.

Sheree Delaney accepted a one- year term Human Resource Administrator position effective July 4/05 with the Justice CSU - HR Division.

Changes at TPW CSU

Janet Robar and **Erin Carew** have left TPW-CSU to work on the School Board SAP project from January 3 - December 31, 2006.

Best wishes & heartfelt thanks to **Mary Dauphinee** who retired December 31, 2006. The Manager, Labour Relations has been filled by **Gary Wadden**.

New Payroll HRA's effective January 2006:

Janet Crichton
Carolyn O'Malley
Charlene Hudson.

Susan Gee is on secondment to Environment & Labour effective November 14, 2005 to September 2006.

Colleen Gallant is the New Org. & Development Assistant.

Staff changes at the PSC

Welcome to **Lydia Adisenu-Doe** who joined Strategic Support Services on January 10th as Jr. HR Consultant, Diversity Initiatives. Lydia will initially be working closely with Sarah Barrett in preparation for Sarah's maternity leave beginning on February 13.

Lisa Palermo successfully competed for the term position of Strategic Services Officer, replacing Pam Coffin-MacAulay during Pam's maternity leave. Lisa's background includes two undergraduate degrees, over ten years of government experience, including a background with program development and coordination. Lisa will be coordinating the Premier's Award of Excellence Program and implementing our recognition framework. Lisa's start date with us is Monday, February 6th.

Karen Fitzner has joined Employee Relations and Compensation Division as Acting Director of Staff Relations as of January 3, 2006. This position has been vacant since the retirement of Don Nelson last year and a search continues for a permanent replacement.

Donna Gillis has resigned her position to take up employment at Dalhousie University. We

thank her for her service and wish her well in her new position. **Glen Mitchell** will be replacing Donna as Senior Corporate Staff Relations Consultant. Many of you will recall that Glen was with the Commission previously as a consultant for approximately four years. Welcome back, Glen!

Theresa MacIsaac has accepted a one year secondment to the OED effective January 16, 2006. In her new role Theresa will be working with the OCM team in the implementation of the SAP HR/Payroll system with the School Board Project. The OCM team will be working closely with the 8 school boards helping them get ready for the implementation.

Louise Cornish will be taking on the role of Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Operating Officer at the Department of Emergency Medicine at the QEII Health Sciences Centre, starting Jan. 30. 2006. She will be working with the team there to implement their strategy and vision.

Peiyi Wu joined the Innovation and Growth team on a four month co-op term as a Jr. HR Consultant, Strategic HR Management. Peiyi is currently in his fourth year of a commerce degree majoring in computer information systems at Saint Mary's University. Peiyi will be working on the HR Strategy for the HR Community, the Performance Management System for MCPs, and the Leadership Continuity Program.

Christine Adams has joined the PSC as the Manager, SAP HR/Payroll Business Transformation.

Rebecca MacKay has accepted a one year secondment with Treasury & Policy Board as PICI/User Fee Project Coordinator.

Cathy-Leigh Spencer has joined the PSC as Administrative Support to the Evaluation, Audit, and Communication sections.

Carrie Hotton was the successful candidate for the position of Strategic Services Consultant effective October 10th. Carrie's new role will be to provide advice and leadership regarding the design of strategies, programs and policies related to attraction and retention.

Staffing changes at Health

We are pleased to welcome **Donna Smith** to the newly established position of HR Development Consultant. Donna comes to Health from the Resources CSU and brings with her a wealth of training & development experience.

Carol Hamilton, formerly Rick Anderson's (Senior Director Health Sector Workforce) administrative assistant, has accepted a one-year term position as a Pay Roll Benefits Officer.

Carla Atkinson is backfilling Carol's position as Administrative Support to Rick Anderson and oversees the competition process. Carla has several years of Administrative experience here in Health HR. Carla will be Rick's new right hand.

Cathy Woodworth has been seconded from the Protocol Office. She brings with her a wealth of experience and will provide administrative support to Anne Marie Fitzpatrick (Acting Director of HR) as well as the other HR Consultants.

As you may already know, **Michelle MacLean** was the successful candidate for the newly established Payroll Benefits Coordinator position. Michelle brings with her many years of pay roll benefits experience and of course an aptitude for the beloved SAP.

Good luck to all of the Health HR CSU staff in their new roles!



PREMIER'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Premier's Award of Excellence

By Carrie Hotton
Strategic Support Services, PSC

Mentioned in the *Corporate Human Resources Plan*, the Premier's Award of Excellence recognizes the outstanding contributions of Nova Scotia Government employees. As a complement to existing recognition activities like our Long Service Awards and Minister's Awards, the Premier's Award of Excellence supports our goal of being a preferred employer in Nova Scotia. Nominations were submitted in December and Premier Hamm presented the awards to recipients at a ceremony held on

January 31st at the World Trade and Convention Centre.

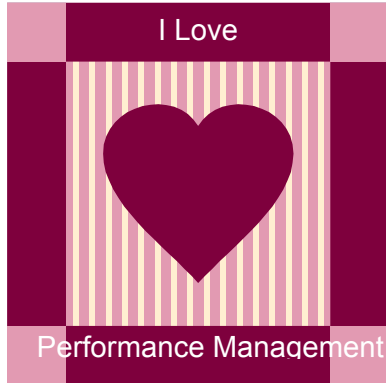
"Public service employees of the Government of Nova Scotia are among the best in the world and it was time for us to recognize exceptional work," said Premier Hamm. "The selection panel evaluated 50 nominations and, with great difficulty, recommended five as recipients of the award. The award winners, in fact, represent the many thousands of government employees who bring their skills and dedication to their public service roles every day."

The recipients for this inaugural year are: Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN) Team- Justice, Snow School Development Team- TPW, Annette Boucher- Justice, Online Resources Work Team- Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, and the Evaluation of Alternatives Work Team- TPW.

In the spirit of recognition, I'd like to say thank you to Pam Coffin-MacAulay and Margaret Melanson for their efforts in designing the program. I'd also like to say thanks to Katherine Noseworthy, Colleen Hartling, and Jane Allt as core project team members, for their support in ensuring a smooth implementation.

Performance Management

By Louise Cornish



With Valentine's Day just around the corner, it's time to turn our thoughts to something that some of us are quite passionate about ... You guessed it.... Performance Management.

If you've forgotten how the performance management cycle fits into our annual planning, budgeting and accountability cycles, please go to <http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/pdf/InnovationGrowth/PlanningPerformanceCycle.htm> to see a detailed overview.

Performance management is a process, not an event. It operates as a continuous cycle. The government's strategic goals provide the starting point for setting departmental goals and the development of our business plans. This is followed by agreement on performance and development, leading to the establishment of plans between individuals and managers, with continuous monitoring and feedback supported by formal reviews. As we approach the end of the fiscal year, it's

important to get ready for the final performance review for the year from both a employee's and manager's perspective.

Targets that were set through the year will need to be reviewed with documentation provided by employees in order to determine if measures that were set were met. The new leadership competencies you've heard so much about took effect April 1, 2005. All MCPs will therefore be evaluated using these new competencies outlined in the Competency Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ) this year.

If you completed your Competency Assessment Questionnaire early in this fiscal year, you'll already be familiar with the competencies and the levels that apply to you. You likely identified some development opportunities as well. As we approach the end of the year, please refer to your CAQ and update it with additional situations where you exhibited the behaviours at the level specific for your MCP level. And as you look forward to next year, consider what development opportunities you require to develop in these leadership competencies. Tools such as the [Development Resource Guide](#) at: http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/MCP_New can help. You can use the [Career Development Plan](#) at http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/MCP_New to document the actions you'll take to develop in the coming year.

Coming Soon: The performance management webpage will soon contain a Best Practices section that our co-op student, Peiyi Wu, is

working on. We are creating a feedback form that will assist managers and employees in soliciting feedback on their performance and the Hay 360° assessment project is also well underway and will be launched in the new fiscal year. Please refer to our Performance Management website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?m=1.360.452.364> for additional information and resources.

Diversity in the Public Service

By Charlie Macdonald

"I would also like to reaffirm today that our government is committed to an agenda of diversity in the workforce. That commitment is a key part of our human resources corporate plan. And we are confident that we are on the right path to making our public service truly reflective of the diverse workforce of Nova Scotia."

Premier John Hamm, remarks at the Nova Scotia House of Assembly during Treaty Day celebrations, September 30, 2005.

This column on diversity in the public service will be a regular feature in *HR Links*. I hope, in this column, to provide very brief announcements and updates that are relevant to the Valuing Diversity Initiative and some tips and tools that you may find helpful to support your client

Departments, Agencies, Boards or Commissions as you support their efforts to become a truly diverse workforce.

Moving Towards Equity: Diversity and Affirmative Action in the Nova Scotia Public Service

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the release of the 2004-05 Affirmative Action progress report *Moving Towards Equity*. This is the benchmark report that we will be building upon in future years. We are hoping to establish a cycle whereby our yearly progress can be tabled in the House of Assembly each autumn.

Diversity And Employment Equity: Sign-Language Interpreted Session Planned Feb. 24

Please be advised that there will be Sign-Language Interpreters available for the February 24 workshop "Diversity and Employment Equity". It would be appreciated if your HR-CSU would communicate this to your line Departments and if you have any employees who are Deaf and would benefit from this training please support their attendance.

Some hints for Hiring Culturally-Competent Employees

Our goal is to be a diverse workforce. In order to achieve this goal we need managers and employees who value diversity and who are competent to deliver services to all Nova Scotians.

In supporting your department to become an organization that values diversity, it is essential to build an office atmosphere of respect, openness, and trust between clients and staff. It is important for all of us to remember that bias and discrimination can be obvious and flagrant, or covert and subtle. Our hiring practices should reflect this understanding.

The following interview questions are provided, as a few examples, to help you determine whether a job candidate will be sensitive to diversity in your workplace or would bring cultural competence to the position being filled.

Examples:

What experience do you have in working with people of diverse backgrounds, abilities, cultures and ethnicities?

The candidate should demonstrate understanding and willingness to serve diverse communities. Any experience, whether professional or volunteer, is valuable.

Please share any particular challenges or successes you have experienced in working with people from diverse backgrounds.

You will want to get a sense that the candidate has an appreciation for working with people from diverse backgrounds and understands

the accompanying complexities and needs in an office setting.

In the Public Service we work with and provide service to persons of different ages, races, cultures, mental and physical abilities, sexual orientation, religions, genders, and immigration status, etc. all with different needs. What skills from your past employment or volunteer activities do you think are relevant to this job?

This question should allow a better understanding of the candidates approach to customer service across the spectrum of diversity, their previous experience, and if their skills are transferable to the position in question. Look for examples that demonstrate an understanding of varying needs. Answers should demonstrate listening and clear communication skills.

The Religions of Canada

If you have questions on accommodating the religious practices of employees you may wish to refer to an excellent resource guide that has been developed by the Department of National Defense. It can be viewed at:

http://www.forces.gc.ca/hr/religions/engraph/religions_toc_e.asp?flag=No

EAP

help.when you need it.

12 Workplace Gifts to Give Employees Now and Throughout The Year

by Rhonda Calcott
EAP Coordinator

The following article promotes mental-health well being in the workplace. It was published jointly by the Economic Roundtable on Addiction and Mental Health and the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) in the year 2000. It seems fitting to repeat this message at this time of year as we reflect on our past year's work in our HR role and look for things to put on our "work resolution list" for 2006. Coaching and supporting managers to take and implement the following workplace gifts will help to promote productivity, attendance and create a more vital and effective workforce.

1. *The Gift Of Time And Space To Do Our Work*

This gift means helping employees off the treadmill at work. Many people are getting ill not from too much to do but from their sense they have too much to do, all at once, all the time. With this gift, we put high value on the time of employees, rather than wasting a precious resource and breathing down the necks of those who are on deadline.

2. *The Gift Of Knowing What Is Expected Of Us*

This gift means giving employees a clear picture of what employers expect; what, fundamentally, their job is; what priorities they are being asked to work toward from one day to the next. This prevents confusion and self-doubt, reduces stress and promotes productivity.

3. *The Gift of Acknowledging What Others Do*

Money is not the only reward people work for. The gift of acknowledgement gives employees something very valuable in the long-term – appreciation for doing good work. When the boss says thank you, it helps employees realize that what they do contributes to the organization's success.

4. *The Gift Of Sharing Success At Work*

This is the gift of seeing success as something to share rather than something to own. With this gift, we will salute the part others played in the good work we did, sharing the credit just as we shared the load.

5. *The Gift Of An E-mail Ceasefire*

E-mail overload is a huge source of frustration and anxiety in the workplace. Casualties are mounting daily. The gift of not doing an e-mail dump on others this time of year will prevent employees facing several hundred e-mails when they return. This is the gift of liberation – liberation from the enslavement of e-mail.

6. *The Gift of Call-Forwarding – When Someone's Really There*

This is a gift of common sense. Call-forwarding today promises a human alternative to a voice message but often delivers another voice message. This is a real frustration for hurried callers trying to break through cyberspace and make human contact. Let us resolve in 2006 to call-forward only when someone is there to answer the phone.

7. *The Gift of Leadership*

This is a gift from the top. A gift of clarity in setting a future direction for the company. Productive employees need this

sense of direction. Good management practices will prevent confusion, frustration and reduced output.

8. The Gift of Job Fulfilment

This is the gift that spurs productivity. It is the gift of opportunity. It is the gift of personal growth through on-the-job training. It is the gift of matching the right employee with the right job. Just as the pay cheque buys bread for the table, self-fulfilment at work buys bread for the soul.

9. The Gift of Listening To Others At Work

This gift is an art form. Hearing not only what others say, but understanding how they feel and what they need to do their job. Body language conveys much of our message in our communication. We cannot read body language by e-mail. In a society hurried, worried and rattled by change, let us resolve to start listening on the job.

10. The Gift Of Redistributing Workloads Wisely

One person doing the job of two or three, working a lot of overtime results in employees who feel trapped. Heavy workloads are one of the top ten sources of stress today – employees are not whining or complaining, they are worried their workload is preventing them from doing what they perceive to be a good job. They are worried about quality, and about making

mistakes. With the gift of good workload management, supervisors and managers will hear those concerns and interpret them wisely.

11. The Gift Of Inclusion At Work

Isolation at work – not getting information, not being invited to meetings, feeling shelved, work going unnoticed, suggestions going unanswered, the boss playing favourites – is number two on the top ten list of workplace stress. Isolation breeds unhealthy insecurity, a loss of self-esteem, and even depression. This gift replaces isolation with inclusion, information and a sense of belonging to the team.

12. The Gift Of Trust

A lack of control over one’s own work is number one on the list of the top ten sources of stress. *It poses a risk to the cardiac health of workers as great as smoking. The gift of trust gives employees the freedom to make decisions about the tasks before them, fusing a pledge between employer and employee to trust each other in order to do good work and reap the benefits of it.

** Reference: Institute of Work and Health
Reference: Bill Wilkerson, Co-founder & CEO, Business & Economic Roundtable on Addiction & Mental Health and Maureen Shaw, President and CEO, Industrial Accident Prevention Association*