

### Inside

Becoming a Preferred Employer 3

Human Resource Development Consultant? 5

Valuing Diversity 6

Corporate Careers Website 7

CISM 8

### Regular Features

HR Comings & Goings 4

Letter to the Editor 4

HERO Award 8

# Building Relationships\* and Capacity

by Vanessa Hammock,  
Project Director Human Resource Strategy



*"I do not feel invited or a part of the community even though I work with the HR Community everyday"*

*"We need more opportunities to meet colleagues and interact with other HR professionals"*

*"What about cross-departmental project teams within the HR Community?"*

*"I would like to find more ways to share ideas within the community. I would love to be able to learn from other HR professionals, there is such competence and talent in our own ranks."*

*"There should be more opportunities to build relationships between the PSC and HR CSUs"*

**S**ound familiar? It should, these remarks and suggestions came from you, the HR Community. Given this feedback... and the recent announcement of the three HR Strategy project manager development → 2

\*MCP leadership competency



**Check out... Corporate Careers Website → 7**



← 1 opportunities, I would like to focus this article on how you, as individual members of the HR Community, can further your own careers and self development while at the same time, work together as a community to build capacity.

### The Career Development Connection

As a community, it has been said time and time again, “we never focus on ourselves, specifically our own career development.”

Ask yourself: *Have you prepared a career development plan?*

Career development is an integral part of the performance management process. By preparing a career development plan, it will also give you the opportunity to strategize as to how to achieve your career goals.



that there is an interest in but not enough opportunities available to develop management skills and competencies.

The community has also indicated a need to increase its project management and HR technical skills. A project management approach is being taken with the HR Strategy for the community. The project managers and their teams will also have the opportunity to learn new HR technical skills or further enhance current skills. → 3

## UPDATE

### HR Skills & Competencies Project

The HR Skills & Competencies project is underway. Two workshops have been held. A multi-stakeholder workshop was held to identify 2-3 common competencies for the HR Community. This workshop included 21 participants from the community with representation from the PSC and HR CSUs and all levels of work and functional areas. A second workshop was held with 14 members of the support group to identify 2-3 leadership competencies. Feedback from the HR Community included a need to identify competencies for the AS group.

Stay tuned, information will be provided on the results of this work soon.

“Don’t wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what. Get started now. With each step you take, you grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more self-confident and more and more successful.”

*Mark Victor Hansen, author, Chicken Soup for the Soul*

### Discussing Career Development with Your Manager

The plan is designed to be self-directed but the support of your manager is critical. In discussion with your manager, you will be able to identify short- and long-term goals and engage in discussion regarding better control and management of workload. You will also be provided with an opportunity to work together to identify the benefits of your career plan not only to you personally but to the organization.

### Working Together to Build Capacity

The development of the HR Strategy for the HR Community is a real opportunity for HR professionals in government to develop their skills and competencies in

the three priority areas of the strategy: HR skills and competencies, building capacity, and talent management. It is an opportunity for individuals to do work they would not normally do, further develop their leadership competencies and build strength within the HR Community.

This work has started with the identification of three project manager roles. An invitation to apply for these roles was sent to the community on May 17th. These roles are intended to provide three members of the community an opportunity to develop their HR leadership skills and competencies, including the development of people competency, as they will be managing their own teams. These opportunities were made available as a result of feedback received from the community

## PUBLICATION STATEMENT

HR Links is published 10 times a year on the first business day of each month. The July/August and December/January issues are combined.

The editorial board welcomes and actively solicits articles and story suggestions from members of the HR Community and its partners. Please send your submissions to [hrlinks@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hrlinks@gov.ns.ca) by the first of the month for editing and layout.

### Members of the HR Links Editorial Board are:

Jane Allt, Michelle Collins, Vanessa Hammock, Donna Hendy, Jeannette Sanchez-Smith, Alexandra Smith

← 2 Project teams will be made up of representatives from the HR Community who will then be able to enhance their development of people competency by sharing their learning and new skills with their respective 'home' HR teams.

### Partnerships

"To create an HR community that is viewed as a cohesive, collaborative professional group that meets the needs of clients in an effective, efficient, timely and consistent manner."

Developing partnerships has been identified as a priority and is included in the PSC 2006/2007 Business Plan. This priority focuses on building relationships and capacity within the HR Community to enable community-wide delivery of quality HR services and programs to departments and agencies across government. In other words: how the community can make a difference together based upon the common interest of human resource management.

### Continuous Learning HR Community

The HR Community is made up of many talented HR professionals who have a wide range of experience in many areas of HR. The community needs to find more ways of learning from one another. The building capacity team will be looking at this but in the meanwhile, ask yourself, what ways can you share your expertise with others in the community?

Here are some existing vehicles to communicate and learn from one another.

- HR Forums
- HR Retreats
- HR Links
- Best Practices Web-Site

In thinking of these, what opportunities have been missed? Are there any areas of HR you want to learn more about but do not have an opportunity to do so? How can the community achieve greater efficiencies through increased collaboration? ■



# Becoming a Preferred Employer

by Michelle Lucas  
Communications Director  
Public Service Commission

Nova Scotians say that public servants have integrity, are courteous and friendly, and are knowledgeable and service-oriented. These were some of the findings of an independent public opinion poll recently commissioned by the Public Service Commission.

"If we want to establish the provincial government as a preferred employer, we need to track public opinions," said Rick Nurse, PSC's Commissioner. "It is encouraging to know that Nova Scotians hold positive views of government employees, and that many of them would consider working here."

Results were favourable overall.

"It will be important to continue asking the public about how they view government employees and government as an employer," said Mr. Nurse. "Results from this type of research can inform how we advertise job postings, develop attraction and retention strategies, and tell Nova Scotians about opportunities in government - all things that will help us be competitive in the search for skilled and responsive public servants." ■

*About 750 Nova Scotians were surveyed by Omnifacts Bristol Group in February 2006. Respondents were representative of age and gender groups, and geographic regions within the province. Over half of the respondents had a college or university-level education, and were employed. A summary report is available at [www.gov.ns.ca/psc](http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc)*

## Poll Highlights

- 80%** are confident in the abilities of government employees to serve the people of the province
- 72%** believe public servants are focussed on the public good
- 82%** feel employees are respectful
- 83%** agree that employees have integrity
- 62%** say they would consider the Government of Nova Scotia as a potential employer if looking for a job

Of those who responded they would not likely consider government,

- 36%** cite "lack necessary experience or skills"
- 20%** cite "level of competition and frequency of postings" as their reasons.

Opportunities for improvement include creating awareness of the opportunities government has to offer.

- 40%** report not knowing how to find out about employment opportunities
- 34%** feel that government employees have limited opportunities for career advancement and growth

As it happens, employees share the same concern about advancement and growth. In the 2005 employee mini-survey, only

- 37%** of government employees felt they have opportunities for career advancement in the provincial government.

# HR Comings & Goings

The Justice HR CSU welcomes **Andrea Anderson** and **Kathy Leights** both as Human Resource Administrators. Andrea obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from Mount Saint Vincent University and a Diploma in Adult Education from Henson College. She has five and a half years HR experience both in the public and private sectors, including 18 months with the Department of Community Services where she worked predominantly in Finance (using SAP/SAS) but also completed an assignment specifically in HR. Other human resource positions have included that of Staffing/Payroll Clerk and Assistant Training Co-ordinator both with DND, and as an HR Manager with Knowledge House. Andrea joined the Justice CSU in a term Human Resource Administrator position on March 14, 2006. Kathy attended studies Saint Mary's University in the Bachelor of Commerce program. She completed both the Payroll Administrator and Payroll Supervisor designations with the Canadian Payroll Association. For the previous 10 year period, Kathy was employed in the private sector with Grafton Connor as an Accountant addressing both automated payroll activities and business/financial

transactions. Kathy joined the Justice CSU in a term Human Resource Administrator position on April 3, 2006.

**Tanya Butts** has been seconded to the Justice HR CSU from the Corrections Division to act as the Occupational Health and Safety Consultant.

The Education HR CSU has seen a bit of a shuffle which includes: **Charlette Palmeter** as the Human Resources Assistant primarily serving the Department of Education and the Office of Immigration; **Charmaine St. Peters** takes on the Human Resources Assistant role primarily serving the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. **Tanya Andrews-Hurd** is the new Employee Benefits Coordinator – Congratulations on your new role! **Annette Saulnier** returned to the Department of Education from her secondment in Classification and Compensation with the Public Service Commission and has accepted a challenging 2 year special project assignment with Student Assistance. We will miss you in HR Annette! **Mary Ellen Williams**, Human Resources Consultant has now moved to primarily serving the Department of Education and the Office of Immigration.

**Nadine Landry** is the newest addition to the Public Service Commission. Nadine was the successful candidate in a competition recently to replace **Joan Hensler** as the Office Services Administrator. Nadine has extensive experience with the NS Government in areas like, Health, Senior Secretariat and Treasury and Policy Board.

Also new to the Public Service Commission, although not a strictly HR role is **Michelle Lucas**. Michelle is the new Communications Director for the Public Service Commission and will have the opportunity in her role to meet many of the folks in the HR Community. Michelle joins the commission from communications stints at the Nova Scotia Hospital and the Departments of Health and Agriculture and Fisheries.

And a Going – **Michael Johnson** completed his Leadership Development Program assignment with the Public Service Commission in early April and returned to his "home" department, Agriculture & Fisheries in Truro. Michael was instrumental in working with Patti Pike on the Corporate HR Plan. ■

## Letter to the Editor

### Dear HR Links:

With the various HR professional associations coming out with their certifications, what does this do to the qualifications required for Government of Nova Scotia HR positions? Can the certifications be used as equivalencies? Do we even require certifications?

*Signed, Lonely and Uncertified*

### Dear Lonely and Uncertified:

I have to start first by stating how proud I am to see Certification of Human Resource Professionals. Finally after all of our hard work and dedication, we are truly being recognized as a profession. Hats off to the professional associations who have been instrumental in moving this forward. At present, the qualifications for most human resources positions in government include human resource educational requirements and work experience. We do not at this time require a professional certification from an HR professional association.

Professional designations from our human resources associations are certainly a nice to have, but are at this time not used as screening criteria. Don't worry about not being certified right now, it is more important at this stage to have the experience and the education that are necessary in our ever changing HR roles.

...Now what can we do about the lonely part?

*Signed, HR Links*

# What's a Human Resource Development Consultant?

Sometimes known as 'the Training Specialist', the 'trainer', 'T&D consultant', or 'Training and Development consultant', HRD Consultants provide services and programs that focus on developing people and enabling them to excel. Working with all government employees, the HRD role contributes to a highly skilled and flexible public service for Nova Scotia. We support all of the priorities within the Corporate HR Plan, and contribute to making the Government of Nova Scotia a preferred employer.

HRD Consultants plan, organize, and direct a wide range of training and development activities for all employees. The HRD Consultants across government have a variety of experience in human resource systems, such as talent management and performance management; designing and conducting training programs; and working with groups and facilitating processes. This expertise is supplemented with knowledge of adult education, program planning, and leadership training and development.

As part of the HR Community, HRD consultants contribute development and research that contribute to strategic decisions and policy that positively impact our clients. As well, we lead initiatives for our clients that support ways and means of optimizing operational effectiveness.

## The HRD Consultant To-Do List includes:

- 1 **Plan programs and courses** for all levels of employees on a wide variety of human resource, workplace, leadership and management development topics.
- 2 **Design courses** to meet client needs.
- 3 **Deliver programs and courses**, including set up of teaching materials prior to the class, facilitate the class, and evaluate to understand how learning impacts performance and results.
- 4 **Help all employees maintain and improve job skills**, and possibly prepare for jobs requiring greater skill. Help supervisors improve interpersonal skills in order to deal effectively with employees.
- 5 **Facilitate group processes** with a focus on team development and change management delivery.
- 6 **Consult with managers and employees** on performance management system, talent management, workforce planning, organizational structure and job design and competency development.
- 7 **Educate** regarding effective work practices.
- 8 **Develop and provide HR planning guides and tools** to help incorporate HR planning into the business planning cycles.
- 9 **Support departments to implement initiatives** (e.g. talent management, performance management, etc.)
- 10 **Coach individuals on career development and planning** ■

## HR Corporate Plan Are We Ready?!

by Patti Pike, Executive Director  
Strategic Human Resource Management

In Canada, within the next decade, for every two people who are retiring there will be less than one person to take their place. Given that more than half of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next five to seven years, we need to take action to ensure that we can attract and retain individuals who want to provide service to the Nova Scotia public. We must also ensure that we are reflective of the people we serve by providing a diverse public service, at all levels of our organization.

The Deputy Ministers identified a 'corporate HR strategy' as one of the top corporate priorities and in the Summer of 2005, the Corporate HR Plan was launched to the departments and HR Community. By the end of the fiscal year 2005-06, over 60 presentations had been made to approximately 1,300 employees and leaders around the province.

For the plan to succeed, it needs the support of all public servants and the commitment of senior leaders, managers and HR professionals

throughout government. A shared commitment to the overall goals of the plan and the workplace values that are central to organizational change are pre-conditional to the plan's success.

Every department has identified key HR initiatives in their business plans and will be utilizing the expertise in their leadership and HR community to achieve their objectives. Our organization is making great progress so stay tuned for a future update on where we are in relation to the strategies identified in the Corporate HR Plan. ■

# Valuing Diversity in the Nova Scotia Public Service

by Charlie MacDonald  
HR Consultant Diversity

## The Diversity Roundtable

Members of the Diversity Roundtable have spent several months collectively and collaboratively developing an operational charter. The charter provides the essentials of purpose, scope and how we will work together as a team.

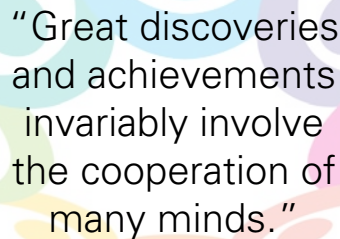
The Roundtable is an interdepartmental forum whose purpose is to support and promote the corporate human resources goal to be a public service that is representative of the diverse community it serves, and to be a respectful and inclusive organization that recognizes diversity as its strength.

The Roundtable and its members are available to departments and agencies to assist with the development of their affirmative action plans and to provide feedback and advice in the areas of diversity and affirmative action.

The charter will be posted on the PSC Website in the very near future but in order to give a flavour of how the Roundtable intends to work I provide the following basic summary:

The roundtable intends to accomplish its purpose by:

- ensuring that we have common understanding of diversity and what it means to be a culturally competent organization
- sharing information on what is happening across government including identifying best practices
- ensuring a coherent approach to diversity
- building momentum and creating and enabling change
- bringing expertise to the roundtable (individual experience, position/content expertise)
- providing advice and feedback on developing initiatives and/or policies
- providing a forum for key government agencies, and communities of interest to have a voice in policy development and initiatives



"Great discoveries and achievements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds."

Alexander Graham Bell

The roundtable has organized itself into three "task teams." These teams are:

**Communication:** The scope of the communication task team is to identify, develop and implement communication tools and strategies in support of diversity in the Nova Scotia public service. Initially, the task team is looking at taking a social marketing approach to help support developing a culture that values diversity within the public service.

**Attraction and Retention:** The scope of the attraction and retention task team is to develop strategies and develop tools to support the recruitment, hiring, accommodating/supporting, training, promotion and retention of employees from the designated groups within the Nova Scotia public service. The task team will start by reviewing the responses to the employee survey from the perspective of employees from designated groups. Also, the task team has been informing the development of a training module on diversity, which will be specific to the HR community.

**Policy:** The scope of the policy task team is to develop tools, guidelines and provide advice to support the implementation of diversity related initiatives within departments and agencies ranging from representation to cultural competence. In addition to providing advice on the

Affirmative Action Policy review, the task team will be developing a diversity lens and reviewing departmental affirmative action plans with the view of identifying best practice and providing advice to departments and agencies on areas for improvement.

## Significant Diversity Dates in June

### National Aboriginal Day

June 21st is National Aboriginal Day. A day for all of us to celebrate the cultures and contributions to Canada and Nova Scotia of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. June 21st was chosen because of the cultural significance of the summer solstice (first day of summer and longest day of the year) and because many Aboriginal groups mark this day as a time to celebrate their heritage. Visit the Office of Aboriginal Affairs website for further details as the Aboriginal Day approaches:

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/>

### Canadian Multiculturalism Day

On November 13, 2002 the Government of Canada, by royal proclamation, designated June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day. Canadian Multiculturalism Day is an opportunity to celebrate our diversity and our commitment to democracy, equality and mutual respect and to appreciate the contributions of the various multicultural groups and communities to Canadian society. Multifest '06 is scheduled for June 16, 17 and 18 at Alderney Landing. This Nova Scotia Multicultural Festival is a vibrant festival that celebrates our cultural diversity. It combines professional and amateur performances, an array of culinary treats from around the world and a cultural pavilion where visitors can learn about the many different cultural groups and organizations that call Nova Scotia home. For more information on Multifest '06 visit: <http://www.multifest.ca/> ■

# Corporate Careers Website

by Carrie Hotton  
Strategic Services Consultant, PSC

In support of government's goal to be a preferred employer, the PSC's attraction and retention team have developed various strategies to help attract people to the provincial public service.

## We don't really have a problem attracting people to work for us, do we?

In a recent public perceptions research study conducted for the PSC, 40% of external job seekers indicated they did not know how to find out about employment opportunities for the Government of Nova Scotia—that's two out of every five working-age Nova Scotians! In addition, over 70% of our government employees are over the age of 40 and according to our employee survey results, less than half of our employees see a future for their career in government. In addition, external demographic challenges—within Nova Scotia, Canada and globally—indicate that the available workforce is shrinking in size. This puts increased pressure on organizations to attract and retain the "right" people to meet their business needs.

One of the attraction strategies we have employed to address these challenges is to introduce a new corporate careers website. Launched in April, the careers website—available at [www.gov.ns.ca/careers](http://www.gov.ns.ca/careers)—hosts our job postings, provides information about our culture, discusses the benefits of working with government, and provides information about our human resource programs like learning, healthy workplaces, and diversity. The website provides visitors with affecting testimonials, welcoming images and a user-friendly format. This new website is an exciting change as it allows us to raise employee and public awareness of the diverse range of career opportunities available within government. Our corporate careers website is an integral step for government in implementing online recruitment practices.



## How can you help?

Encourage people to visit the website when they want to learn more information about working with us. If someone is viewing a job posting in a newspaper or directly through [careerbeacon.com](http://careerbeacon.com), they might not be aware of the information available in our careers website. You can add the following sentence in at the end of your job postings, "To learn more about working in the Government of Nova Scotia, visit our careers website at [www.gov.ns.ca/careers](http://www.gov.ns.ca/careers)."

## What's next?

You will hear more about our attraction and retention strategies in the coming months and will begin to see messages such as "make a difference" and "branch out in a different direction" used in various promotional materials,

like the careers website, to describe a career choice within the Government of Nova Scotia. A comprehensive attraction and retention framework will be published and available online in September, and we will be presenting it to management teams in government departments and agencies in the fall.

This is an exciting time for HR practitioners involved with staffing and we look forward to partnering with our CSUs to help government attract and retain committed, diverse, and accountable public servants to meet the needs of Nova Scotians! ■

*If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Holton (424-5067, [hottonca@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hottonca@gov.ns.ca)), or Lisa Palermo (Strategic Services Officer, 424-4459, [palermml@gov.ns.ca](mailto:palermml@gov.ns.ca)).*



## HR Reads

*In our July/August issue we will be providing to our readership the titles and authors of summertime reading that you would recommend to your colleagues.*

*This doesn't have to be HR journals.*

### **So what do you recommend?**

*Send those titles and authors to [hrlinks@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hrlinks@gov.ns.ca) by June 9th and we will include them in the next issue of HR Links.*

# CISM

## Critical Incident Stress Management Services

by Rhonda Calcott EAP Coordinator

A robbery, a car accident, a threat to one's life, a bomb threat, an attack by an animal causing bodily harm, a death of a co-worker in the workplace, or finding suspicious harmful agents - these are all examples of Critical Incidents that employees can be exposed to in government workplaces.

The following information about CISM services currently available will help you in providing advice, direction, and support to managers and employees when you are informed of a tragic incident happening within your department. This arrangement is not to replace current CISM programs that are working in departments.

### Background information

The NS Government has entered a contract with Health Canada's Crisis Referral Centre (CRC) for a trial period between September 2005 - April 2007 to provide after hours, weekend and holiday crisis EAP services to NS Government employees as well as 24/7 Critical Incident Stress Management Services to address employee emotional well being concerns.

### Accessing CISM services

Calls received by the NS Government EAP staff during regular business hours requiring CISM services are transferred to Health Canada's CRC to receive appropriate and timely CISM interventions. Situations requiring CISM services after hours, calls to the EAP line will reach Health Canada's CRC directly and receive immediate assistance.



### CISM Interventions provided

Depending on a variety of factors surrounding the incident and the number of employees involved, the Health Canada's CRC staff will recommend and coordinate with the manager, appropriate CISM interventions required. Following a group CISM intervention, employees may wish to receive individual counselling and followup. They contact the NS Government EAP to have this arranged.

### Payment

All CISM intervention costs (except pre-incident planning/orientation) provided to departments are paid immediately by the NS Government EAP and recovered via quarterly billings sent to HR.

### Pre-incident Awareness Activities

The Nova Scotia Government's EAP is working with Health Canada to finalize a CISM awareness package to educate employees and managers within the 2006-07 fiscal year on:

- the definition of a critical incident
- how to access CISM services
- the types of CISM services available
- the type and timeliness of a CISM response to expect
- materials available for employee self-care

The plan is to have the above information accessible via the EAP website, linked to departmental OHS and HR websites. Consultations with OHS, HR and HRD representatives will take place to determine the best approach for each department to roll out this information.



Awarded to the  
**IPMA Conference Volunteers**

At HR Links "press time" there was less than 10 days and counting before the IPMA Annual Conference taking place in Halifax. Janet Lee and Jerry Dodson are the Co-Chairs of the conference and submitted the following about those many many many volunteers who have been committed for two years to the success of the conference. During the last two years our many unsung heroes have been meeting first monthly, then bi-weekly and now as we near our 'finish line', weekly. All have contributed their time, energy, creativity, enthusiasm and commitment to success - devoting many personal hours of time in order to ensure their 'day job' did not suffer.

For all of you IPMA Conference Volunteers Jerry and Janet, as Co-Chairs, pay tribute to YOU and express their appreciation of your efforts.

Hat's Off!! You are our **HEROs!**

*If you see an individual or group in our community that you feel is deserving of some special recognition please send your nomination to:*  
[hrlinks@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hrlinks@gov.ns.ca)

### Customized departmental CISM program

Health Canada is available to assist any department that wishes to supplement their CISM program by training departmental peer supports who would then work cooperatively with professionals who are on contract to provide CISM services across the province. Fees and payment for this are negotiated between the department and Health Canada. ■

*Please contact Rhonda Calcott at 424-5433 if you have questions, comments or suggestions.*