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Valuing Diversity

in the Nova Scotia Public Service



“It were not best that we should all think alike; it is difference of opinion that makes horse races.”
Mark Twain

by Charlie MacDonald,
Public Service Commission

Just as Mark Twain believed in diversity with respect to horse racing it is important to understand that diversity in perspective in the hiring process is intrinsic to ensuring the “horse race” is fair. This is nowhere more true than when considering the composition of your Selection Panel or Search Committee.

Diversity on a panel allows a wider perspective, which is valuable in assessing candidates’ qualifications. In the selection process, barriers arise as a natural tendency to “clone” and in assessing candidates from a set of experiences or career paths that is too narrowly defined. Studies have indicated that better problem-solving and creative decision-making are made by more diverse groups.

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Check out...

Meet the New
HR Minister → 4



← 1 While representation from designated groups is appropriate on all search committees it is particularly important (and best practice) when a member (or members) of a designated group are to be interviewed. However, given the under-representation of some groups, this may not always be possible to accomplish. When you are a member of a designated group in a Department or Agency, which is not representative, you are all too often called upon to be the one to sit on selection panels—taking you away from your core job responsibilities.

It may be advisable to seek designated group members from outside of the department in order to ensure appropriate representation and a wider perspective. You can contact the Diversity Management Consultant for assistance in this regard. The Diversity Round Table, through its Attraction and Retention Task Team is developing a process to develop a “pool” of trained and available Public Servants that would be available to ensure diversity on Selection Panels. We will have more information on this process in the not too distant future. In all cases you may not be able to identify an individual who is from a designated group to sit on a panel—but it is our collective responsibility to strive towards this objective.

In addition to understanding its obligations under such policies as the Fair Hiring Policy, it is important that the panel understand its obligations

under Human Rights legislation and be well-versed in current selection process methods. This is not just knowing the letter of the law, but understanding how assumptions about experience and qualifications may be discriminatory and interfere with sound decisions. Recognizing the possibility of unconscious bias is the first step to eliminating it.

Remember—An equitable process:

- focuses on objective, job-related criteria
- allows people opportunities to present their full qualifications for the job
- evaluates people on the basis of their ability to meet those objective job requirements and organizational goals.

A question that I have often been asked: “doesn’t the Fair Hiring Policy prevent us from focusing on hiring for diversity?” No, while the Fair Hiring Policy says that we must hire objectively and on merit, it also says that we must give due attention to other HR policies including the Affirmative Action Policy. These are complementary, not competing policies; and, when we get it right, the outcome is a well qualified and diverse workforce. ■

*If you have specific questions please contact **Charlie MacDonald** at 424-6917 or macdonc@gov.ns.ca.*

Policy Review Focus Groups

*by Carrie Hotton,
Public Service Commission*

As you may recall, the PSC is leading a review and update of government’s fair hiring and affirmative action policies. A number of stakeholder focus groups, moderated by Omnifacts Bristol Group, will be conducted in the fall around the Province to collect input from employees about how to improve the policies and to identify areas that require change. Separate focus group sessions are being held for our HR community.

On September 18th, an online survey will be launched to provide the public with an opportunity to provide input—those who were unable to make it to a focus group session can participate in this survey. ■

*If you have any questions, please feel free to contact **Carrie Hotton, Rhonda Walker or Maria Tendencia** at the PSC.*

HR Links is looking for **contributions from people like you**

Perhaps you’ve always wanted to contribute but didn’t know how to or when.

When should I have my article ready?

DUE DATE	PUBLICATION DATE
September 8	October
October 10	November
November 10	Dec/Jan
January 12	February

How long should my contribution be?

Comings and Goings	20-40 words max
Article	400 words max
Feature article	650 words max

How do I submit my article?

Send your article in a MicroSoft Word document to Michelle Lucas at lucasmx@gov.ns.ca or to hrlinks@gov.ns.ca



PUBLICATION STATEMENT

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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.

Members of the HR Links Editorial Board are:
Jane Allt, Vanessa Hammock, Donna Hendy, Michelle Lucas, Alexandra Smith

The Diversity **Talent Pool**

What is it and where do I get answers?

by Lydia Adisenu-Doe, Public Service Commission

Q What is it?

A The diversity talent pool consists of résumés of pre-screened, qualified applicants within the designated groups who are seeking employment with the provincial government. The pool was created in response to the need for the Government of Nova Scotia to make the public service more representative of the people it serves.

Applicants in the pool have work experience in various fields including: Human Resources, Health Informatics, Policy, Social/Community work, Accounting, Finance, Communications and Public Relations, Computer programming and other IT related fields. Qualifications of applicants' include high school diplomas and undergraduate, Masters and PhD degrees.

Q Is it an administrative support temp agency?

A No. While there are candidates with administrative background, we also have candidates from fields such as policy, social work, accounting and IT etc.

Q How do I benefit?

A You benefit by having:

- easy access to pre-screened, qualified applicants
- a quicker and cheaper means for filling your casual needs
- a great opportunity to enjoy the rich experience of a diverse workforce
- an opportunity to contribute to our Corporate Human Resource goal to become a diverse workforce as well as to help your department or agency achieve its affirmative action goals.

Q Who is a member of the designated group?

A For Nova Scotia, they are Aboriginals, African Nova Scotians and other racially visible minorities, Persons with Disabilities and Women (in non-traditional roles).

Q When can I use the pool?

A You can request résumés anytime you are hiring casual employees. You can also make it a "first port of entry" whenever you are going through a hiring process.

Q Do I need an FTE to hire someone?

A Yes, departments need the FTE to hire someone from the pool. The Public Service Commission does not provide FTEs.

Q Do I need to fill the DHR1 Form?

A Yes, a DHR1 form has to be approved.

Q Do I need to register as a department?

A No, registration is not required for departments. All you need to do is to request résumés anytime you need to hire someone either by phone, e-mail or fax, whichever works best for you.

Q Do departments conduct interviews?

A All referred applicants go through pre-screening as part of their initial information interview with the Public Service Commission. We do however encourage departments to go through the selection process that includes

an interview to ensure that the candidate they hire is the best fit for the job and the organization.

Q Do I have to check references?

A Yes, please refer to government policy on background checks in management manual 500 for more information.

Q What if a candidate needs some form of accommodation?

A The Public Service Commission currently has The Diversity Accommodation Fund to assist Government Departments, Boards and Agencies to offset some of the costs associated with supporting employees who need some form of accommodation. For more information please contact: **Charlie MacDonald**, Diversity Management Consultant
Phone: 424-6916
Email: macdonc@gov.ns.ca
Website: www.gov.ns.ca/psc

Q Am I obliged to hire if I request for resumes?

A There is no obligation to hire any of the referred candidates. ■

*If you would like more information about the talent pool or if you have a casual position that you wish to fill with a qualified member of the designated groups, you can call **Lydia Adisenu-Doe** at (902) 424-5722, e-mail diversitytalentpool@gov.ns.ca*

HR Comings & Goings

The Justice HR CSU is pleased to advise that **Sandra Little, Heather Bowser** and **Sandra Kinley** have been appointed as permanent Human Resource Consultants effective September 1. Sandi Little has been with the CSU since June 2005 in a term role and has 18+ years of experience in Human Resources. Heather has now been with the CSU since accepting a secondment assignment since November 2005. Heather has been with the Province for 25 years and was with TPW prior to joining Justice. Sandra Kinley brings over 12 years experience in various aspects of human resources and has been with Justice for the past few years.

Justice also welcomes **Tonya Fry** as the newest Human Resource Development Consultant to the team. Tonya joined Justice in late June 2006 and prior to joining the province was working in a training and development roles with Eastlink, Convergys and the Sheraton.

The Health CSU is announcing the following comings and goings. **Rick Anderson** has changed roles to function as Senior Director Health Sector Labour Relations. **Gail Boone** joins the Department as Director of Human Resources after 11 years in management with the Worker's Compensation Board. Gail's experience in team building, labour relations, and organizational

development make her an excellent fit for this role. Welcome Gail! **Kim Ashizawa** will be with the Department as a Pay Benefits Clerk until the end of December. We are glad to have Kim as a member of our team.

A number of changes have taken place at the Public Service Commission: **Margaret Garnier** has left Innovation and Growth and replacing her in an administrative assistant role we welcome **Udeme Akpan**. **Cheryl Burgess** returns to the Public Service Commission on September 5 and Valerie Hearn will be returning to her previous role as Senior Consultant. **Rhonda Calcott**, Manager of EAP has left for a one-year secondment with the Government of Canada. Taking her place for the next year will be **Kim Purcell** who was in this role many years ago. **Stacy Gloster** is moving from Education to the PSC in a two-year internship role working on the HR Strategy. **Darrel Foley**, has joined as Corporate Staff Relations Consultant from the Nova Scotia Nurses Union, but many of you will remember Darrell as a Conciliation Officer with the NS Department of Environment & Labour. **Carolyn Jagat** will be joining the PSC in Employee Relations in an administrative support role in early September and with this staffing will have the Employee Relations Division at full compliment.

Stewart Sampson is joining the PSC for six months from Environment and Labour. Stewart will be working on the development of an Employee Safety and Well Being policy. New HRA's being trained include: **Carol Hamilton, Lana Moran, Tara Smith, Kim Ashizawa, Heather Campbell** and **Colin Huntington**. These HRA's are quickly being reassigned to various CSU's.

Marriam Neuman has recently joined Strategic Support Services at the PSC taking **Steve Crichton's** place who has left for a 1 year secondment in the Education HR CSU. **Maria Tendencia** is working as a project coordinator with attraction and retention, healthy workplace, and diversity staff. **Dylan Heide** started as a Policy Analyst at the end of July as part of his MPA program internship. **Pam Matheson** was offered an opportunity with Grant Thornton and left at the end of July.

A special welcome to "COSBY." **Cosby** is Charlie MacDonald's new guide dog. Charlie recently spent three weeks in New Jersey to meet and train with Cosby.

Barbara Baldwin retired at the end of July after 35 years of Public Service. A retirement function is being planned for the whole community on September 14th. ■

Meet the New HR Minister

by Michelle Lucas



of Human Resources and Minister

On June 26, 2006, when the Premier of Nova Scotia named his new cabinet, **Ernest Fage**, MLA Cumberland North, was appointed as Minister

responsible for the Public Service Commission.

"I was happy to return to this organization, knowing that it has a clear vision and direction established by the Corporate Human Resource Plan, as well as the people to make it all happen," said Mr. Fage. "I have a great deal of respect for public servants and know that they are making a difference in the lives of Nova Scotia families. This is a great place to work and I often take

the opportunity to promote the public service as a good career move."

Since 1999, Minister Fage has served in various portfolios, including Agriculture and Fisheries, Natural Resources, Economic Development, and Emergency Measures. He also held the HR position for several months in 2002.

Along with the HR portfolio, the minister will also hold the position as minister of emergency management. ■

Management Manual 500

It's Changing



Lunch with Howard Windsor

by Sheila Sanderson,
Public Service Commission

by Geneviève Tofflemire-Lepage and Danielle Boucher,
Public Relations co-op students

As part of its review of the Human Resource Management Manual (Manual 500), the Public Service Commission, in partnership with Treasury and Policy Board, recently implemented some changes to this on-line corporate HR policy resource.

On July 31, a number of items previously included in the Manual 500 have been relocated or replaced with references to more direct information sources. Other policies have been reorganized or realigned within the Manual 500 for a better fit. None of these changes has resulted in revisions to the content of individual policies.

These changes are based on feedback received from the HR Community during the HR Policy Review, conducted by the PSC in 2005-06. You will be kept informed as existing policies are revised or new policies are developed in the future.

Employees should refer to the on-line manual for the most timely policies and updates and are encouraged to subscribe online to the Management Manuals ListServ to receive notices of changes to the Management Manuals.

To view the revised Manual 500 and a record of the revisions that have been made, please visit www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/manuals/500HumanResourcesMgmt.htm ■

For additional information, please contact **Sheila Sanderson**, Policy Analyst, Public Service Commission at 424-5901 or sandersh@gov.ns.ca.

With 28 years in the Nova Scotia government under his belt, Howard Windsor, Deputy Minister for the Office of the Premier, held the attention of 40 young civil servants as he shared his perspective on what it takes to have a successful and rewarding career in the public service.

With the goal of achieving a leadership position from the beginning, Howard knew he needed to take a hold of his own career, and he encourages others to do the same.

"Even though I am a Deputy Minister today, you must realize that a title or position doesn't necessarily mean that you have a successful career. The work that you do on a daily basis is what changes the lives of Nova Scotians and when you enjoy what you do, that's when you'll know you have succeeded."

With retirement on the horizon, Howard described his entrance into the public service as the result of his own persistence. Multiple rejection letters followed by several term positions finally led to full-time permanent status with the Department of Environment.

Over the years, he worked across the public service in positions of increased responsibility in Housing and Municipal Affairs, Tourism and Culture, Transportation and Public Works, Finance, and the Premier's Office.

When trying to articulate how he knew when it was the "right time" to move to the next challenge, Howard gave this sage advice: "If the job has taken you as far as it is going to, and you have given to the job all you can give, then is the time to move on."

He recounted that from department

to department, the environment, the teams, and the work techniques differ in a variety of ways, however, in the end they each allowed him to grow stronger and develop specific skills that would help him move forward.

According to Howard, civil servants must learn that as much as they are experts in specific areas, they must adapt and gain "softer skills." These skills, such as leadership and being able to communicate with co-workers effectively, are fundamental in progressing with one's career.

"Having the ability to build and hold a team together is a critical attribute in today's workplace," Howard said. "Since there are huge challenges in government, working in a team, with everyone from engineers, policy makers, communications, and front line staff, is critical to the success of the department and employees."

Howard went on to describe how no career is a straight path. "The new generation of workers should understand and become aware of the diversity of opportunities in government and take advantage of as many as they can," he said.

Nearing the end of his speech, Howard emphasized that failure does not prevent success, as long as a person learns from his mistakes. Therefore, taking risks in one's career is acceptable and can lead to higher achievement.

"Even though sometimes you may hit a fork in the road, it is important not to panic or give up," he said. "Above all, employees must learn all they can, have fun, take advantage of all the opportunities around them, and make a mark before moving on."

GoverNEXT was the proud sponsor for this lunchtime event, held on June 6, 2006. ■

Corporate Training that Counts!

by Kenda MacFadyen,
PSC HR Development Consultant

Along the path to becoming a learning organization (Goal 5 of the Corporate HR Plan), we must provide training and professional development opportunities that meet the needs of both employees and departments.

Every year, the PSC's HR Innovation and Growth division is charged with developing the annual corporate calendar. To determine which courses and programs to include, we draw on best practices, course enrollment and cancellation stats, and feedback from HR Development Consultants.

What was said:

Both employees and managers identified a strong link between career development plans, performance management plans, and division or unit operational plans. Most employees prefer to complete internally offered courses and programs through their HR CSU and the PSC and the majority use LearnNet for registration. More than 85 per cent of managers recommend PSC courses and programs to employees.

The course evaluation review found that participants gave courses an average score of 3.7 out of four.

As well, "quality" and "relevance" were cited as the most important considerations when deciding which course to attend.

When asked what training is needed, employees and managers listed 85 separate courses or programs. Fifty-three of the suggested courses are already offered, 16 are job-specific or technical (i.e. wetlands training, collections training, engineering courses), and 16 are not offered.

What we're doing:

We are using this input to improve the corporate calendar. This means offering some new courses, increasing regional opportunities, and increasing awareness of the courses available.

For example, retirement planning for early career employees and a customer service course are being added to the 2006-07 calendar as new offerings, and the managing personal effectiveness course and some others will be offered in regional locations.

We're always working to improve the timing and frequency of course and program offerings and we hope to better align the release of the corporate calendar with the performance management cycle in the future.

We are happy to support your life long learning!

If you want more information about corporate training and development opportunities, contact your HR CSU Development Consultant or the PSC's Innovation and Growth division. You can also check out the 2006-07 training calendar on LearnNet at www.gov.ns.ca/psc/training

"I would like training to give me a well-rounded ability to excel at my job."

—survey participant

This year, we conducted a corporate-wide training needs assessment to provide additional insight into what people need and want. The assessment included a review of all PSC course and program evaluations, an online survey (45 per cent return rate among 1,200 randomly selected employees), and an analysis of issues identified by 2005-06 Leadership Development program participants.

Stepping Up To Frontline Manager Development Program

During the program you will...

- Develop leadership competencies and learn strategies that enable you to lead with confidence in a challenging environment
- Broaden your management perspective through a variety of learning experiences
- Network with your peers from other government departments to exchange knowledge and ideas

Executive Leadership Development Program

Purpose
The Executive Leadership Development Program is designed to support the development of the leadership competencies at the senior level. The program includes address critical issues for senior leaders in the public service, with a focus on enhancing leadership effectiveness for organizational success.

During the program you will...

- Develop leadership competencies and learn strategies that enable you to lead with confidence in a challenging environment
- Network with peers from across government to stimulate corporate thinking and establish enduring professional relationships
- Acquire insight on your own leadership practices through an exceptionally powerful 360° assessment tool

NOVA SCOTIA Public Service Commission

2006 2007

Hire a Consultant to Help Out

Whether you're planning a meeting, developing a business case, or changing a process, a consultant may have the answers to your questions.

by Kenda MacFadyen, Public Service Commission

Everyone ultimately learns this lesson: you can't do everything yourself.

Eventually, you have to resign yourself to relying on the expertise of others. Whether you're planning a meeting, developing a business case, or changing a process, it's often best to stick to what you do best and hire an expert to do what they do best.

Finding the right consultant can take a bit of digging, perhaps even more than when buying equipment or products, but keep in mind that it's far easier to replace a non-working printer than a non-working consultant.

To help you source the support you

need, government offers a number of resources and tools, such as standing offers.

A standing offer is an index or catalogue of pre-qualified suppliers of good or services. The catalogue gives you information about a vendor's expertise, experience, and pricing. Think of it as the yellow pages of service providers.

Government Procurement provides standing offers for everything from consulting services to fuel products to training courses. Go to http://iweb.gov.ns.ca/tour_asp/jumppage.asp and click on "Click Here to go to Nova Scotia Procurement Site for Standing

Offers". Click on Consulting Services for information about consultants who provide support related to a wide variety of projects. Click on Training Courses for information about trainers and firms who provide programs and courses.

Finding outside expertise is the just the first step in your search. Stay tuned for Tips from the Experts on how to find the perfect fit between you and a consultant. ■

IPMA-Canada's International Certification The First Step on the Road to Excellence

by Sherri Boutilier, Department of Community Services

The International Personnel Management Association (IPMA)—Canada has a comprehensive International Certification program designed to enhance your knowledge, develop your skills and provide you with the professional edge to advance your career.

There are two types of certification available through IPMA-Canada. The IPMA-Certified Professional (IPMA-CP) is for HR Professionals who have knowledge, experience and demonstrated expertise in a range of HR functional areas. HR Professionals who have mastery level knowledge, experience and demonstrated expertise in one functional area of HR may



qualify for the IPMA-Certified Specialist (IPMA-CS).

The foundation of IPMA-Canada's Certification is the IPMA HR Competency Model. This model describes three roles—Business Partner, Change Agent and Leader and 22 specific competencies such as communication skills, analytical skills, consultation and negotiation skills, ability to build trust relationships etc. These HR Competencies were selected to focus professionals on what it takes

to succeed in the human resources profession.

Certification is open to all members who meet the eligibility and experience requirements, can demonstrate technical proficiency and pass a competency exam. Certification provides instant recognition of your skills and abilities. Based on both technical and behavioral proficiencies, professional certification gives you an edge over others in the field. ■

To find out more about IPMA—Canada's International Certification program check out the website at <http://www.ipma-aigp.ca/about/index.htm> or contact **Sherri Boutilier**, Director of Certification for IPMA—Canada, Nova Scotia Chapter at boutilsh@gov.ns.ca.