



Kingston District
Human Resources
Professionals
Association

Shaping Organizational Excellence

HR Dimensions

February 2006

Kindness in the Workplace

I recently saw a sign on a billboard outside of a high school near where I live that said ***“Practice Random Acts of Kindness”***. I was impressed and pleased to see this promoted in our community, especially at a high school, and I commend whoever decided to place this in the community for all to see. I think this is a message that we all need on a frequent basis.

It is life-transforming when we practice this wisdom and give of ourselves to others with no expectation of it being returned. It just plain feels good. Wayne Dyer explains the benefits, “. . . the positive effect of kindness on the immune system and on increased serotonin (calming agent in the brain) has been proven in research studies. Kindness extended, received, or observed beneficially impacts the physical health and feelings of everyone involved.”

The Heart Math Research Center (www.heartmath.org) has amazing documentation of the benefits of acting kindly towards ourselves and towards others. They have done study after study to show how kindness and caring thoughts are registered in another person’s brain waves and how this has a profound effect on our overall well-being and immune system. “When people touch or are in close proximity one person’s heartbeat signal (ECG) is registered in the other person’s brainwaves (EEG). The heart generates the strongest electromagnetic field produced by the body. You think kind thoughts about someone and this has a positive effect on their body.” Amazing!

They have also done many studies to show the benefits to our own bodies when we think and feel

positive expressions of ourselves and others, as well as the effects of the reverse. “Negative emotions may suppress the immune system for up to six hours following the emotional experience.”

I think that kindness to others does begin with kindness to ourselves and the more we honour and respect our own needs the easier it is to share and leads to acts of kindness towards others. As Olivia McIvor, a colleague and human resources professional who was instrumental in the groundbreaking work of kindness to colleagues TM believes, “Only kindness will take caring and respect to the next level – direct action”.

I was recently at Warkworth Institution where I volunteer with some inmates. One of the inmates and leaders of the self-studies growth group, passed around a handout all about how to be kind to others. He said, “It’s helpful to do kind, peaceful things”, and listed ways inmates could practice kindness on a regular basis. I was

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Kindness . . . from page 1

so impressed and he was definitely part of my inspiration to write about kindness.

My core value is kindness and I have been the recipient of its benefits so many times. This was so evident on a recent shopping trip to a flea market in Florida. I was conversing with a sales person and we started chatting about nutrition. I gave her some suggestions and the next thing I knew I was leaving the flea market with three gifts: two t-shirts from the lady I was conversing with and another beautiful gift from another vendor after a wonderful interaction with her. I left there with such a glow and thought; it is so powerful to be kind. The returns are immense and just the feeling good part is the major benefit.

So now that we know this is a wonderful, life-enhancing practice how do we do this in our daily, busy lives? The first thing is to have the intention that you are willing to practice random acts of kindness and then just watch what happens. You will truly be amazed!

Some acts of kindness in the workplace could include:

- Sharing quotes with each other to brighten up each other's day. Don't use email, write a quote on a nice piece of paper and put it on someone's desk. For example: "To love someone deeply gives you strength. Being loved by someone deeply gives you courage." – Lao-Tzu
- Offer to get someone water or a coffee or tea while you are going for yourself.
- Make a positive comment on someone's dress or hair.
- Bring a healthy snack into work, like nuts or seeds, and pass this

around at 2pm when some folks are starting to fade.

- Open a door for someone, male or female.
- Smile and say good morning and put feeling into it. Wish them an awesome day.
- Offer encouragement if your colleague is having a challenging day.
- Shop at the Buck store (I'm often teased about this) and give little gifts away for no reason, just place it on someone's desk.
- Offer to cover the phone for someone while they take a break.
- Share a joke. Again don't use email, hardcopy on someone's desk. The following are some examples.

Funny signs

Seen during a conference:
For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a daycare on the first floor.

On a repair shop door:
We can repair anything.
(Please knock hard on the door, the bell doesn't work.)

Having trouble?

Wayne always loved fast cars. Taking advantage of the empty roads one morning he accelerated down a wide open stretch. Unfortunately a police officer was waiting at the other end and Wayne was flagged down.

He greeted the officer with a cheery "Good morning!"

"And a good morning to you, Wing Commander," the officer replied. "Having trouble taking off?"

- Take someone out to lunch for no reason.
- Offer praise for a job well done.

Acknowledge the accomplishments of others.

- A simple pat on the arm and an "I like you" can go along way to lifting someone's spirits.

Let's make this world a kinder place to live one kind act at a time. It will not only make your world a better place but your heart and immune system will forever thank you!!

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Recertification Top 10 List

Under the national standards for the Certified Human Resources Professional designation (CHRP), you need to re-certify through HRP AO every 3 years. Maintaining your CHRP establishes you as an accomplished, committed, informed and connected professional and is your key to success.

Here are 10 examples of how easy it is to re-certify.

1. Writing an article for an HR publication could earn you 10 points per project.
2. Participating as a committee / task member with a chapter could earn you 10 points per year.
3. Supervising an HR student in the workplace could earn you 1.5 points per hour of contact.
4. Volunteering with a non-profit organization could earn you 10 points per 3-year period.
5. Attending a chapter meeting could earn you 2 points per meeting.
6. Attending a legislative update by a legal firm (usually at no cost) could earn you 1.5 points per hour, 10 points per day.
7. Serving as a chapter executive member could earn you 20 points per year.
8. Attending a HRP AO chapter, annual or HR related conference could earn you 10 points per day attendance.
9. Developing a new HR program at work could earn you 25 points.
10. Mentoring a protégé in a chapter mentoring program could earn you 1.5 points per hour of mentor support.

Total all of these up and you will arrive at 100 re-certification points in no time!

More Information

For a current full-length re-certification log or application form, please access the HRP AO website at: <http://www.hrpa.org/hrpao/certification/recertification>. HRP AO has developed the re-certification log in electronic format.

Your re-certification date can also be reviewed online. If you need assistance guidance, please contact an HRP AO Professional Standards Co-ordinator at info@hrpao.org or (416) 923-2324.



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Welcome to our . . .

New Members

By Steve Wowk, *CHRP*
Membership
Director

As the new membership director, I am looking forward to working with the executive and our members to grow our membership. If you know of anyone who may be interested in membership information, please email our HR Administrator and I will ensure that the individual is contacted and receives the necessary information.

As of December 22, 2005, KD-HRPA has 150 members versus 136 at this time last year (10.3% growth). Forty percent of our members have a CHRP designation.

KD-HRPA would like to welcome our new members.

Sandra Boyle

Liseta Medeiros

Ralph Mojsiuk

Lisa Sansom

Kelly Sparks

Kirk Millar

Scott Wylie



Student Representatives

KD-HRPAO would like to congratulate Carm Hunter, Megan Kirkpatrick and Matthew Vrooman, who were selected to be Student Representatives from St. Lawrence College for the KD-HRPAO Committee.

Carm Hunter is a full time second year student; Megan Kirkpatrick is a full time third year student; and Matthew Vrooman is a full time post graduate student.

We would like to welcome Carm, Megan and Matthew to the KD-HRPAO Committee and thank all of the students who applied for these positions.

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Lessons from the Circus An HR Perspective

At the November breakfast event, Lynda Trommelen delivered a presentation to the Kingston Chapter of the HRPAO about her 6-month stint with Cirque de Soleil in Las Vegas. As she spoke about her time with Cirque de Soleil there was no hiding the powerful positive impact of the experience. It struck me that this was exactly the kind of impact that organizations ought to have on employees as it was clear that the culture supported the high performance needs of the enterprise. There were numerous lessons to be learned and many aspects begging for deeper exploration, all of which were skillfully presented with the practitioner in mind. Of the many lessons, I will give a brief account of the selection process, succession planning and the concept of policy space.

Lynda and her husband John were recruited for their ballroom dancing prowess. The typical space allotted for ballroom dancing is about twice the area of that upon which they were asked to perform during the selection process. Thus immediately they were challenged to both adapt and perform; shortly thereafter they were asked to use only half of the area. And shortly after, half that area again. The selectors were assessing their ability to adapt, perform, be flexible and also take risks as unrehearsed ele-

ments were requested. Often such constructs are tested for by assuming examples of past behaviours are indicators of future behaviour or that espoused intentions are accurate predictors. While such methods have both their advantages and disadvantages, they are a poor substitute for direct observation.

Succession planning is a key component of the Cirque de Soleil. The window of opportunity for performers to be at their peak is limited by the toll that age and the demands of the profession take upon their bodies. Cirque de Soleil creates opportunities for performers to move gracefully off-stage into valued supporting roles. For example, the woman responsible

for the maintenance of footwear was a former lead dancer and the gentlemen in the scaffolding controlling the rate of rotation of the acrobats suspended above the stage are former acrobats themselves. Valued and skilled support staff with firsthand knowledge of the needs of performers is critically important as the repercussions of error can be devastating. In addition, their model of succes-



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sion helps engender employee loyalty and adds value to a very effective organizational culture.

Early in their tenure, at the end of one of their performances, it was clear that the audience thought their's was the grand finale. Moving rapidly, the show was ended right then and there as Cirque de Soleil went, as it were, with the flow. This highlights a great deal of flexibility in the policy structure of the enterprise and it is a good example of the effects of 'policy-space'. In the interest of brevity, I will use an analogy to frame up the concept.

If we consider optimal performance to be a surface polished to a mirror-like sheen, then policy can then be considered as the process of polishing. As we continue to polish the surface, a reflection slowly emerges until such a time as we have clarity. However, as we polish (policy) sediment builds up and unless we clear it away it will scratch and mar the surface as we continue to polish and clarity will not be achieved. This clearing of sediment can be termed de-polici-fication or the removal of policy relics and artifacts. Creating the space in policy frameworks to support and empower agents in the use of their most important faculty – decision making – is essential to the next generation of organization. The Cirque de Soleil is able to be flexible because of the space given to their agents to make decisions.

These have been but a few of the Lessons from the Circus and it was both an informative and inspiring way to start the day. Thank you Lynda and John Trommelen.

About the Author: Matthew Vrooman, B.A., M.Ed. is currently serving as the Student Representative on the KD-HRPAO board for the Post-Graduate program in Human Resources at St. Lawrence College and can be reached at matthewlvrooman@hotmail.com.



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