

Sponsor's Message

# CHRP: The Mark of Things to Come

**M**aking a mark in the business world takes talent, timing and, these days, top notch HR. For a multitude of reasons, ranging from generational demography to our interconnected technologies, today's economy is more focused upon the human element than ever before.

Successful organizations are seeking out HR professionals with both the passion and proven capacity to produce results on the bottom line.

These days, that individual is most likely to hold the CHRP - the mark of a Certified Human Resources Professional. While in its relative infancy, the CHRP is a nationally recognized designation that has been evolving to meet the organizational challenges of the 21st century.

For individuals seeking the highest standards of performance and professionalism and to equip themselves with the HR knowledge requisite for success, the CHRP has become a beacon. For businesses looking to empower the potential of their human capital, it marks the evolution of HR.

As HR professionals are called upon to help organizations thrive in an increasingly competitive business climate, the CHRP empowers individuals and industry to rethink the people equations.

As the official designator of the CHRP in the province, the British Columbia Human Resources Association (BC HRMA) has seen the rise of the HR evolution. With over 60 per cent of BC HRMA membership either holding or in pursuit of the designation, and over 21,000 CHRPs nationwide, the future of HR - and its impact on the business you do - has already arrived.

**Simon Evans**  
CEO, BC HRMA



## EMPLOYEE RETENTION

### DENNIS WOLFF

#### Counter offers – the forbidden fruit of employee retention

**W**hile the challenging economic climate of the past two years has given employers a bit of a break, there is no denying that the war for talent is back on again.

The economy is picking up and a lot of people have made "finding a better job" their number 1 New Year's

resolution. Still, most employers will be caught off guard when a valued employee hands in his or her notice.

Many will default to the age-old sales strategy of making a counter offer. As someone who recruits professionals and assists companies in trying to hire the

best talent, I have frequently observed how the counter-offer game is being played. Rarely does anyone win.

The resignation of a high-performance employee means considerable loss of knowledge and revenue to a company. Add to that the average cost of 1.5 to three times that employee's annual

salary to find a replacement. Presenting a better offer appears to be the only realistic option to prevent significant loss to the company.

I firmly believe in doing whatever you can to retain your top employees, but the moment an employee makes it known that he or she has another offer on the table,

the dynamics of the relationship between employer and employee shift dramatically.

If you are not prepared to accept the resignation, there is no real alternative to making a counter offer. However, this makes it an act entirely born out of desperation. I like to call it the forbidden fruit of employee retention, and as tempting as it may seem – don't touch it.

Employees who are truly invested in the well-being of their company will always bring up their concerns and, at times, challenge their employer. Only when they repeatedly feel disappointed will they consider the last resort: making the conscious decision to leave.

You might be able to persuade them to stay on by making all sorts of promises and possibly paying them a better salary. Almost all companies who make a successful counter offer still end up losing the person within the next six months.

**Keep in mind that the odds are against you if you think you will be able to retain the individual permanently**

The reason: a counter offer only sugar-coats issues that are much deeper rooted and can't be resolved as easily. Eventually, employees will remember why they were looking in the first place. And that has rarely to do with money, benefits, vacation time or job title. Most employees leave because of their bosses.

Sometimes, employees hand in their notice completely out of the blue. Before rushing into a counter offer, take a moment to think about this: Why did they not bring up any of their concerns before? If they never bothered raising their concerns and observations with you, are they really the kind of individual you want as part of your business?

You may be able to convince them to stay on, but be aware that their productivity level is compromised as they have already checked out mentally. Also consider for a moment the effect a successful counter offer sends to your other staff. People talk, and your other employees

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**YOUR BENEFIT PLAN SHOULD BE AS UNIQUE AS YOUR COMPANY'S IDENTITY.**

It's your employees that make up the identity of your company. At TRG, we understand that no two companies or employees are alike. Their individual qualities, needs and goals make that identity unique. By rewarding and retaining your employees with a flexible and comprehensive benefits plan, you're actually safeguarding the character and identity of the company itself.

If you are looking for employee benefits or a retirement program specifically suited to you and your people, give us a call. Together we can build a program that's sure to leave a distinct and lasting impression. For more information visit [TRGGROUP.COM](http://TRGGROUP.COM)

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**WORK FORCE**

**ANGELICA MIRZA**

*What's going on with Diversity Canada?*

To stay competitive in the global economy, successful companies need knowledge capital and high-yielding value propositions, yet the strength of home-grown, diverse talent may be overlooked.

Just look at landed immigrants in Canada with degrees who, having left significant careers, may end up working in a wage bracket far below their capacity but remain under-developed and under-used in the workforce.

Though we may be uncomfortable with it, there are still employment and promotion barriers due to lack of acceptance of diversity. Lack of acceptance of immigrants.

What is the real barrier? Racism? Agism? Intolerance? Conservative business models? The whole concept of diversity refers to the basic differences between people in an organization. It encompasses race, gender, ethnicity, age, education and other backgrounds.

Yet in today's constantly changing business environment, having a diverse employee base can have a dramatic and profitable impact on an organization's success and longevity, affecting such areas as innovation, engagement, succession planning and economic growth.

Successful organizations not only embrace diversity and inclusion, but dominate

the increasingly competitive global environment. With an agile, diversified workforce, every organization can use a variety of available resources to service its market to its full extent.

In a recent HSBC Business Without Borders initiative, 833 Canadian companies were surveyed.

**A company needs to establish diversity goals, strategies and practices at every level to ensure they are well embedded with constant checks and balances**

According to responses, 82% strongly or somewhat agreed that their organization has a multicultural workforce, but only 38% felt that companies generally took advantage of it to do business abroad. Among those employed in a multicultural workplace, just 63% felt their own company leveraged that advantage to conduct business internationally.

But leveraging diversity requires a special talent and skill set.

What do you do, for example, in a company of eight people where there might

be intolerant undertones? Employers and managers must always be aware when working to develop a solution to a challenging problem, to include everyone and welcome different viewpoints.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, what do you do in a larger company where people feel almost invisible? Recognize and reward those who cultivate this inclusive atmosphere in their own decision-making process or other workplace behaviour.

Diversity is all about setting the mindset of valuing the differences in people and recognizing the similarities. Once this way of thinking is established, the benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace will naturally develop.

Diversity at work does not only reflect how people perceive themselves but also how they perceive others. Those perceptions can affect their interactions and overall performance.

Establishing a diverse workforce does not just happen; an organization needs a specific strategy with stated goals and metrics as part of the program. It occurs through strong sponsorship and accountability from top leaders and management who are actively and openly engaged in the organization's diversity agenda. A company needs to establish diversity goals, strategies and practices

at every level to ensure they are well embedded with constant checks and balances. Diversity must be driven by the CEO and senior leadership to be supported in the workplace.

Including people with different backgrounds, experiences and cultures can bring a fresh perspective and approach to the table.

By welcoming these different viewpoints and perspectives from employees with diverse areas of expertise and knowledge, employees can feel more engaged with a greater stake in the solution.

Actively engaging new initiatives, programs and plans can also bring a higher level of motivation and a greater sense of ownership in the final outcome of the project or plan.

The concept of developing and accepting diversification is not short term, and neither is the resolution. Those involved in workplace diversification must take a strategic

approach, observing and monitoring meaningful actions and behaviours to assist the entire organization toward transformation.

There are no guarantees, but if diversification is ignored, opportunities to engage well-meaning and performing employees may be lost. This could not only affect an organization's business goals, but might end up directly benefiting a competitor. Managers and employees alike should heed the call to become more actively engaged by taking full advantage of the opportunities presented through diversity, acceptance and inclusion. ■

*Angelica Mirza is a partner with Caldwell Partners International, one of North America's premier providers of executive search for board directors, chief and senior executives, as well as for selected functional experts. For more information, contact amirza@caldwellpartners.com or 604-669-7153.*

**BIV** daily online edition

**BUSINESS TODAY**

**B.C. small businesses to capitalize on high dollar for upgrades and staffing**

Fifty-eight per cent of B.C.'s small businesses plan to capitalize on the high Canadian dollar by upgrading their processes, equipment and machinery, according to a survey released by **BMO Bank of Montreal** (TSX: BMO, NYSE: BMO.US).

The survey noted that B.C.'s small businesses are more likely than their counterparts elsewhere in Canada to capitalize on the high dollar by expanding their operations across Canada.

Also, 21% of B.C.'s small-business owners plan on an expansion into either the U.S. or Mexico, and 21% plan to increase staffing levels.

BMO Economics is forecasting the Canadian dollar will stay above par for 2011. **Thursday, April 14**

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**Counter offers: Think before accepting**

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will soon have figured out that they have a very powerful bargaining tool at hand. Do you really want to put your company into such a vulnerable position?

That said, there is one circumstance when touching the forbidden fruit can be excused: in a pinch, a manager may very well want to use this tool, especially when the immediate cost of losing the individual outweighs the risks of the counter offer.

Keep in mind that the odds are against you if you think you will be able to retain the individual permanently. Instead, use the counter-offer strategy to buy yourself some time. Remember, by threatening to leave, the employee has just shown you how little they

believe in a future with your company. You can no longer be sure of their loyalty and commitment. Use the time you bought with the counter offer wisely and do whatever you can to find a replacement as soon as possible.

A word of caution to any professional considering accepting a counter offer: think very carefully about the implications of your decision. If you have gone through an in-depth interview process with another company but turn down the offer because you accepted a better deal from your current employer, your true motivations will be questioned.

In my experience, companies don't make job offers lightly and will wonder whether you were simply out shopping for a better

deal. This will definitely limit your future chances with this company and whomever you met during the interview process.

Receiving a counter offer is very flattering but be aware that you will invariably be considered a flight risk even if you decide to stay on. Your employer can no longer be sure of your loyalty. What will this mean for your future career? ■

*Dennis Wolff, conductor IT and tech talent, is a recruitment consultant with McNeill Nakamoto Recruitment Group, a boutique-style recruitment company specializing in temporary, permanent and contract staffing. He can be contacted at [dennis@mcnak.com](mailto:dennis@mcnak.com) and 604-662-8967 ext. 104.*



**CHRP DRIVES ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS**

As one of Canada's fastest growing companies, Best Buy Canada Ltd. has built its success on recruiting the best and building a strong corporate culture. The Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation has offered tremendous value both internally and externally: anchoring excellence and enhancing HR's credibility with business partners on all levels. Recognizing a body of knowledge and set of professional standards that crosses all industries, the CHRP provides a key competitive edge to Best Buy Canada's growth and development nationwide.

The CHRP designation is the most recognized and sought-after mark of an HR professional. CHRPs bring the people management skills organizations need to develop a workforce that aligns with winning business strategy. There are currently over 21,000 CHRPs across Canada and 2,300 in BC alone - with over 60% of BC HRMA members either holding or pursuing the designation.



learn more at [www.bchrma.org/chrp](http://www.bchrma.org/chrp)

L to R: Karen Johal, CHRP • Kate Bevington, CHRP • Cylena Stern, CHRP • Chris Taylor, CHRP • Allison Ribaux, CHRP • Selina Gao, CHRP • Janice Antaya-Finlayson, CHRP