

The New Reality

"If Spoiled employers' don't wake up to the new reality, they will lose their most valuable assets – employees"

The Ottawa Citizen, January 19, 2008

This article by Susan Hickman reports many frightening truths. What drove me to the computer before I even finished reading it is that I have been sending a similar message for years now so as to avoid going down this path.

Susan quotes a Carleton University's Sprott School of Business specialist in stating that newcomers to the workforce don't put their priority on money or getting ahead. This is not new; research has been telling us for decades that money falls low on the list of priorities for workers, but what is dramatically different is that now if employees don't get what they want, they move back home with their parents, and are able to afford not having to work for a company with which they are unhappy. Depression Survivors, Baby Boomers and even Generation Xers never had this luxury. They stayed in a job and made the best of it.

Newcomers to the workforce want challenging work, free training and most important, lives outside of their jobs. The article further states that business success "will depend on how employers deal with workloads, reward and recognition, performance management, recruiting and keeping talent," as well as developing supportive managers if they want not only to be competitive, but ultimately to stay in business.

This article targets Ontario but I know from experience that many organizations in Quebec are already familiar with these woes. What is surprising to me is that Quebec business has a head start in that the government offers financial assistance to create the type of workplace Susan describes.

Optimus has programs uniquely designed to address all these concerns; some of which can not be obtained anywhere else, and deal with attracting, hiring and retaining issues; effective leadership, reward and recognition, decision making and so much more. Even our performance management system is unique in its approach to retaining top performers.

This is not my sales pitch, this comes from my heart; it is a plea to work at retaining our best now, or some private sector employers will be replaced by new companies that understand this new workforce.

My specialty is staffing and staff development. Working to create a positive workplace has been my passion since my first job at the University of Manitoba, where I introduced a successful job sharing program between two valuable employees: a new mom who no longer wanted to work full-time and someone who wanted to return to school part-time.

I can't begin to describe how enthusiastic I am about helping employers avoid the pitfalls addressed in this article. The prediction is that it will eventually take 3 young people to take the place of one retiring workaholic baby boomer, and according to Linda Duxbury of Carleton, "there is no one waiting in the wings". This is not new to me, I have been hammering away (and I am certain that's what some of my clients' call it) about retention. Not the perks; people may come for the perks, but they won't stay for them.

Let's work together; give me a call so that we can address your specific challenges and find a solution; because trust me; if we don't work on it now, later may be too late.

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