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Summer 2016 Volume 14, No. 3

Nathaly Pinchuk
RPR, CMP
Executive Director

Perspective

Banning Cellphones at Work: The Big Dilemma

A matter of trust

There has been extensive discussion and material written on establishing a cellphone policy in the workplace. Some organizations have tried to ban the use of personal cellphones completely without success. I certainly don't agree with this, but employers do have a right to develop a policy on usage.

I wonder how small organizations plan to implement the ban on cellphones if they considered banning them. Most small or even medium size organizations don't provide lockers for employees to lock up their personal belongings. Are employees going to have to go through metal detectors or body scans to ensure they don't have any electronics hidden?

I do see the need to establish a cellphone use policy and implement it. Keeping it handy only for lunch and break periods may not always work. There also has to be an element of trust involved here.

While we have all seen or experienced the misuse of cellphones while in the workplace, there is a growing list of circumstances that warrant the phone to be available for instant access. Whether we are waiting for important calls from doctors' offices, being called to pick up a sick child from daycare, school or the babysitter or awaiting urgent news regarding our sick elderly parents, there are those who need to reach us immediately for unforeseen emergencies where we may need to take quick action. This obviously doesn't include looking for a fourth person to complete the team for this weekend's golf rounds — we've seen our share

of that too. We should be allowed to keep our phones handy for these types of emergencies.

For those managers who feel that emergency calls should be handled through the business phone line, I would suggest that they rethink this option. Honestly, how often have you been able to reach the person you are calling at their extension on the first try? If they are in a meeting or away for the next few hours, what happens in case of a medical emergency? Have you tried dialling "0" for a live receptionist to only discover that you have been transferred to the "automated attendant" who can't help you or you've been completely disconnected?

While most calls of a personal nature should be done during lunch or on breaks, I strongly feel that I should be able to keep my cell handy at my desk for the urgent circumstances. Those who call me for any other reasons can leave me a voicemail and I'll call them back on my own time. I'm confident that I'm not alone in stating that an onslaught of personal calls during the day can be annoying, frustrating and interrupt the workflow. It makes more sense to complete the tasks at hand and catch up with your loved ones later on.

I'm grateful to all my bosses for having trusted me to do the job I was hired to do and be the judge of when to have my personal phone handy versus when to just keep it at the bottom of my purse until after office hours.

Nathaly Pinchuk is Executive Director of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Brian W. Pascal
RPR, CMP, RPT
President

President's Message

Watch Out for the Z Generation

Better entrepreneurs, more difficult to retain

Just when you thought that you had the workplace figured out, along comes a whole new cadre of workers to make your life even more interesting. This time it's Generation Z (those born between 1994 and 2010) who will take your place of work by storm. By the end of the day, you won't know if you've been shaken or stirred, but you will want to de-stress.

Unless you are planning to retire this year, there's almost no way to avoid the phenomenon that is this new generation. They are coming in numbers, beginning in 2015 when the first wave of twenty million will hit the workplace in the United States, and another seven million join them in Canada. Once again, you will have to adjust your recruitment and retention strategies as well as your management techniques in order to herd these cats in some form of order and good government, at least at work.

The differences between this generation and the one previous could not be more startling. Just when you've adjusted to Gen Y who are all about the money, along come these Gen Z'ers who are looking for meaning in their lives and in their work. They will move through a series of different jobs in their quest to find something they care about, rather than settling for a stable career that is unfulfilling. That's a noble ambition, but it's much easier to pay a little more to get people to work harder than it is to help them find enlightenment at work.

The good news about Gen Z that's starting to emerge from studies and research is that the Z Generation is also much more entrepreneurial than their older brothers and sisters. They also appear to be more loyal and open-minded. Those are good things to know because you can tailor compensation packages based on these traits. Given the pace at which the world keeps changing, it will be good to have at least one group of workers who are willing to try new things when they are encouraged to do so.

The good news about Gen Z that's starting to emerge from studies and research is that the Z Generation is also much more entrepreneurial than their older brothers and sisters.

This next generation of workers will also enter the workplace at a time when the world and the economy all feel a little less secure (because they are) than for previous generations. This will lower their expectations in terms of overall compensation, benefits and job security. However, growing up in this latest era will also make them less willing to trust the system and therefore much harder to retain, especially if they see an opportunity to branch out on their own.

But the biggest challenge of dealing with a new generation at work is trying to find a place for the newbies while reassuring all the older workers that their positions in the system are secure. Once again, managers at all levels will be asked to officiate, mediate and referee disputes between the generations, all the while trying to produce quality products and services for the new economy.

Good luck with Generation Z.

Brian Pascal is President of IPM [Institute of Professional Management].

The Duty to Accommodate Religious Attire in the Workplace

It's not just about the dress code

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Feature

Religious attire has been a topic of recent controversy and debate. Religious attire and grooming observances tend to come into conflict with workplace requirements in one of two areas: dress codes and safety policies.

Dress Codes

The case law demonstrates that while employers are entitled to expect employees to wear religious attire that is consistent with employer dress codes, employers must be cautious and sensitive in challenging employees as to their religious attire. If there is a genuine conflict between what the employee must wear as a religious observance and the employer's dress code, then further accommodation will be necessary.

In *Saadi v Audmax*, the employer argued that its "business attire" dress code amounted to a *bona fide* occupational requirement because it was in the business of assisting new immigrants in finding employment and its own employees therefore had to lead by example. The policy required "business attire" and listed things that were appropriate, as well as things that were forbidden (such as jeans and running shoes). Based on this policy, the employer took issue with a parts of an employee's attire which it thought were unprofessional. This included her choice of clothing, which the employer described as a "tight short skirt and leggings", and her chosen style of head covering, which the employer described as a "cap."

The employee, an observant Muslim woman, stated that she adhered to the principle of modest dress and wore a hijab to cover her hair. She filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The human rights adjudicator found the employer had discriminated against the complainant by attempting to dictate what style of hijab and other religiously-conforming attire it would accommodate in the workplace, without relying on any apparent basis other than a manager's personal preference. However, the Ontario Superior Court set aside a number of the adjudicator's findings of discrimination as being unreasonable and flawed. The Court stressed that while the employer's dress code was to some extent subjective and a reflection of personal taste, that did not make it discriminatory.

The Court went on to explain that the adjudicator should have asked himself whether the dress code, or the employer's enforcement or interpretation of it, conflicted with what the complainant was required to wear as part of her religion. Further, the Court found that the adjudicator missed the key logical step of considering whether it was possible for the complainant to comply with the dress code without compromising her religious requirements. In considering these questions, the Court noted that the evidence revealed no contradiction between dressing modestly and dressing in a professional business manner and revealed nothing about the complainant's religion that would require her to wear the particular form of clothing and hijab to which her employer objected. Ultimately, the Court concluded that her religious rights were not affected so long as it was possible for her to wear a religiously acceptable form of hijab that was fully consistent with the dress code.

Health and Safety Policies

As with dress codes, health and safety standards must not be used to treat individuals adversely based on their religious practices unless accommodations cannot be made without incurring undue hardship.

An early example is *Bhinder v CN*, which involved the conflict between safety and religious interests when a Sikh employee refused to wear a hard hat because it would require him to remove his turban. The Supreme Court of Canada found the hard hat requirement was a *bona fide* occupational requirement that did not violate the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. However, the Supreme Court later questioned whether it had correctly decided Bhinder because there was no evidence that Mr. Bhinder's failure to wear a hard hat posed any threat to the safety of his co-workers or the public. It only increased the risk to himself.

Religious attire and grooming observances tend to come into conflict with workplace requirements in one of two areas: dress codes and safety policies.

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Feature

The Duty to Accommodate Religious Attire in the Workplace

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In more recent years, adjudicators have also assessed safety risks and distinguished between risks impacting the employee alone and impacting other employees or the public.

The seriousness of an employer's safety concerns must be balanced against any countervailing employee interests.

In order to establish that permitting an exception to a particular safety standard would impose undue hardship, employers must prove that the rule addresses a real safety risk of some significance and there is no other reasonable means of managing the risk.

Best Practices

Employers should actively explore possibilities to accommodate religious attire in the workplace. In doing so, it is prudent for employers to assess:

1. the nature and importance of the workplace rule in question;
2. the sincerity of the employee's belief in the religious practice in question, the nature of the conflict, and possible solutions;
3. the consequences of allowing exceptions to the workplace rule and possible alternatives;
4. the seriousness of the risk posed to the employee, his or her coworkers, and the public, as well as the effectiveness of any alternatives;
5. possible moves into other positions where adherence to the same workplace standard is not necessary.

Tom Ross (Partner), Dan Bokenfohr (Partner) and Kendal Gummer (Associate) practice Employment Law at McLennan Ross LLP. Tom Ross can be reached via email at tross@mross.com

IPM 's Spotlight on Members

Jaime Moore, RPT

Regional Director, Ottawa Chapter

IPM Associations extend special thanks to Jaime Moore, RPT for her exceptional contribution to the Ottawa Regional Chapter. Jaime is Senior HR Advisor at the Canadian Commercial Corporation. She joined the Canadian Professional Trainers Association after having attended an IPM event in 2006. She volunteered as a member of the Ottawa Regional Executive in 2007. Jaime is now Regional Director of the chapter and has been working diligently with her team to help plan and promote regional conferences and advise on member services since 2009. She excelled in this role while going through pregnancies, maternity leaves and now raising her two children. Her boundless energy, eagerness to help and enthusiasm are truly admirable.

IPM Associations congratulate Jaime for her efforts and contribution to the Ottawa Regional Chapter's success. We also thank Canadian Commercial Corporation for supporting Jaime on her initiative as a valued member of IPM Associations National Board of Directors.

Michelle Henry
J.D.
Partner,
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Court Awards 26 Months' Notice to Dependent Contractors

Remuneration for this new category of contractors

Most organizations are aware that individuals who perform services for them generally fall into the categories of employees or contractors. They are also generally aware that there are different rights and obligations depending on the nature of the relationship. For instance, independent contractors are not entitled to notice or payments in lieu of notice at common law when the relationship is terminated; and, employees, on the other hand, are entitled to notice under an employment agreement or at common law. Recently, however, our courts have recognized a third category of dependent contractors. This category falls somewhere between an employee and an independent contractor.

Dependent contractors, like independent contractors, are not covered by the employment standards legislation; but, unlike independent contractors, are entitled to notice of termination, whether they operate as an individual or through a corporation. From a notice perspective, our courts treat dependent contractors like employees, and, in the absence of a valid agreement limiting entitlements upon termination, dependent contractors will receive reasonable notice based on the same factors as an employee: age, length of service, position and the availability of alternative employment. Courts have also awarded some long notice periods in the event of terminations, and have expressly rejected the argument that the dependent contractor category should arbitrarily have a reduced reasonable notice period.

The entitlement to reasonable notice for dependent contractors was discussed by the Ontario Court of Appeal in the recent decision of *Keenan v. Canac Kitchens Ltd.*, 2016 ONCA 79, released on January 27, 2016. In this case, Mr. Keenan and Ms. Keenan worked full-time for Canac beginning in 1976 and 1983 respectively. They continued as full-time Canac employees until October 1987, when they were called into a meeting and told that they would carry on their work as contractors. Shortly after the 1987 meeting, Canac presented the Keenans with an agreement which reflected the new arrangements and which had already been signed by Canac. Only Ms. Keenan signed the agreement, but she did not obtain legal advice in advance. The agreements also required the Keenans, as "sub-contractors", to devote their "full-time and attention" to Canac. Canac also changed their job titles from foreman to "Delivery and Installation Leader".

The Keenans were paid as before on a piece work basis for each box or unit installed but the amount was increased to reflect the fact that they were paid in gross, without deductions for income taxes, employment insurance and CPP. With the exception of some weekend jobs and work for friends and family, the Keenans continued to work exclusively for Canac until the end of 2006. Beginning in 2007, as the work from Canac had slowed down, the Keenans started to do some work for Cartier Kitchens, a direct competitor of Canac. A "substantial majority" of the Keenans' work continued to be done for Canac. In 2009, for instance, the split was 72.6% and 27.4% for Canac and Cartier respectively. Canac did not take issue with the Keenans performing services for Cartier.

The Keenans' relationship with Canac came to an end on March 15, 2009 when they were called to a meeting and told that Canac was closing its operations and their services were no longer needed. At that time, Mr. Keenan was 63 years old and Ms. Keenan was 61 years old. They were not provided with any notice of termination, as in Canac's view, the Keenans

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Regardless of the individual's status, companies should almost always enter into written agreements with a stipulated termination clause which deals with the amount of notice the individual is entitled to on termination of the agreement by the company.

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Court Awards 26 Months' Notice to Dependent Contractors

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were independent contractors. The Keenans commenced an action for damages in lieu of reasonable notice. The lower Court awarded the Keenans 26 months' notice and Canac appealed. In upholding the lower Court's decision, the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the finding that the Keenans were economically dependent on Canac due to the fact that they worked exclusively for Canac or at a high level of exclusivity, and on that basis were dependent contractors.

So, what are some practical considerations for companies in light of this emerging category of dependent contractor? First, regardless of the individual's status, companies should almost always enter into written agreements with a stipulated termination clause which deals with the amount of notice the individual is entitled to on termination of the agreement by the company. If there is a possibility that the individual may be deemed an employee, then the company should consider ensuring that the notice period is at least equal to the minimum statutory entitlements an employee would be entitled to under the relevant employment standards legislation.

Companies must also ensure that the agreements are signed prior to engaging the individual. It is also important to renew any expired agreements. If an agreement is for a fixed period or specific project, a new agreement should be signed before the end of that period or project, in the event that the parties wish to extend the relationship.

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Anita Sampson Binder, RPR

Vice President, Recruitment Strategy and Delivery, ARES Staffing Solutions

Serving up Diversity and Inclusion in the Recruitment Process

What are 'The Answers'?

A lot of quality literature has been written on 'the business case for diversity and inclusion.' As HR practitioners, managers, employees and consultants, we must regularly review it to ensure our workplaces are devoid of systemic discrimination. In Ontario, we are legislatively governed by the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (best to check out your local legislation).

Clearly, the evidence demonstrates that hiring diverse employees at all levels is 'the right thing to do'. It also benefits organizations greatly by generating more creative and innovative ideas and solutions through hiring strong performers, mirroring our clients in our workforce and impacting our bottom lines. It simply works better to have everyone represented and supported in our workforce.

Recruitment professionals are frequently challenged by hiring managers who insist on hiring to 'fit their culture' — by which they may mean a specific ethnicity or background, or candidates with Canadian experience, English-sounding names and of a certain 'young' age, for example.

These are difficult discussions to have with our recruitment partners. Often, they do not intend to discriminate and they do not realize that they are asking us to do so. Yet, the result is the same. This is what we are being asked to do and it simply can't happen on our watch. We have the responsibility and opportunity to educate.

> The goal is to 'hire the best' and we must not deprive organizations we serve from having the best possible workforce.

How do we have these difficult discussions? How do we 'live' diversity and inclusion without putting the wall up or closing conversations? What are the right answers in these 'sticky situations'?

Having tried this in a number of ways with varied results, I recommend 'gentle, constructive education' that demonstrates the benefits of diversity and inclusion without 'nailing' our recruitment partners. Here are some examples to generate healthy conversations. They don't address every situation but they will provide some ideas to get us moving forward. The goal is to have the most impactful result by hiring 'the best' qualified candidate.

"We have a young culture, so we'd like to see young candidates."

Weaving the organization's 'cultural fit' into the process is fine if this is done to ensure that the candidate's values and work ethic are in alignment with the organization. If the organization is rooted in entrepreneurism, it's fine to target candidates that are entrepreneurial. However, age is not relevant information and has nothing to do with qualifications, 'fit,' or the candidate's ability to perform. We can help employers understand that organizations benefit from having all generations and ages represented, including new grads and those with experience who can mentor them.

"I need someone with Canadian experience."

Often, Canadian experience is unnecessary. Canadian regulations for specific processes and procedures can be reviewed and learned quickly if candidates have the required technical and behavioural competencies. We can promote understanding by measuring behavioural and technical competencies in interviews, then determining if additional learning is required. It helps to dig into years of experience performing specific duties and candidates can demonstrate their knowledge level by providing detailed examples. It is simply advantageous to recruit the most qualified candidate. Organizations that recognize international 'transferable' credentials and training reap the corresponding competitive advantage.

"I want somebody with an English-sounding name."

Why? Selecting candidates based on criteria other than their qualifications is discrimination. To avoid generalizations based on ethnicity, we can help hiring managers understand that our purpose is to source qualified candidates and the last name or ethnicity are irrelevant. I recommend communicating that we are here to keep the hiring manager and candidate

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Serving up Diversity and Inclusion in the Recruitment Process

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safe within the recruiting process by not engaging in any type of selection that is discriminatory or irrelevant to getting the best qualified person. That's our value add — keeping everyone safe with a legislatively compliant recruitment process while finding the best possible candidate.

"I need a guy with his CMA."

Really? Last we checked, there were many qualified candidates other than those of male gender. Many times, non-inclusive language hasn't been taught in organizations and the hiring manager doesn't mean this literally. Again, we can suggest 'remaining open' to all candidates to broaden the funnel of qualified candidates. Encouraging inclusive language can also help to change this mindset.

In the end, we do our clients (both internal and external) an injustice if we don't include diverse candidates in the recruitment process. The goal is to 'hire the best' and we must not deprive organizations we serve from having the best possible workforce. It's all about having solid, beneficial, legally compliant recruitment and HR processes. As trusted advisors, we can share those constructively with our recruitment partners.

Anita Sampson Binder is Vice President Recruitment Strategy and Delivery with ARES Staffing Solutions in Toronto and can be reached via email at anita.sampsonbinder@aresstaffing.com.

Virtual Punches: Cyberbullying in the Workplace

Update your harassment policies and procedures

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Feature

Name calling, teasing, joking, harassing — whatever you want to call it, bullying has a new meaning. As technology evolves, so does the world of bullying and governments are rushing to action. Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and New Brunswick have all amended their respective Education Acts to address cyberbullying.

Nova Scotia took a more drastic step. In light of the tragic death of Nova Scotia teen, Rehtaeh Parsons, who was allegedly sexually assaulted in 2011 at the age of 15 and then bullied when a digital photo of the alleged assault was passed around her school, the Nova Scotia government enacted the *Cyber-safety Act* (the "Act") in 2013. The Act defines cyberbullying as:

> Any electronic communication through the use of technology including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, computers, other electronic devices, social networks, text messaging, instant messaging, websites and electronic mail, typically repeated or with continuing effect, that is intended or ought reasonably be expected to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation, distress or other damage or harm to another person's health, emotional well-being, self-esteem or reputation, and includes assisting or encouraging such communication in any way.

Not long after coming into force, the Act was put under the microscope. The constitutionality of the Act was challenged in *Crouch v Snell*, 2015 NSSC 340 ("Crouch"). The implementation of the Act was prompted by a very different set of circumstances than those in Crouch. In Crouch, former business partners, Mr. Crouch and Mr. Snell became entangled in internet exchanges that amounted to cyberbullying based on the definition in the Act. Mr. Crouch sought and was granted a protection order pursuant to the Act, prohibiting Mr. Snell from cyberbullying Mr. Crouch and restricting Mr. Snell's communication with, and making reference to Mr. Crouch on social media.

Mr. Snell sought a review of the order and challenged the constitutionality of the Act based on s.2(b) – Freedom of expression and s.7 – Life, liberty and security of the person under the Charter:

> 2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:…
>
> (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;…
>
> 7. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

Justice Glen McDougall determined the Act was unconstitutional for infringing both ss.2(b) and 7 of the *Charter* and struck down the Act in its entirety. In his December 2015 decision, Justice McDougall highlighted the wide variety of expressive activity that could be caught under the definition of cyberbullying, including various incidents of day to day disagreements between individuals.

This high profile case serves as a reminder to employers of their obligations regarding workplace harassment, as expressed in the article of Dr. Martin Shain, "Tracking the Perfect Legal Storm", Mental Health Commission of Canada, May 2010:

> The duty to provide and maintain a psychologically safe workplace is expressed and acted upon in different ways across the country (Canada) and in different branches of the law, but the unmistakable common thread is the increasing insistence of judges, arbitrators and commissioners upon more civil and respectful behaviour in the workplace and avoidance of conduct that a reasonable person should foresee as leading to mental injury.

While the Crouch case received significant attention for striking down the provisions of an overly broad cyberbullying prohibition, this does not mean that employers can now turn a blind eye to incidents of bullying or harassment in their workplace. In Canada, employers have obligations to address bullying and harassment in the workplace pursuant to the

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As technology evolves, so does the world of bullying and governments are rushing to action.

Virtual Punches: Cyberbullying in the Workplace

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common law, employment standards legislation, human rights, occupational health and safety legislation and, in unionized workplaces, collective agreements. With the rapid rise in cyberbullying in and outside the workplace, employer obligations continue. As technologies advance, employers should consider implementing or updating workplace harassment prevention plans, investigation and resolution policies and procedures to ensure they align with the realities of new-age bullying.

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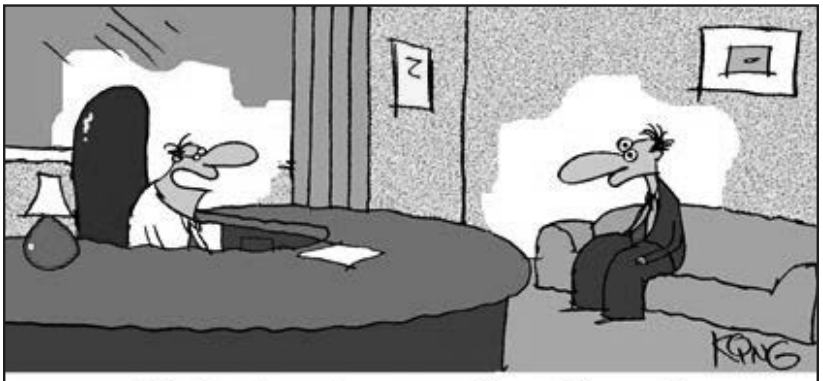

"You're just the type of weakling this company can exploit and discard. You're hired."

Richard Hudspith

Somatic Movement Educator and Wellness Counsellor

Somatic Movement: Improve Your Performance and Balance at Work

The art of pandiculation

Ask the Expert

Q As part of our Workplace Wellness Program, we are investigating options that can be done by employees at their desks or in a group setting. We heard about somatic movement. What is this all about?

A

What is Somatic Movement?

Somatic movement is an alignment-based practice that involves gentle movement and a concept called pandiculation. Pandiculation teaches our brain how to contract and relax our muscles in a functional way. As such, we learn healthier ways to move and be in our bodies. As we gain greater control of our muscles, we restore balance to our bodies.

What are the benefits of Somatic Movement?

Somatic movement creates a new pattern of muscle memory which allows us to sit, stand and walk with our posture aligned. Somatic movement is especially helpful for people who suffer from back, hip or neck pain and other chronic discomfort. Somatic exercises release unconscious holding patterns and unwanted tension which cause pain.

In addition to releasing tension that might be interfering with intended muscle movement, having relaxed muscles brings greater sensory awareness to our bodies. That means we are more aware of what our muscles and bodies are doing.

All somatic movement is done deliberately and without force. Because it is both deliberate and slow, we are able to soothe our nervous system and regulate our breath.

How long does it take to see or feel a difference?

You will feel a difference after each exercise. For example, after you've done Somatic movement on your right side, you will feel a difference between that side of your body and your left. The right side of your body may feel longer, flatter, softer or more relaxed.

In the beginning, the effects of Somatic movement may not last very long. Our brains revert to established patterns of movement. The important thing to remember is that Somatic work is a process; the effects of the exercises are cumulative. As we repeat the movements regularly and over time, our brain re-patterns healthy movement for longer periods of time. With repetition, our brains also become more efficient and effective in retaining healthy movement patterns.

Who can do Somatic movement?

Anyone can do Somatic movement. The exercises are not strenuous or physically difficult to do. There are also modifications that can be done if someone is physically limited. Somatic movement can be done standing, sitting in a chair or lying on the ground.

Somatic movement is also beneficial for athletes. They can exercise with greater effort and strength because their muscles "fire" more fluidly and effectively. Imagine running like a gazelle or having a pain free golf swing!

Does a person need special clothing or equipment?

Though Somatic movement is best done in loose, comfortable clothing, many exercises can be done wearing a business suit or dress/skirt. Take your shoes and jewelry off and you're ready to go. Obviously if you are wearing a dress or skirt, you would do Somatic movement standing or sitting in a chair. The only equipment you need is a mat if you are on the floor or your office chair if you're sitting. Some exercises are done standing up, so just make sure you have a bit of space to move.

How often should we do Somatic exercises?

Someone who sits in a chair all day should do Somatic exercises a couple of times throughout the day. In the morning and at night are best because our brains can retain more information.

Can you give us an example of somatic exercise that can be done sitting on a chair?

Begin by centering yourself. Sitting comfortably in a chair, place your hand on your belly and breathe using your diaphragm. Do this for about one minute to get your diaphragm moving.

Turtle: Gently drop your chin toward your chest. Inhale and slowly lift your head and raise your shoulders. Bring your head to neutral and your shoulder a little higher. Exhale and relax your shoulders, letting them drop down. Repeat 8 times. Close your eyes and notice how your neck and shoulders feel.

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Ask the Expert

Somatic Movement: Improve Your Performance and Balance at Work

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Pelvic Tilt: Make sure when you sit in a chair you always sit on your sitz* bones and can feel them under you. They are your neutral reference point for keeping your posture properly aligned. Sit comfortably on a chair and feel your sitz bones on the seat. Inhale & as you exhale, tip the pelvis backwards, letting your head roll forward and shoulders roll in toward your chest. Inhale and roll the pelvis back up; when you feel your sitz bones on the chair stop. That is your reference point. Continue to exhale and roll off your sitz bones and inhale up to the reference point. Do this sequence six to eight times, then stop and notice how you are sitting in your chair. How do you feel? Be sure to use your pelvis to come up. Don't arch your back to come up.

*Sitz bones are the boney protuberances at the back of your buttocks.

Are there any cautions or precautions?

The adage in Somatic movement is "stay within your range of comfort". You never go beyond what feels comfortable. The key point to remember is we are teaching the brain how to move our muscles in a new way and that requires us to be gentle and slow. If your doctor has advised you not to perform a certain movement, then don't.

The best precaution is to learn how to do the exercises properly. Attend a class in your area, contact a Somatic Movement Educator or get a DVD showing you how to do the exercises. Let me know if you need assistance in finding the right resources.

Richard Hudspith is a Somatic Movement Educator and Wellness Counsellor with over 20 years teaching experience. His website is http://www.thefunctionalyogi.com/ and he can be reached via email at hudsy3@hotmail.com.

Dave Newby

Vice President, HR and Customer Experience In-Touch Insight Systems

The Fine Art of Getting to the Point

Effective verbal communication

Ask the Expert

Q: How can I be sure to say the right things when I'm under pressure at work? I am a specialist in my field, but often feel I don't get my points across effectively in meetings or other critical situations.

A: First, in the hope that it makes you feel a little better, let me say that you are not alone. There are many subject-matter specialists in the workplace feeling the same pain. Employers used to respect and value expertise because information was hard to come by, and it was therefore the most obvious way to differentiate oneself at work.

Nowadays, with information on any topic so readily available, there are many in the workplace with broad ranges of expertise. We have all had to learn that information no longer differentiates us — it's the ability to communicate that knowledge effectively which is most highly valued.

Here is a three-part plan, in fact the most important tips to help you get to the point, speak clearly and be remembered in every situation where effective communication is critical.

1. Consider the audience (preferably in advance of your meeting)

Think about the person or people you are talking to, in terms of:

- **Their background knowledge of what you are discussing.** For example, are they technically adept or challenged? There is no point in showing off your deep technical expertise if they aren't going to understand it. You might even intimidate them which could adversely affect your future relationship.
- **Their attitude towards you and your contribution.** Are they aligned with you, ambivalent or opposed to what you are likely to say?
- **Their wishes and their concerns.** The more you know about these, the better you will be able to address the specific needs of the person or people you are talking to, and the more they will subsequently view you as someone who understands them.

2. Communicate information that is relevant to the audience

Subject-matter experts often fall into the trap of thinking that everyone else is as passionate about their subject as they are. This can lead them into giving far too much (often irrelevant) detail on a topic simply because they know it. Where they think they are engaging and enthralling their audience, they may find (if anyone cared to tell them) that they are intimidating or simply boring people.

If you have really thought about the audience in the manner outlined in tip 1, you should be able to figure out which points and what depth of information are going to be most useful for them. I suggest keeping it simple. Just pick two or three core pieces of relevant information on a given topic and expand on these points a bit so that your audience gets the key message without being overwhelmed.

It is critical to find those two or three core pieces of information which take into account the audience's level of background knowledge, attitude to the topic, hopes and concerns.

3. Structure it correctly

Finally, you'll need to structure your comments in a way that is relevant for the particular topic, the audience and the sense you want to give them.

For example, if you are in a project status meeting, you may wish to demonstrate that you are in control of time. In this case, if asked, "How is your part of the project going?" you might structure your answer in terms of past, present, future, or today, next week, next month, or step 1, step 2 and step 3.

There are many structures that can be used, but the point I am making is that you will be

continued next page...

We have all had to learn that information no longer differentiates us — it's the ability to communicate that knowledge effectively which is most highly valued.

Ask the Expert

The Fine Art of Getting to the Point

... concluded from page 14

most effective in your communication if you can pick the right one for the audience and meeting you are involved in.

These tips should help you. Success requires application. It takes extensive practice and preparation to appear spontaneously effective in high-pressure situations.

For inspiration and to see where an audience-focused mindset can take you, pay a visit to **www.ted.com**. Here you can watch some of the world's greatest communicators. They are, of course, also experts, but that is not what the millions of viewers find so interesting. We value these people because despite their amazing expertise and passion for their subject-matter, they have found ways to engage us and tell us everything we need to know about their subject-matter (and often life's work) in less than 20 minutes!

I bet that the presenters featured on TED Talks haven't always had those verbal communication skills, but they are living proof that experts can become great communicators!

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