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Sharlene Rollins
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A New Generation of Freelancers

Take a closer look at your teams

An interesting phenomenon that is developing around younger workers is that they seem to prefer working freelance or on projects versus consistent work with one organization. A recent study by the Upwork Research Institute found that over half of Gen Z workers are taking on freelance projects and of that group, 53 percent are freelancing full time. This compares to 44 percent of Millennials, 30 percent of Gen X and 26 percent of Baby Boomers who prefer freelance work.

It isn't that these younger workers are slacking off. On average, they report working at least 40 hours per week on a variety of projects and a third of them said they had been working like this for over two years. What does this say about Gen Z workers? To refresh your memory, Gen Z is the demographic cohort that is most frequently described as those born between 1997 and 2012.

The managing director of the Upwork Research Institute says that Gen Z workers want "freedom, control and autonomy that allows them to take advantage of new, distributed ways of working that ultimately impact their performance and financial stability." Clearly, they are more independent and have more of an entrepreneurial mindset than their older brothers and sisters. Freelance work gives them the opportunity to be their own boss and create a more flexible career path than being in a traditional organization.

The research into Gen Z and freelance work reveals even more reasons why they like working in this format. Key is flexibility, with 70 percent saying that is very important to them, working where they choose is another factor identified by 64 percent. Other factors include the ability to pursue work they are passionate about and to take more control over their personal development and career paths.

There is no doubt that the shape and nature of work and employment is in a state of flux right now. So, what should employers do to adapt to how newer workers might be choosing to work freelance style? If we think about things differently, we may be able to make the shift in a way that acknowledges the needs of Gen Z workers and still accomplish our organizational goals. One suggestion from workplace experts is that we should be flexible and maybe consider putting together teams and work groups of freelance and full-time employees. Each can contribute a piece to the puzzle and that should work for everyone.

Those employers who learn these lessons first will get a leg up on everyone else as we navigate our way through the next generation of workers.

Sharlene Rollins is Manager, Administration for IPM [Institute of Professional Management].

Perspective



"Your resume is top notch, Billings. You deserve every penny of the \$2 an hour we're going to pay you."

Incivility in the Workplace Costs Everyone

Make sure you're fully prepared



Nathaly Pascal
RPR, CMP, RPT
President

President's Message

It feels like we are having a wave of incivility throughout society and in the workplace these days. It can range from rudeness to disrespect and while it is not the same as harassment or bullying, it can still be hurtful and harmful. A study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that it actually costs employers and companies money - a lot of money. Their estimate is that US organizations collectively lose more than \$1.2 billion in reduced productivity per day due to uncivil behaviours at work and \$828 million per day due to absenteeism caused by incivility.

There's no reason to think that the Canadian experience would be much different. We are all paying a price for incivility at the workplace. That comes in the form of lost productivity and profit as well as increased stress levels for employees, lower engagement at work and an overall dissatisfaction with their jobs. Some employees even report that they would take a cut in pay if it meant they could eliminate all forms of incivility in their jobs.

So, what if anything can employers do to deal with this rising tide of incivility at work? Like most problems, the solution starts with senior management. Leaders need to be role models when it comes to promoting a civil and respectful workplace. Time to walk the talk and model what you'd like to see your employees follow.

Many organizations are trying to combat incivility by introducing a zero tolerance policy for incidents of workplace incivility. However, these types of policies only work when employees are encouraged to report such situations and there exists a real and tangible follow up by management and HR. This can be supported by having a prepared form that employees can complete and by publicizing this policy and process through employee emails or internal newsletters.

The follow-up, investigation and action portions of dealing with a complaint of uncivil behaviour are also vital to your credibility as an organization. If there is an intervention, the employee who filed the complaint should be notified and proper records should be kept of the types and frequencies of complaints as a measure of how well your policy is working. Training to highlight this issue and to help prevent incidents from arising in the future can also be helpful towards building a more respectful and welcoming workplace.

Doing nothing when it comes to incivility in the workplace is definitely not an option. There's way too much to lose from both an employee and a financial perspective. It will be well worth the investment to deal with this problem now and not wait until the costs become overwhelming.

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



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Pre-Employment Misrepresentations

Legal Implications and Termination Considerations



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Feature

If an employee made misrepresentations during the pre-employment process, termination for just cause may be an option, depending on the circumstances. However, deciding whether this is the appropriate course of action requires careful consideration of both the severity of the misrepresentation and the overall impact it has on the employment relationship.

When an employer seeks to terminate an employee for just cause based on pre-employment misrepresentations, the burden of proof lies with the employer. The employer must demonstrate that the misrepresentations were indeed false. Proving the falsity of certain misrepresentations can vary in difficulty. For example, showing that an employee lied about their credentials or work history may be straightforward because these details can be typically confirmed through public records, reference checks or professional certifications. On the other hand, proving that an employee misrepresented their connections and industry contacts can be much more challenging. This is because such claims can be subjective, difficult to verify and often rely on unsubstantiated personal networks or vague assertions.

To establish fraudulent misrepresentation, there are specific legal requirements. The full test for fraudulent misrepresentation contains four key elements:

1. There is a representation made by the defendant to the plaintiff;
2. The representation must be false;
3. The defendant must have known the representation was false at the time it was made; and
4. The false representation caused the plaintiff to act.

Therefore, in the employment hiring context, the employer must prove that the misrepresentation was key in the hiring of the employee.

Courts have determined that if an employee misrepresents their educational achievements and credentials to an employer, and the employer, had they known the true credentials, would not have hired the employee, this could justify termination for just cause. Conversely, in a case where an employee misrepresented their previous salary, the employer could not prove that the employee would not have been hired if the correct salary

had been disclosed, and as a result, just cause for termination was not established.

Additionally, courts evaluate the severity of the misrepresentation in relation to the overall employment relationship. They will consider whether the misrepresentation was essential to the trust and integrity required in the job.

Even in the absence of fraudulent misrepresentation, there remains an ongoing duty of honesty in contractual performance. As established by the Supreme Court of Canada, both parties in a contract must refrain from misleading each other or knowingly providing false information. This duty applies to the employer-employee relationship from the moment the hiring process begins and extends throughout the entire employment relationship.

Recent employment caselaw continues to emphasize the need for honesty in the employer-employee relationship. For example, it has recently been found that dishonesty on a pre-employment questionnaire was acceptable grounds for the employer to withdraw the promise of employment.

In today's digital age, it is important to consider potential virtual misrepresentations. If an employer discovers information about a prospective candidate that is not included in their resume - such as details on LinkedIn - it is best practice to verify this information with the candidate. The internet is rife with false or misleading content, so employers should always confirm the accuracy of any information obtained from an external source directly with the applicant. Honesty and truthfulness are essential in the employment relationship. However, not all pre-employment misrepresentations or acts of dishonesty will be deemed serious enough to justify termination for just cause. Employers should carefully assess the nature and impact of any misrepresentations before going the just cause route.

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Members
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Feature

The Upside of Artificial Intelligence

Amazing Benefits to HR and Recruitment

There are many horror stories circulating around about Artificial Intelligence and in particular around AI tools like ChatGPT. These range from concerns about cheating in college to real security and privacy issues. We shouldn't forget the real threat to people who actually write for a living in business and entertainment. Some also point out that ChatGPT often churns out as many wrong answers as correct ones and some worry about internal biases that these automated systems and surveys generate.

One area where workplace experts have raised their voices has been in diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). These discussions have risen to the highest level of corporate and government. There is worry about this new technology discriminating against minority job applicants.

However, some other workplace experts are advising otherwise. At least in the short term, they believe that these new tools can actually improve DE&I, foster allyship and give a boost to employee retention. They are utilizing AI to address long-standing inequities in the modern workplace like scanning job applications for more inclusive language and removing barriers that are identified early in the recruitment process.

Using AI to improve diversity, equity and inclusion

In fact, it is in the recruitment phase that organizations are finding great success using AI technology in improving the speed, quality and diversity of the hiring process. One example is in using Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) that can rapidly scan resumes and screen for potential while ignoring bias factors like gender, race or age that would normally screen many candidates out early in the process. This allows businesses to cast a wider net when trying to find the right candidates for vacant positions.

AI tools can be adjusted to include candidates from under-represented groups and utilized to review past work experience to identify a fit for your organization's culture. You can then recruit and hire employees who have both the necessary skills and experience as well as helping to promote a more diverse and inclusive workplace. AI recruiting software also makes it easy to track your progress on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and allows you to make changes along the way to achieve your goals in this area.

AI still needs a human touch

One of the major concerns about AI is the impact on humans. Will there still be a need for us once AI gets up and running at full speed? The simple

answer is yes. AI tools and software are still machines, computing devices. They can add and subtract very well, but they cannot really think independently and they have no morals or ethics. They spit back what we feed into them in ways that can be useful - as long as we monitor and guide them.

AI recruitment software will still need HR advisors and hiring managers to make sure that their recommendations also have a moral and ethical foundation. We will need to work with AI tools in the recruitment process to ensure that all staffing processes are transparent, ethical and inclusive. We have to monitor their performance and watch carefully to make sure that their 'thinking' aligns with ours and the organization. Humans will always be needed to uphold our values, corporate culture and norms and ensure that these machines are acting to benefit the current and future employees of our workplace.

Looking ahead

AI is changing the ways we learn and work and this will only increase as we move forward. Many organizations are using AI to create more diversity on their internal teams by analyzing the personality traits and work styles of current team members. They can identify gaps that could be filled from the outside in an approach that is developed by the software itself. It is also being utilized to improve communication and feedback processes among employees.

AI is also being utilized in managing employee records and payroll, onboarding and performance management. In onboarding, AI can help automate that whole process from verifying documents to general information training to providing employee identification cards and access to the organization's networks. In learning and development, AI can help create individual training plans, track progress and identify career opportunities like lateral transfers or assignments to help employees fully develop their potential.

Finally, AI is being used to track employee performance. This used to be just whether an employee was online when they were supposed to be or enroute if they were a delivery person. Now AI monitors performance, behaviour and engagement in a much more sophisticated way and gives the employer valuable insights on morale and productivity, allowing for earlier intervention to make suggestions and improvements.

AI technology continues to expand and improve, but it will always need the human touch.

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Feature

Misplacing the Remote

Recalling Remote Workers

Introduction

Employers across Canada have grappled with the challenges of bringing employees back into the office following the COVID-19 pandemic. Key questions for many employers include how to properly recall employees back into the office and when does refusal to return to the office amount to repudiation of the employment agreement? Two recent court decisions may provide guidance on the answers.

Byrd v Welcome Home Children's Residence Inc. (ON Small Claims)

The employee began working for the employer in April 2018. There was no written employment contract but the employee received several promotions. In May 2020, the employee's husband was posted to Europe and the employee and the employer agreed to an arrangement by which the employee would continue to work for the employer remotely from Europe. The arrangement was not reduced to writing.

For 13 months, the employee worked remotely for the employer without issue. In January 2022, a new manager was hired by the employer and shortly after, the employee was informed she was not permitted to work more than 15 hours per week and most of her responsibilities were assigned to the new manager and other staff.

The employee brought a constructive dismissal claim. The employer argued that it was an expectation of the employee's role that she supervises employees in-person and stated the employer looked forward to her physically returning to the workplace to continue her role.

The main issue before the Court in finding constructive dismissal was to determine the terms of the employee's contract of employment and, specifically, the terms under which she began to work remotely. The Court found the employee's remote work from Europe became an accepted part of her employment with the employer. The Court further found that a right to recall an employee

from Europe is a fundamental term and requires clear and timely notice to the employee of the right to recall her to work in-person. So constructive dismissal was established.

The Court contrasted its decision with *Staley v Squirrel Systems of Canada Ltd.*, 2013 BCCA 201, where the employer confirmed in writing that the employee's remote work arrangement was temporary, so when the employer tried to recall the employee, there was no constructive dismissal.

Briggs v ABC Insurance Solutions Inc., 2024 BCSC 1918

In this decision, at the time of hiring, the employee was informed her role would be "hybrid", which she understood to mean she could work from her home or from the office. The employee lived in Mission, B.C. while the employer's office was in Langley.

The employer acknowledged there was a "work from home" policy in place at the time the employee was hired, but stated this was a temporary policy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 17, 2023, the employer notified all employees, including the employee, that they were expected to return to working in the office full-time by September 2023.

The employee began commuting to the Langley office four times a week, starting in April 2023. However, on July 3, the employee notified her manager that it was not financially feasible for her to commute four days a week from Mission to Langley. She advised she would continue to work from her home office. The employee asked for further discussion on the issue, as well as the possibility of a commuting allowance. On July 9, 2023, the employer informed the employee that her employment had been terminated. The employer took the position that the employee had repudiated her employment contract by refusing to work in the office.

continued next page...

Misplacing the Remote *concluded from page 6*

Repudiation requires an assessment of the context of an employee's refusal and a determination of whether the employee refused to perform an essential condition of the employment contract. In the July emails, she clearly and unequivocally stated she would continue to work, albeit remotely. At the time of the emails and termination, the employer did not prohibit working from home and working from home was not directly incompatible with the fundamental terms of employment. As a result, the Court found the employee had not repudiated the employment contract and that the employer terminated her employment.

Key Take-Aways for Employers

- 1. Written Documentation is key:** Where employee in-office attendance, changes to remote work arrangements, or changes to work location is required, ensure there is an explicit term allowing for such changes in the employment agreement, the remote work arrangement and/or the policies that govern remote work.
- 2. Recall the right way:** If there is no explicit term allowing for recall or relocation, a recall or relocation is a fundamental term of employment, so unilateral change could trigger constructive dismissal. It's vital that clear and sufficient notice should be given to the employee so they have a reasonable amount of time to comply.
- 3. Legal Advice:** When establishing a remote work arrangement or when considering recalling employees, employers should strongly consider discussing with legal counsel to reduce the risks of constructive dismissal or wrongful termination.

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Feature

Business Ethics: Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reasons

It's not 'One-Size-Fits-All'

In our everyday life, ethics, which is derived from the Greek word “ethos”, usually refers to our morals and standards - what we deem to be acceptable behaviour for ourselves and others. In the business world, ethics can be a set of practices and policies that organizations use to guide them through their daily work and help them to maintain a steady moral compass even when things are difficult. Business ethics can be used to cover a myriad range of workplace situations and decision-making processes. They can affect financial transactions, negotiations with suppliers and competitors and even how we treat our employees and customers.

They aren't law, although organizations in Canada clearly need to follow all laws and regulations or pay severe penalties. Rather, they are guiding principles that hold companies and their employees accountable and allow a business to build and maintain a good reputation. In fact, legal and ethical are not the same and most business ethics in any range of areas would go much farther than those proscribed by governments.

Why business ethics are important

Consumers

Business ethics are the hall monitors of the corporate world. They help to shape not only how an organization operates on a daily basis, but how they are seen by the employees, customers and consumers who they would like to attract as customers. In a survey by giant accounting and consulting firm, Accenture, 40 percent of consumers said they would stop doing business with a company if they disagreed with their social or environmental policies. Moreover, over 60 percent responded that they make their personal purchasing decisions based on a company's ethical values and authenticity.

Employees

Business ethics are also a good sign to both your existing and potential employees about what you stand for and how you will treat them. Employees also take ownership of the business ethics in an organization and will police those ethics as

their personal business. One recent study reported that in a workplace with a strong ethical foundation, over 80 percent of them would report wrongdoing by another employee if they saw it happen. When the leadership models good, ethical behaviour, it also encourages employees to follow suit.

What should your business ethics cover?

You can choose to address social, labour and environmental issues in your business ethics discussions. They can also be dealt with in your corporate responsibility portfolio. You must lay down a set of principles and guidelines that address employee conduct and promote an ethical organizational culture. They should also come with examples of right and wrong behaviour along with the penalties for violating any particular area of your organization's ethics policy.

Here are some areas that you should consider covering under your business ethics umbrella:

- General employee conduct while at work - What is expected of employees by the organization when it comes to ethical behaviour and giving their best performance.
- Confidentiality - Address central issues within the organization, sharing confidential information with other employees and departments, as well as with issues pertaining to the sharing of information with people outside the organization.
- Conflicts of Interest - Clearly define what constitutes “conflicts of interest” and give examples so that employees are sure about the types of things that fall under this. Make sure that you distinguish between acceptable conflicts of interest as opposed to those that are deemed unacceptable.
- Relationships with clients, customers, suppliers and vendors - What types of professional and personal relationships are acceptable?

continued next page...

Business Ethics: Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reasons *concluded from page 8*

Should they even be disclosed? What would be the repercussions to the employee in the event of questionable relationships?

- Unethical behaviour – Define ethics in general and ensure that you outline which ones are strictly prohibited, such as taking kickbacks or bribes, disseminating confidential information and falsifying organization documents.
- Gifts – Are your employees permitted to accept gifts? If yes, how large may these gifts be? Are there any types of gifts that are strictly forbidden?
- Entertainment – Define what types of entertainment activities are allowed and how often they may occur as a result of a business relationship.
- Using the organization's assets for personal activities and gain – Are employees allowed to use any company resources for personal purposes? Consider things like Internet access, office supplies, copiers, vehicles, etc.
- Reporting fraud or unethical behaviour – There is nothing wrong with encouraging employees to report suspicions of fraud and clearly outline the procedures in place once a complaint has been received or suspicious activities reported.

Who should be covered under your business ethics policies?

This is an easy one. Every employee from the bottom to the top echelons of the organization should be subject to these policies. If they violate them, they should be punished the same way, whether they work in sales, marketing or in the executive suite. Your brand and your reputation are riding on this, and many organizations have learned the hard way that they cannot treat their senior executives who stray any different from the person in the warehouse.

Business ethics have to be applied equally and without favour to rank or title if they are going to be successful. To do otherwise risks alienating employees who will see the double standard and by clients and customers who witness bad behaviour at the senior levels and lose confidence in the organization's ability to maintain the high standards that they have come to expect.

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Feature

Ontario Court Confirms Enforceability of ESA-Only Termination Provision

Clarity and compliance are crucial

Employers and employees in Ontario have long been permitted to contract out of common law notice entitlements, provided their agreements meet or exceed statutory minimums under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA). However, in recent years, courts have closely scrutinized termination provisions, leading to increased uncertainty for employers.

The recent Ontario Superior Court of Justice decision in *Bertsch v. Datastealth Inc.*, 2024 ONSC 5593, provides welcome clarity, reaffirming that properly drafted termination provisions will be enforced - even when they limit an employee's entitlements to ESA minimums.

The decision also demonstrates how employers can use procedural tools like Rule 21 motions to resolve contractual interpretation disputes efficiently.

The Legal Context of Termination Clauses

Termination clauses in employment agreements determine the notice period or pay-in-lieu employees receive upon termination. Without a valid termination clause, employees can claim common law "reasonable notice," which can range from a few weeks to two years or more.

To be enforceable, termination clauses must: comply with ESA minimum requirements; be clear and unambiguous to avoid misinterpretation; and exclude language that could lead to outcomes contravening the ESA.

The Bertsch decision underscores these principles and highlights how employers can mitigate legal risks through precise contractual drafting.

In *Bertsch v. Datastealth Inc.*, the plaintiff, Gavin Bertsch, was terminated without cause after 8.5 months of service with the defendant, Datastealth Inc. His employment contract limited his termination entitlements to ESA statutory minimums and explicitly excluded common law reasonable notice. Upon termination, he received four (4) weeks' pay in lieu of notice - exceeding ESA requirements. Nonetheless, Mr. Bertsch argued that the termination clause was unenforceable and sought twelve months' notice,

totaling approximately \$300,000.

His employment contract stated that termination entitlements would meet or exceed ESA minimums, including notice, severance and benefits; any ambiguity would default to compliance with ESA standards; and the agreement satisfied all common law notice obligations. Mr. Bertsch claimed the clause was ambiguous because it did not explicitly reference ESA Regulation 288/01 exemptions and allowed termination for cause without notice in cases that did not meet the ESA's "willful misconduct, disobedience, or neglect of duty" standard. Datastealth Inc. filed a Rule 21 motion, seeking a legal determination of the termination clause's enforceability. The employer argued that the provision was clear, compliant with the ESA and did not require perfection to be valid. The court ruled in favor of Datastealth Inc., finding the termination clause enforceable.

Key takeaways from the decision include:

- **Clarity and Compliance:** The clause was unambiguous and met ESA requirements. Courts will not invalidate a clause based on speculative interpretations that could lead to illegal outcomes.
- **Appropriate Use of Rule 21:** The motion resolved a contractual dispute early in litigation, saving time and costs.
- **Employment Law Considerations:** The court acknowledged the inherent power imbalance in employment relationships but found this irrelevant when a contract's language was sufficiently clear.

The court dismissed Mr. Bertsch's claim, upholding the employer's reliance on the termination clause.

Lessons for Employers

The Bertsch decision reinforces critical best practices for employers when drafting and enforcing termination clauses:

- **Clarity is Key:** Termination provisions must be explicit and free from ambiguity.

continued next page...

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- **Failsafe Language is Beneficial:** Including “failsafe” provisions that default to ESA compliance can safeguard against potential drafting errors.
- **Leverage Procedural Tools:** Rule 21 motions can efficiently resolve contractual interpretation disputes, minimizing litigation costs.
- **Regular Reviews are Essential:** Given evolving case law, employers should periodically review employment agreements to ensure continued compliance.

While Bertsch provides reassurance for employers, Ontario courts continue to scrutinize termination clauses closely. This decision confirms that perfection in drafting is not required—what matters most is clarity and legal compliance. To minimize risk, employers should proactively assess their termination provisions,

ensuring they are: clear and unambiguous to prevent disputes; compliant with the ESA and its regulations; and explicit in stating that ESA compliance satisfies any common law notice or pay-in-lieu entitlements.

Although this ruling is favorable to employers, Ontario courts will continue to assess termination provisions closely and critically. Employers should regularly review employment agreements to confirm enforceability in light of legal developments.

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Next Stage Coaching
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Feature

Making the Most of Meetings

Lead with total success

How often have you heard people talk about the time they waste sitting in meetings? Ideally, meetings are held because people need to come together for a specific purpose. Meetings are most effective when the right people are at the gathering, having robust dialogue around meaningful topics that enable decision and action.

The chair has the responsibility for setting up, leading and closing meetings. Factors contributing to meeting effectiveness include having a clear purpose; maintaining focus and effectively managing the agenda; having clear agreements on participation, communication and meeting etiquette; and transparent decision-making with details of the follow-up action required noted.

Clarify the purpose of the meeting:

Distribute the agenda in advance. Where possible, invite meeting participants to identify relevant agenda items that pertain to the topic to be discussed. Ensure the agenda is organized and timed, and items are categorized. Categories can include for information purposes, input, discussion, action or for a decision.

Maintain the focus:

Introduce the agenda and ask for clarification questions at the beginning of the meeting. Stick to the items to be discussed and ensure participants stay on topic. Use the 'parking lot concept' or 'list of future agenda items' for issues or topics raised that need to be addressed but are not relevant to what is being discussed.

Manage the agenda:

Be vigilant about progressing through the agenda in an orderly fashion. Keep to the allotted time to cover all agenda items. Encourage presenters maintain their focus and stick to their predetermined time limits. Check with presenters ahead of time to allocate the time available for sharing their content and allowing for questions either throughout or at the end of their content. Clarify the need to include time for questions into the overall allotment.

Outline the rules of participation:

Invite the group to establish group norms and

rules regarding involvement. Operate by the general rules for meeting etiquette as set. Ensure all voices are heard either live at the meeting or by soliciting input before the meeting starts. Manage the dynamics between participants. Encourage meaningful contributions and encourage people to speak clearly and offer new information rather than repeat what others have said for the sake of hearing themselves speak. Manage over or under-participation in a way that respects the diversity of people and views being offered. Managing participation can be accomplished by inviting others' opinions, using statements such as 'would like to hear differing views' or 'hear from some of the people we have not heard from yet.' Do not put undue pressure on those who cannot effectively contribute on the spot.

Expect participation:

Establish the expectation that participants come prepared. Ideally, a meeting provides an opportunity for all voices to be heard. However, respect that up to 15-20% of the world's population is neurodivergent. Realize that not everyone will be comfortable speaking at the meeting, so use alternative ways of gathering their input on agenda items before the meeting. Invite email comments on agenda items ahead of time or check in to determine an individual's comfort level to speak to the item. Ensure their input is presented.

Remain impartial:

As the chair, it's essential to remain neutral. If the chair does need to weigh in and offer an opinion, do it in such a way as not to shut down others' participation. Ask questions to ensure understanding and invite contrary views.

Use inviting language:

Words and phrases such as 'yes but' or 'I don't agree' tend to limit or shut down participation. Resist the urge to weigh in in this way. Get curious and ask a question instead.

Summarize at the end of each agenda item:

Ensure a common understanding of the way forward. This can be accomplished by asking

continued next page...

*Making the Most of Meetings
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participants what they are taking away from what has been discussed. The chair can fill in the gaps if anything needs to be added to the summary.

Identify the action to be taken as a result of a decision:

Identify the action to be taken by clarifying the 'who, what and by when' for each action decided. Identify supports or resources required to action the decision.

Summarize at the end of the meeting:

Ensure all agenda items have been addressed. Note the items that require additional discussion and those to be added to a new agenda.

Evaluate the meeting's effectiveness:

Develop and use a tool that allows for evaluating the meeting's effectiveness. Consider separate chair and participant evaluations. Look for and implement improvement opportunities.

Hosting effective and productive meetings is an excellent way to respect employees' time and contribute to workload management and workplace effectiveness. Chairing meetings requires more than presiding over a get-together to chat about things. Developing the skill to lead meetings is a vital management skill.

Gail Boone is an Executive Coach and Owner of Next Stage Coaching & Facilitation and can be reached via email at gailboone@ns.sympatico.ca



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